Variations in gender stereotypes based on having or no having children in a population from southern Chile

Variaciones en estereotipos de género basadas en tener o no hijos/as en una población del sur de Chile

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Soraya Espinoza-Moraga
Trabajadora Social, Universidad de Los Lagos, Chile.
Doctora en Trabajo Social por la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, España.

Ramón Vivanco Muñoz
Trabajador Social, Universidad de Los Lagos, Chile.
Doctor en Sociología por la Universidad de Granada, España.

Antonio Vargas Peña
Sociólogo, Universidad de Los Lagos, Chile.
Candidato a Magister en Ciencias Social por la Universidad de Los Lagos, Chile

Johanna Reina-Barreto
Trabajadora Social, Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi: Latacunga, Cotopaxi, Ecuador.
Doctora en Trabajo Social por la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, España.

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Abstract

The following article presents adherence to gender stereotypes in 284 participants. Dimensions such as femininity/masculinity, parental roles, sexuality, skills, and abilities were studied. It was observed that having or not having children can influence adherence to stereotypes, with greater adherence among those without children. Men showed greater adherence to femininity/masculinity and sexuality stereotypes compared to women. This information can be valuable for designing prevention programs that aim to promote gender equality and combat discrimination.

Keywords

gender stereotypes; gender violence; hegemonic masculinity

Introduction

Gender-based intimate partner violence is one of the cruel forms of power asymmetry between women and men, with devastating consequences for the victim, her family, and society according to several studies the presence of gender stereotypes is key in the invisibility and maintenance of this problem (Castellano et al., 1999; Parrot and Zeichner, 2003; Foshee et al., 2004; Shen Chiu and Gao, 2012; Foshee et al., 2008). Stereotypes and attitudes that promote gender-based violence can act as precursors or facilitators of gender-based violence in its commission and suffering (Rubio-Garay et al., 2015). Therefore, their study is essential to identify those persist in couple relationships and address them to prevent gender-based violence.

Gender has become one of the most important and significant theoretical contributions of contemporary feminism. Although Simone de Beauvoir in 1949 introduced the idea that 'one is not born, but becomes a woman', gender as an analytical category has taken on great relevance in recent years (Lamas, 1999). Based on the premise that sexual differences are used to determine male and female roles, beliefs and representations that are social constructs, a stereotype refers to a generalized or preconceived idea about the attributes and characteristics of a group and the roles to be played by its members (Cook and Cusack, 2010; Morcillo-Martinez et al., 2023). In the specific case of gender stereotypes, these are shared beliefs about the attributes and characteristics of each gender, which are naturalized and determine the expected behaviors, roles and behavior patterns.
for men and women (Moya, 2003). These stereotypes are deeply rooted in the collective imagination and are difficult to change.

As Lagarde (2005, p. 178) points out, ‘Each culture, and within it, each dominant group, agrees on its stereotypes of men and women as the only ways of being men and women; as if it had always been so, and as if it would always be so...’.

Gender stereotypes are transmitted through differential socialization that takes place in institutions such as family, school, and church and is reinforced by the media such as radio, television, cinema, and the internet (Amurrio et al., 2010). Differential socialization begins at birth and differentiates identities are acquired based on gender roles and stereotypes, which are justified and perpetuated in different spaces (Ferrer and Bosch, 2013; Gallardo-López et al., 2020). In other words, from an early age, roles and behavioral patterns are established for men and women, which can perpetuate gender inequality in society. The sexist culture perpetuates the construction of such schemes and the integration of values based on the differences between men and women, which legitimizes the subordination of women. Differential socialization establishes expectations about skills and abilities, separates spaces, and divides the division of labor, all based on gender (Morcillo-Martínez et al., 2023).

These traditional stereotyped gender roles perpetuate a model of femininity that allocates to women the responsibility to protect and provide security and care, as well as greater participation in domestic tasks, always relegated to the private sphere. On the other hand, traditional or hegemonic masculinity that is based on a patriarchal androcentric view that emphasizes the superiority of men over women, where men represent an active position of power, capacity, strength, rationality, and self-control, which forces them to order and dominate women. Cometa et al. (2008), point out that assertiveness and good performance are considered characteristics that indicate a greater capacity for agency in men, while warmth and willingness to care for others are perceived as signs of greater commonness in women.

