

Culture portability from origin to destination country

Elisa Brini
Anna Zamberlan
Paolo Barbieri

✉ elisa.brini@sosgeo.uio.no

The gender division of domestic work among migrants in Italy

PERSISTING GENDER INEQUALITIES IN HOUSEHOLD LABOR

Gender inequality in the division of household labor has persisted over time, with women still responsible for the larger share of domestic chores and childcare.

Whether this is the **result of structural constraints or of cultural preferences based on traditional gender norms remains an open question.**

THE COMPLEXITY BEHIND CULTURE

The role of culture - complex set of norms, preferences, and beliefs shared by a given group of individuals - is difficult to isolate, because of **mutual influence between cultural and structural domains.**

ISOLATING CULTURE

We isolate the cultural component of gender inequality by leveraging migrants' geographical mobility (Fernandez and Fogli, 2009; Polavieja, 2015). Immigrants living in the same destination country but coming from different origin countries differ in their cultural heritage while sharing the same institutional and economic environment. Keeping all relevant individual and macrolevel features constant, any difference in migrants' behavior mirrors a cultural component of gender inequality.

Does gender equity in the country of origin affect the intra-couple division of household labor?

How does culture influence the gender division of specific tasks?

How does partners' division of household labor change over time in the destination country in relation to gender equity from the source country?

METHOD

The **Social Condition and Integration of Foreigners survey** (Istat, 2011-2012) is used to measure the level of **male involvement in housework and childcare tasks** amongst immigrant partners aged between 18 and 65 years old (N=4,601 couples, N=1,509 couples with children).

The **Global Gender Gap Index** (World Bank) from the country of origin provides a proxy of source-country gender equity; relative education by gender and age (Barro-Lee dataset) is used to account for migrants' selectivity.

Results are based on **random-intercept multilevel regressions** with specifications that include individual, households and country of origin characteristics.

RESULTS

1 Immigrant couples living in Italy display an overall unequal gender division of household labor, and gender asymmetries are visible in the performance of specific types of tasks.

2 Migrants coming from countries with lower gender-equal scores display lower equality in the division of unpaid labor between partners. This relation is particularly strong in the case of childcare.

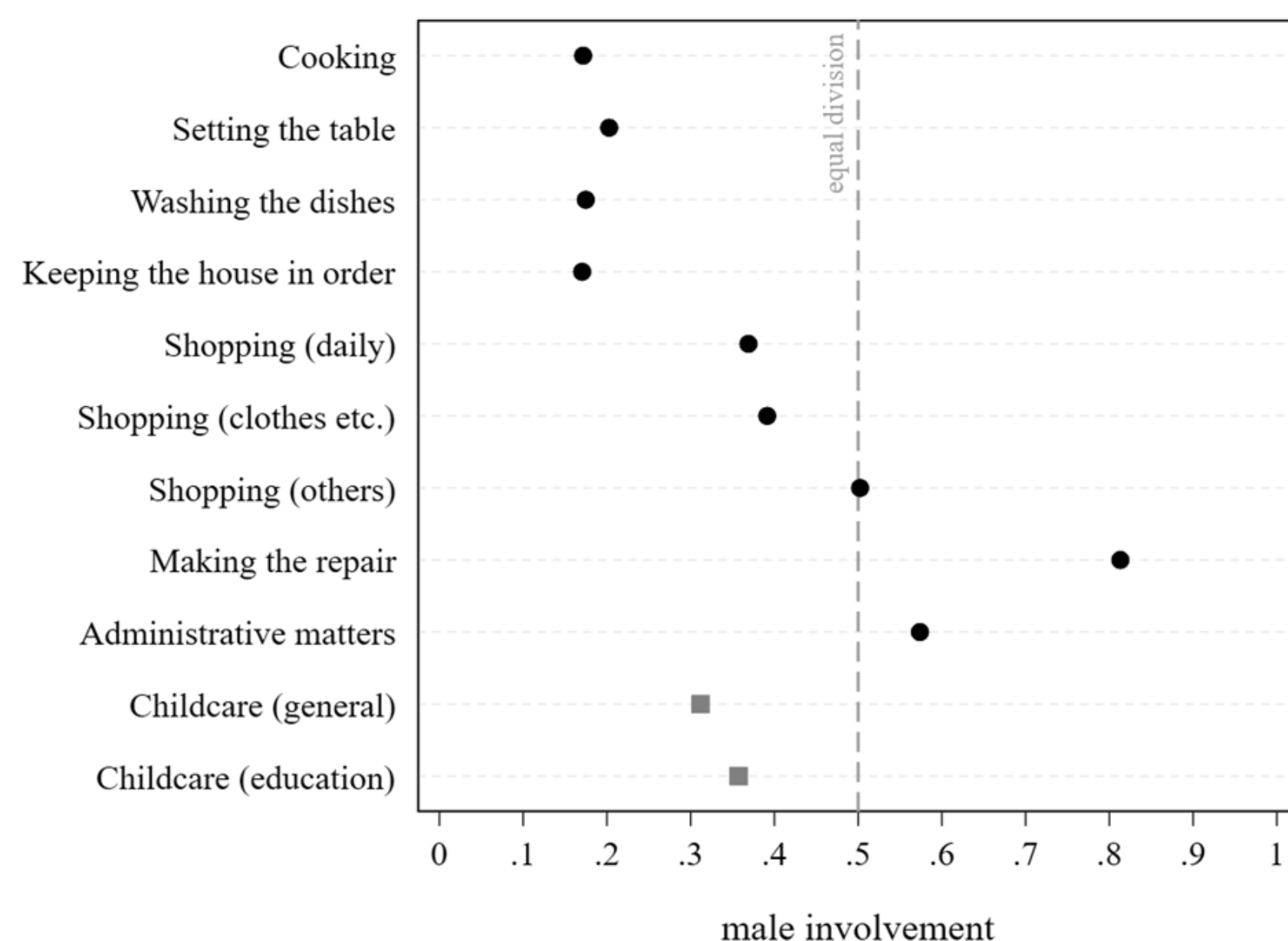
3 Origin culture, however, loses its importance as time is spent in the destination country.