Studies such as that of Díaz-Aguado et al. (2020) suggest that the traditional female stereotype can also be detrimental since it forces women to be seen as weak and fragile, which can result in discrimination and a lack of opportunities in other areas of society. On the other hand, research such as Padrós et al. (2010) and Valls et al. (2008) highlight those associating capabilities and competence related to power and independence with men reinforces the idea that parenting, and childcare is primarily the task of women. This idea of female fragility and weakness also extends to couple relationships, where she is expected to be submissive and obedient to the man, while he has the right and responsibility to control and dominate his partner (Cortina, 2017). These gender expectations are also reflected in sexual relationships, where the man is expected to be the active one, and the passive woman is seen as a mere object of male desire (Rubin, 1984).

The Chilean National Service for Women and Gender Equity (SERNAMEG) conducted a qualitative study in 2009 that yielded interesting results in terms
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of gender roles and sexuality. The role of the father was mainly associated with economic support and the setting of norms, but not so much with affective support in comparison with the maternal role. The role of the mother was associated with closeness and affective support for the children, suggesting personal postponement and giving up certain things.

Regarding sexuality, the study revealed that in men sexuality is considered a key factor of their identity and that they had difficulties in expressing their feelings. In addition, it was noted that they tend to take the initiative and act on their impulses and needs, dissociating love from sex. On the other hand, for women, sexuality is seen as something transcendental and delicate. Also, the study revealed that virginity is no longer an ideal for the participants, which indicates a change in values and beliefs about sexuality in Chilean society.

In this sense, and according to Foucault (1984), sexuality is part of the power structure intrinsically linked to the norms established by social discourse. Hegemonic male sexual behavior is based on androcentric stereotypes, in which men are expected to dominate and control women’s bodies in order to affirm their identity and actualize themselves according to the patterns imposed by patriarchal society.

As anthropologist Rita Segato (2016) points out, all these gender stereotypes and expectations contribute to gender inequality and can lead to gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships, as the idea that men have the right to exercise control and domination over women is legitimized.

Another study in a population of students from two universities in northern Mexico explored five dimensions in relation to adherence to gender stereotypes: femininity/masculinity, maternity/paternity roles, sexuality, competencies and abilities, and expressions of emotionality/aggressiveness. The results indicated a greater adherence to traditional patterns in men and in engineering students, and that students in advanced semesters keep the same gender biases as those of new entrants; it also concludes that although there is an acceptance of the role of women in the workplace, in reality, there are still social expectations that women should be the ones to assume family and child-rearing responsibilities in the private area. Thus, women continue to be primarily responsible for the domestic space, while success and dominance are still considered male attributes in the public sphere (Cubillas Rodríguez et al., 2016).

Moreover, the persistence of this gender order has the consequence that men dedicate a greater amount of time to their paid work and less time to care tasks at home (UN Women, 2020). This situation has important implications, such as a significant gender gap in paid labor activity rates between men and women. Although there has been some progress in recent years, this gap remains considerable (UN Women and ECLAC, 2020). Significant inequalities persist in the distribution of reproductive work (Aguayo et al., 2017; Madrid, 2017; Herrera et al., 2018).
The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has provisions that obligate States to address gender stereotypes in the different scopes in which they are manifested. Article 5 is particularly relevant, as it establishes the obligation of States to adopt appropriate measures to modify the sociocultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with the aim of eliminating prejudices and common practices that are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women. This idea reflects that stereotypical practices that assign women certain subordinate roles are a form of discrimination and undermine the exercise of their rights. According to Amnesty International’s 2018 report on sexual violence, the lack of specialization and knowledge in various gender-based violence can influence victims and survivors during the steps prior to the complaint or judicial procedure since in many public institutions, especially in police instances, health centers, and judicial instances, numerous gender stereotypes around sexual violence are reproduced, leading staff to doubt the victims, minimize the aggressions suffered or, in the worst case, hold them responsible for the facts (Amnesty International, 2018).

The gender perspective allows understanding that gender is a social construct that has a great influence on how people are perceived (Ramos et al., 2022; Robles et al., 2021). Often, gender categorizations are made immediately and implicitly, even when they are not relevant to the situation (Bennet et al., 2000; Ito and Urland, 2003). The binary perspective of gender contributes to the formation and persistence of gender stereotypes since gender categories are immediately detectable, chronically highlighted, appear relatively fixed, and are easily polarized. It is important to emphasize that gender is not simply a biological issue but a social categorization that can limit or privilege people based on their sex. However, in recent decades, women have practiced ways and means that challenge the traditional gender schema imposed by this social structure.

From the literature review, little evidence has been found of studies that address gender stereotypes in the city of Osorno, Chile, so this study aims to delve deeper into this issue.

**Methodology**

The study had a quantitative approach, with a descriptive and transversal design, following the methodological recommendations of Campbell and Stanley (1995). The sample used in the research was non-probabilistic and consisted of a total of 282 participants: 190 women, 91 men and one person who did not identify his gender. Aged between 18 and 74 years, with a mean of 33 years and a standard deviation of 13.5 years, 42% had children and all were residents of the province of Osorno, in southern Chile.

The Gender Stereotyped Beliefs Scale developed by Cubillas Rodriguez et al. in 2016 was applied, which is based on the previous theoretical work of Rocha and Diaz in 2005 and Castro and Casique in 2010. These studies identified five
areas or dimensions in which it is possible to find gender stereotypes: femininity/masculinity, motherhood/fatherhood roles, sexuality, competencies, and capabilities, and expressions of emotionality/aggressiveness, using a battery of 20 statements with a 5-point Likert-type rating, where 1 corresponded to ‘Strongly Disagree’, 2 to ‘Agree’, 3 to ‘Neither Agree nor Disagree’, 4 to ‘Agree’ and 5 to ‘Strongly Agree’. The scale seeks to detect the participants’ position in relation to gender beliefs from a traditional position to an equitable position that recognizes the rights and capabilities of both genders. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to evaluate the reliability of the scale, obtaining a value of 0.877, which indicates a high degree of internal consistency.

The femininity/masculinity dimension includes four statements: ‘Women represent love and weakness’; ‘Being a man is better than being a woman’; ‘If the man has enough income, the woman should not work’ and ‘For men, having a house and a car is a priority in life’. In the motherhood/fatherhood possess greater strength than men’; ‘A father should give caresses and affection to his children’ and ‘Men are more aggressive than women’.

It is important to note that this research had the approval of the Ethics Committee of the Universidad de Los Lagos, which ensures that the ethical standards for carrying out the study were met. In addition, participants were provided with detailed information about the objectives of the research, the procedures that would be carried out, as well as the voluntary nature of their participation by signing an Informed Consent form if they wanted to collaborate with the study.

**Type of analysis**

This study was divided into two stages: one descriptive and the other comparative. In the first stage, the frequencies of each response obtained were calculated, as well as summary measures for each dimension (mean, median, standard deviation). In the second stage, inferential analyses were performed to compare the responses between genders. First, the KS test was applied to assess the normality of the data, and then a choice was made between Student’s t-test or the Mann-Whitney U test, depending on the results obtained. Differences that presented a value of p<0.05 were considered statistically significant.

To determine the internal consistency of the scale and of each dimension, Cronbach’s Alpha and McDonald’s Omega coefficients were used. These coefficients were calculated for the total sample, as well as for men and women separately, allowing us to evaluate the overall consistency of the scale and of each dimension by gender. The last analysis focused on the variable of having children, since it reflected important differences in the adherence to the five dimensions of stereotypes studied. For this purpose, the Chi-square test was applied to find significant differences. The data analysis was carried out with the SPSS v. 23 program.

Roles dimension, four statements are made: ‘Childcare is more the responsibility of the woman than of the man’; ‘Children obey when it is the father,
and not the mother, who calls their attention to them; ‘The most important thing for a woman is to be a mother’ and ‘Children are better educated by a mother than by a father’. The sexuality dimension includes three statements: ‘A woman should be a virgin at marriage’; ‘Men are unfaithful by nature’ and ‘By nature, men need sexual relations more than women’. As for the competencies and capabilities dimension, it raises five statements: ‘Men are more apt for careers that require mental dexterity (mathematics, engineering, etc)’; ‘Men should always be the head of the household’; ‘Men represent intelligence and protection’; ‘Women are more apt for careers that require providing care and service (psychology, nursing, education, etc)’ and ‘Women cannot perform the same activities as men’. The dimension expressions of emotionality/aggressiveness include four statements: ‘Men should not show weaknesses or feelings’; ‘Emotionally, women’.

Results

No person in the sample studied rejected all the beliefs analyzed in the five dimensions, evidencing the persistence of these beliefs and therefore the inequality incorporated in the social imaginary. The dimension with the highest prevalence of acceptance was emotionality/aggressiveness, while the one with the lowest acceptance was femininity/masculinity. When analyzing the dimensions according to sex, statistically significant differences were found in the dimensions of femininity/masculinity and competencies/abilities where men presented higher means in relation to women and therefore had greater adherence to these stereotypes and reflected the position of superiority rooted in their cultural beliefs. The five dimensions are presented below with results at the general level, a second analysis with the difference in means according to sex, and finally a third analysis that focused on the variable of having children, which reflected a differentiated perspective in the results.