Results are robust to more and less parsimonious **model specification**; different **sample definitions** (i.e., selecting only migrants for whom Italy is the first destination country; selecting only couples with dependent children; excluding countries with < 100 observations; excluding industrialized country of origin; Modelling GGI from aggregated geographical regions) and alternative **measurements of gender culture** in the country of origin (i.e., measuring GGI in relation to the country of origin of the men; using the Gender Equity scale (Inglehart and Norris 2003)).

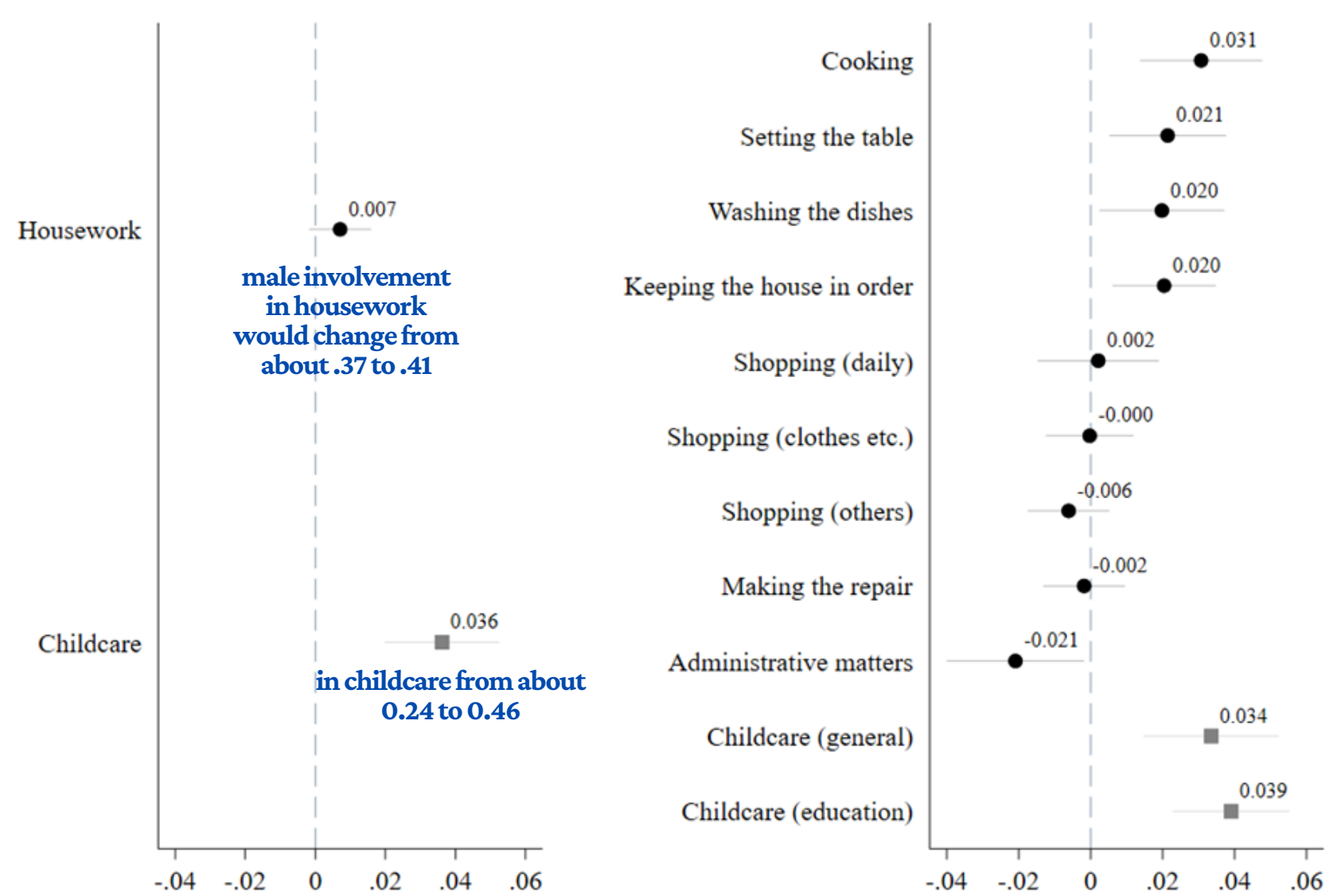
CONTRIBUTION

Our study contributes both to the literature on the cultural component of gender inequalities and to studies of migrants and cultural assimilation showing that culture contributes to the perpetuation of gender inequality in the intra-couple division of unpaid labor, yet non-negligible differences exist among different housework and childcare tasks.