Stereotypes dimension: Expression of emotionality/ Aggressiveness

The expression of emotionality/aggressiveness dimension refers to gender stereotypes related to emotions and the expression of feelings that reinforce the idea that masculine aggressiveness and feminine emotionality are characteristics associated with each gender, which can perpetuate gender inequality in society. Underlying these stereotypes is the belief that men should not show weaknesses or feelings, while women have more emotional strength. The results indicate that 30% of the sample totally agrees or agrees that ‘emotionally, women have greater strength than men’, while 20.6% believe that ‘men are more aggressive than women’. On the other hand, 5.1% mentioned being in total disagreement that ‘a father should give caresses and affection to his children’, and 3.9% agreed or totally agreed that ‘men should not show their weaknesses or feelings’ (Figure 1).
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Figure 1
*Prevalences dimension expression of emotionality/aggressiveness*

**EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONALITY/AGGRESSIVENESS**

1. Man should not show his weaknesses or feelings.

12. Emotionally, women have greater strength than men.

15. A father should give caresses and affection to his children.

16. Men are more aggressive than women.

Source: Own elaboration. 2023.
Stereotypes dimension: Sexuality

These stereotypes refer to beliefs and expectations about the norms of sexual behavior for men and for women. In particular, the stereotype that women should arrive at marriage virgin suggests an expectation of sexual chastity and purity in women, while the stereotype that men are naturally unfaithful reinforces the idea that infidelity is a natural and justified behavior in men. Finally, the belief that men need more sex than women perpetuates the idea that they are more sexually active and that their sexual appetite is stronger. These stereotypes can have negative consequences for both men and women, as in addition to perpetuating discrimination and gender inequality, they limit people’s sexual freedom and autonomy. The study reveals that 15.4% of the people in the sample agree or strongly agree with the belief that ‘By nature, men need sexual relations more than women’. 11.7% of participants consider that they agree or strongly agree with the statement that ‘Men are unfaithful by nature’, and 4.6% consider that ‘Women should be virgins at marriage’ (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Prevalence of the sexuality dimension

![Prevalence of the sexuality dimension](source: Own elaboration. 2023)
Stereotypes Dimension: Competencies and Capabilities

These refer to the skills and abilities that are stereotypically associated with each gender. These stereotypes may also manifest themselves in the belief that men represent intelligence while women are seen as less capable in these areas. On the other hand, it is believed that women cannot perform the same activities as men, which may also limit their job opportunities and perpetuate gender inequality in society.

The main response to this dimension is given by 11.6% of the sample who totally agree or agree with the statement that ‘women are more qualified for degrees that require providing care, attention and services (psychology, nursing, education, etc.)’, followed by two statements with a 5% preference respectively of totally agreeing or agreeing that ‘women cannot perform the same activities as men’ and that ‘men are more qualified for those degrees that require mental dexterity’. 4.3% believe that ‘men represent intelligence and protection’ and finally 3.9% agree or strongly agree with the belief that ‘men should always be the head of the household’ (Figure 3).

Figure 3
Prevalence dimension competencies and capabilities

Source: Own elaboration. 2023.
Stereotypes dimension: Femininity/ Masculinity

These stereotypes perpetuate the belief that women are more emotional, weak, and fragile, while men are stronger, successful, and should be the main economic providers of the household. 12.3% of the sample agree or strongly agree that ‘for men, it is a priority to have a house and a car’, and 6.5% agree and strongly agree with the belief that ‘women represent love and weaknesses’. About 2.9% agree and strongly agree that ‘being a man is better than being a woman’ and 2.1% agree that ‘if a man has enough income, the woman should not work’ (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**
Prevalence dimension femininity/masculinity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Women represent love and weakness.</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Being a man is better than being a woman.</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If a man has enough income, the woman should not work</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. For men, it is a priority to have a house and a car</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration. 2023.

Differences between dimensions of stereotypes according to sex.

For further analysis, the Mann-Whitney U test was applied to compare the responses of men and women in the five dimensions presented above. Table 1 shows the results for each dimension, with the femininity/masculinity and competencies/capabilities dimensions being the ones that were statistically significant. In the first dimension, men presented greater adherence to these stereotypes compared to women, with means of 1.92 and 1.59 respectively, while the competencies/abilities dimension obtained means of 1.80 for men and 1.50 for women. Thus, in both dimensions, acceptance was higher in men, a sign of the position of superiority incorporated in their cultural beliefs.

Although differences in adherence to gender stereotypes were also observed in the dimensions of expression of emotionality /aggressiveness, sexuality, and motherhood/fatherhood, they were not significant.
Table 1  
*Scores for dimensions of stereotypes by sex*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women (n=190)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Men (n=91)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternity/paternity roles</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.0-3.8</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>1.0-5.0</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>7310.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femininity/Masculinity roles</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.0-3.3</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.0-5.0</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>5878.0 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competences/capabilities beliefs</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.0-4.0</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.0-5.0</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>6544.0 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality beliefs</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.0-4.2</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.0-4.8</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>8038.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotionality/aggressiveness expressions</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.0-4.0</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>1.0-4.5</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>7045.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * = p < .05; ** = p < .01; *** = p < .001

Differences between dimensions of stereotypes according to having children.

The third analysis of the data found that the variable of having children reflected a differentiated perspective in the results. In general terms, people in the sample who did not have children were more likely to follow gender stereotypes than those who did. The results are presented in order according to the greatest differences registered among the five dimensions, indicating those statements with statistical differences by means of Chi-square contrast.

Motherhood/Paternity dimension according to having children.

In this dimension, the statement that ‘the most important thing for a woman is to be a mother’ was statistically significant and was more adhered to among people without children (15.5%) compared to those with children, where only 2.5% adhered to the stereotype. It also reflected the power concentrated in the father figure, with 8.5% of the sample without children agreeing or strongly agreeing that ‘children obey the father and not the mother when they are called to attention’ (vs. 3.8% of people with children). The other statements were not statistically significant (Table 2).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>With children</th>
<th>Without children</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
<td>91.9%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree/Strongly agree</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Childcare is more a woman’s responsibility than a man.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Children obey when the father, not the mother, calls their attention</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The most important thing for a woman is to be a mother.</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Children are better educated by a mother than by a father.</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * = p < .05; ** = p < .01; ***= p < .001
Femininity/Masculinity Dimension according to having children.

Among people in the sample without children and in relation to femininity, the most significant stereotype was that ‘women represent love and weakness’ with 11.1% in comparison with those who do have children, where only 3.1% adhered to this stereotype. But it is important to highlight that in this item 16.9% of the participants with children neither agreed nor disagreed with this information compared to the indecision of 12.8% of participants without children. It was also found that people who do not have children are more attached to the idea that ‘being a man is better than being a woman’, with a percentage of 6%, while in those who do have children this percentage drops to 0.6%. The other statements of the dimension were not statistically significant (Table 3).
Table 3
Femininity/masculinity dimension according to having children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>With children</th>
<th>Without children</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>( \rho )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Women represent love and weakness</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Being a man is better than being a woman</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If the man earns a sufficient income, the woman should not work.</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. For men, having a house and a car is a priority in life.</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * = \( p < .05 \); ** = \( p < .01 \); *** = \( p < .001 \)
Emotionality/Aggressiveness Dimension according to having children.

In relation to the emotionality/aggressiveness dimension (Table 4), the statement with statistical significance was the belief that ‘emotionally, women are stronger than men’, with 34.5% among people without children compared to 25.8% of people with children. When analyzing the prevalence registered among those who neither agreed nor disagreed (without children 34.5% vs. with children 32.7%) and among those who totally disagreed (without children 46.6% vs. with children 41.5%), it was striking that the responses were more evenly distributed among the four options for this dimension, something that was not observed in general terms in the percentages of the other dimensions studied, suggesting a certain ambivalence in the sample with respect to the perception of this stereotyped affirmation.