1 Average male involvement in housework and childcare tasks.

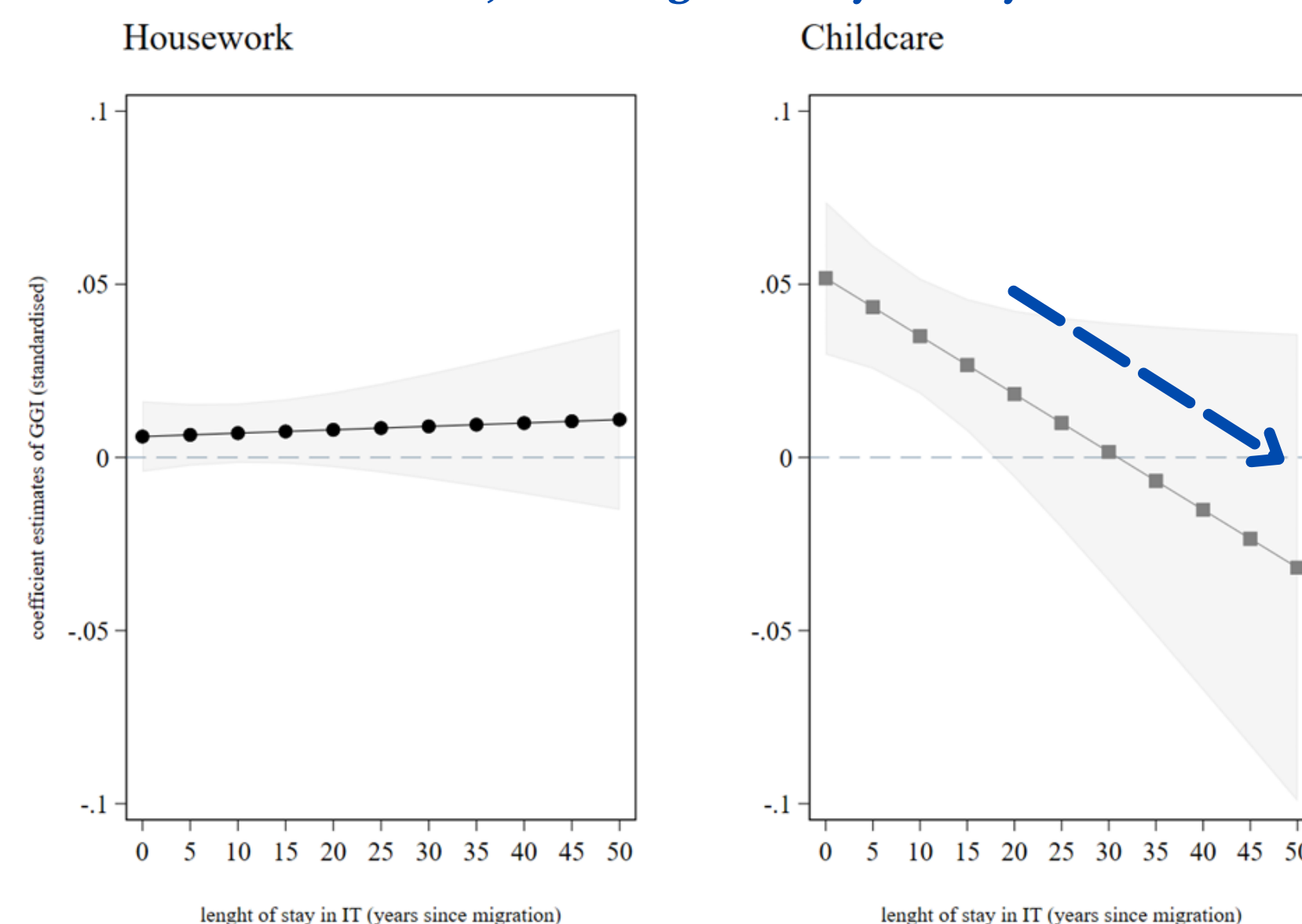


2 Coefficient estimates of standardised GGI on male involvement in housework and childcare. 95% Conf. Int.



Result from multilevel regression model. Controls: partners' age, age2, marital status, level of education, relative education, length on stay in Italy, region of residence, number of children in the household, age of children in the household, woman's country GDP per capita and TFR.

3 Coefficient estimates of standardised GGI on male involvement in housework and childcare, over length of stay in Italy. 95% Conf. Int.



Result from multilevel regression model including an interaction between GGI and years since migration in Italy. Controls: partners' age, age2, marital status, level of education, relative education, region of residence, number of children in the household, age of children in the household, woman's country GDP per capita and TFR.



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