Although it was not significant, the stereotype that ‘men are more aggressive than women’ was of interest, where 24.8% of the sample with children had a greater adherence, compared to 18% of the sample without children. Along the same lines, 7.9% of people without children disagreed with the stereotype that ‘a father should give caresses and affection to his children’, while among people with children it reached 3.1%. Finally, the statement that ‘a man should not show his weaknesses or feelings’ is more adhered to by people without children, with 6.8%, compared to 1.9% of people with children (Table 4).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With children</th>
<th>Without children</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree/Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Man should not show his weaknesses or feelings.</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Emotionally, women are stronger than men.</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. A father should give affection and caresses to his children.</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Men are more aggressive than women.</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$
Sexuality dimension according to childlessness

In the sexuality dimension (Table 5), no stereotypical statement was statistically significant according to having children, although once again people without children had greater adherence to these stereotypes regarding sexuality and clearly reflected the traditional patriarchal social imaginary in force in the context studied. Specifically, the stereotypical statement indicating that ‘by nature men need sexual relations more than women’ was adhered to by 17.9% of the sample without children and by 13% of the sample with children. Likewise, 13.7% of childless participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that men are unfaithful by nature, compared to 9.9% of participants with children. Regarding the stereotype that ‘women should be virgins at marriage,’ 6.8% of the sample without children agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while among the sample with children, this percentage was 3.1%.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10. A woman should be a virgin at the time of marriage</th>
<th>13. Men are unfaithful by nature.</th>
<th>17. By nature, men need sex more than women.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
<td>Agree/Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree/Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With children</td>
<td>Without children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.553,103</td>
<td>1,278,528</td>
<td>1,278,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
<td>* p &lt; 0.05; ** p &lt; 0.01; *** p &lt; 0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Sexuality dimension according to having children.
Competences and Capabilities Dimension according to having children

In this dimension, none of the stereotypical statements were statistically significant, although, as in the previous analyses, the people in the sample without children were those who reported greater general adherence (Table 6). Specifically in the stereotype that ‘women are more apt for careers that require providing care, attention and service’ (without children 14.8% vs. with children 9.4%) and secondly, that ‘men represent intelligence and protection’ (without children 6.9% vs. with children 1.9%). Finally, a similar percentage of the sample agreed or strongly agreed that ‘women cannot perform the same activities as men’ (without children 5.1% vs. with children 9.4%).
Table 6: Dimension of competencies and capabilities according to having children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With children</th>
<th>Without children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
<td>Agree/Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$
Discussion

The objective of this study was to examine the adherence to gender stereotypes in men and women living in the city of Osorno, Chile. The results were presented in five dimensions: motherhood/fatherhood, femininity/masculinity, competencies and capabilities, sexuality, and expressions of emotionality/aggressiveness. It is important to highlight that not a single person in the sample rejected all the stereotyped statements studied. In some items, a considerable percentage of participants agreed with them, which indicates their validity and rootedness in Chilean society. Also of great relevance is the finding that, when stereotypes are analyzed according to gender, the dimensions that are significant (femininity/masculinity and competencies/abilities), men showed greater adherence than women (1.92-1.59 and 1.80-1.50 respectively, Table 1). When the analysis is carried out according to the presence of children, the significance of the dimensions changed, with people in the sample without children reporting greater adherence in all items and even increasing (maternity/paternity, femininity/masculinity, and emotionality/aggressiveness).

The dimension of expression of emotionality and aggressiveness was the one that obtained the highest prevalence at the general level, suggesting as current the belief that male-aggressiveness and female-emotionality are characteristic of each sex. Three out of ten people in the sample agreed or strongly agreed that ‘emotionally, women possess greater strength than men’ (30%) and one out of five that ‘men are more aggressive than women’ (20.6%). Likewise, 3.9% had adherence to the idea that ‘men should not show their weaknesses or feelings’, so despite changes in Chilean society, some parents still feel limited in expressing affection to their children by traditional gender roles. Such stereotypical ideas seem to still be present in other cultural contexts in the continent: the study by Lira Ochoa et al. (2021) measured the perception of gender stereotypes transmitted by parents to 260 adolescents in Mexico and concluded that those stereotypes associated with the restriction of the expression of affection as well as stereotypical social behaviors persisted. When the analysis was done according to having children, the analysis confirmed statistically significant differences in the stereotypical belief that women are emotionally stronger than men (34.5% people without children vs. 25.8% people with children, Table 4). Although it was not significant, the stereotypical idea that men are more aggressive than women was also higher among those without children (24.8% vs. 18% of those with children, Table 4).

Similar results, although with much higher prevalences, were reported by Cubillas Rodríguez et al. (2016) in their study with 1921 young single university students -men and women- from Mexico who used the same instrument applied in this study, which allows a comparative analysis both by dimensions and by stereotypical phrases. The stereotype that emotionally, women possess greater strength than men had greater adherence in Mexico (47.1% vs. 30% in the present study), as did the belief that men should not show their weaknesses or feelings (7.4% vs. 3.9% in the present study). There was also greater adherence to the stereotypical statement that a father should give caresses and affection to his children in Mexico (92.9% vs. 88.8% in the present study). In another study conducted by Colás and
Villaciervos (2007) with 455 adolescents between 14 and 18 years of age who were high school students in Seville-Spain on internalized gender stereotypes, they found that more than 78% of the males accepted stereotypes associated with women's emotionality, such as their supposed emotional weakness. Likewise, 45% of young men reported not expressing emotions, finding that the emotional stereotypes linked to them are notably lower compared to those related to women.

The second relevant stereotype dimension in this study was sexuality. It was generally accepted that ‘by nature, men need to have more sex than women’, that ‘men are unfaithful by nature’ or that ‘women should be virgins at marriage’ (15.4%, 11.7% and 4.6% respectively, Figure 2). Such stereotyped ideas reflect the social concession to men but not to women, where there are still people who consider that they should be virgins at the time of marriage, reinforcing the expectations of female chastity and sexual purity. Comparing these results with those obtained by Cubillas Rodríguez et al. (2016), the Mexican study obtained even higher prevalence in the three stereotypical statements mentioned above (32.9%, 19.3% and 15.6%, respectively).

These stereotypes suggest certain control and regulation of sexuality as postulated by Foucault (1984) where certain norms and expectations are established that people are expected to comply with according to their gender. It is important to consider how these stereotypes influence the perception of sexuality and how power relations are constructed in society. According to Kim et al. (2019) there is a difference in the importance placed on the concept of virginity between men and women. While for women a stricter standard is applied in relation to their virginity, in the case of men their active sex life from an early age is more valued. This demonstrates the application of a sexual double standard that is more rigorous for women than for men. In the same dimension of sexuality, the change that occurred when the condition of having children was considered is striking. Although none of the three stereotypical statements were statistically significant, those without children showed a much greater adherence to them than the general prevalence of the entire sample (Table 5 vs. Figure 2), suggesting that having children could be related to lower adherence to some gender-stereotypical sexual ideas.

On the other hand, regarding stereotypes related to the competencies and abilities of men and women, evidence was found that suggests the naturalization of occupational segregation, with 11.6% of participants considering that women are more suited to jobs that require providing care and services; 5% that women cannot perform the same tasks as men; and 5% that men are more suited to careers that require mental skills (Figure 3). This dimension was one of the two that were statistically significant by sex (Table 1). The percentages were much lower compared to the study by Cubillas Rodríguez et al., (2016) where adherence reached 35%, 29.1%, and 16.1% respectively.

In research on motivation in degree choice, Quattrocchi et al., (2017) found that men when opting for higher-level studies have a greater tendency than women to seek a long-term external reward, especially the economic factor. The results of
this study showed significant differences between men and women in terms of
university degree choice, with a greater presence of women in the areas of Health,
Administration, and Education, and a greater presence of men in the technological
and project areas. These differences are consistent with studies conducted in
other countries, for example in the study by Navarro Guzmán and Casero Martínez
(2012) their results suggest that women choose careers for vocation and to help
other people, while men choose careers to earn a good salary or achieve economic
stability. Indeed, the gender gap in science, technology, and mathematics education
was evident in the most recent UNESCO report (2017) which revealed that only
35% of students enrolled in these types of degrees are women and that globally
women represent only 28% of female and male researchers.

In fourth place and with respect to the maternity/paternity dimension at the
global level, 8.3% of the sample agreed with the belief that the most important
thing for a woman is to be a mother, 6.1% that children are better educated by a
mother than by a father, 5.7% believed that children obey the father more than
the mother when they are scolded and that childcare is more the responsibility
of the woman than the man (2.9% Figure 4). When considering having children,
these prevalences were higher among people without children and two of the
four stereotypical statements were statistically significant (Table 2). This result
suggests that beliefs about motherhood/paternity may vary according to the
personal experience of having or not having children: people who have children
are more inclined to question these stereotypes and to value the importance of
gender equality in society. In the study by Cubillas Rodríguez et al., (2016) again
the prevalences were higher with respect to those obtained here (28.7%, 20.3%,
11.6%, and 8.9% respectively). This posture seems to be in transition in other Latin
American contexts: a qualitative study conducted in the Department of Santander-
 Colombia with young university men and women (Moreno- Rangel, and Rincón-
Silva, 2020) found that its participants expressed the decision to postpone or
give up motherhood/fatherhood as they considered it a barrier to improving their
quality of life and overcoming poverty, prioritizing their academic and professional
achievements. In this study, no man showed a positive attitude towards fatherhood
in late adolescence, while women even indicated the exclusion of motherhood in
their life plan, as they did not consider it as a generator of identity and meaning in
life. They also indicated that male desertion, lack of responsibility, and concern for
child raising were the most common among their family experiences, from which
they recognized that raising a child in their youth was very complicated, time-
consuming, and not easy at all.

However, it could also suggest a relationship between the preference of not
having children due to perceived difficulties in childrearing and the prevalence
of gender stereotypes related to childrearing and care that are ingrained and
incorporated into the female identity.

The findings suggest at least an improvement in the social discourse
towards co-responsibility for reproductive work, gradually reshaping or at least
questioning the distribution of traditional gender roles within the family in Chile.
However, statistics on the use of time in Latin America show that the reality in
the distribution of domestic and care tasks is still very unequal between men and women (Montaño and Milosavljevic, 2010), which, as pointed out by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean -ECLAC- (2009), would have significant consequences for welfare and for the feminization of poverty. In the case of Chile, despite progress, significant inequalities still persist in the allocation, distribution, and use of time: while women devote an average of 6.3 hours to work in the home and 23.7% of their activities are related to reproductive work, men only spend 2.5 hours a day on the same work and 18.5% of their activities are related to this type of work (Servicio Nacional de la Mujer, 2009, p. 122-123; Todaro, 2009).

The last dimension to be discussed is femininity/masculinity. This dimension was the only one of the five studied that was statistically significant in the detailed analyses carried out according to sex (Table 1) and according to having children (Table 3), suggesting that it is the most relevant dimension. Regarding the prevalences found, 12.3% of participants considered that for men it is a priority in life to have a house and a car, 6.5% still agreed that women represent love and weakness, 2.9% considered that being a man is better than being a woman, and 2.1% still supported the stereotypical idea that if a man has enough income, a woman should not work. Comparing the findings with the study by Cubillas Rodríguez et al., (2016) again the prevalence in Mexico was much higher than those recorded here (40.9%, 16.1%, 8.5%, and 12.4% respectively). According to data from the National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships in Mexico -ENDIREH- (2016), gender stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination and violence towards women are still accepted, for example, 46% agree that working women neglect their children, 14.3% think that men should have a higher salary than women and 10.4% believe that men should occupy better positions in the workplace. In a similar vein, a study in Argentina asked a sample of 1,255 men aged 18 to 88 years who perceived themselves as male about what it meant to be a woman. Thirty-two percent identified characteristics associated with the hegemonic perspective of the stereotype of goodness (being a good mother, feminine, loving, etc.), suggesting the persistence of patriarchal perspectives. Only 10% highlighted characteristics such as intelligence, strength, independence, courage, creativity, reflection, and resilience (Robles et al., 2021). Another qualitative study with Mexican university women (Ramos et al., 2022) investigated their views of femininity and identified both traditional and modern aspects of their experiences: on the one hand, they sought well-being and satisfaction by following their own criteria such as independence and freedom, but at the same time they recognized traditional feminine practices and characteristics such as caring for others, coinciding with the results of another study in Spain (Gallardo-López et al., 2020). Although some were satisfied with their experience of being a woman, others expressed restrictions such as lack of freedom and oppression due to male harassment, which caused them insecurity in their social spaces. Finally, they indicated that their actions as women should be based on their own preferences and not on pre-established standards.

The present study has some limitations. In the first place, it has been carried out with a non-probabilistic sample of people living in the city of Osorno-Chile, so its results cannot be extended to the general population. In this sense, it would be important to replicate the study in other national contexts to improve the reliability
of the findings. Likewise, and given that it was not an objective of the research, the sample was not asked about the reasons why the participants did not have children and in this sense, the findings presented here are partial, and this is a future line of research. It would also be advisable to conduct the study considering other variables such as educational level, age, and other variables of intersectionality that could affect the analysis of adherence to gender stereotypes.

**Conclusions**

The objective of this study was to examine the adherence to gender stereotypes in men and women in the city of Osorno-Chile and how these influence the expectations and roles associated with each sex. The results show that regardless of gender or childbearing status, there is a high proportion of participants who agree with stereotypical statements, indicating that they remain deeply rooted in society. Gender stereotypes can have an impact on the perception, distribution of roles and responsibilities between men and women. Regarding the parenthood role dimension, a significant difference was observed between the groups of people with and without children, suggesting that such experience may influence adherence to stereotypes. This difference could also suggest other issues as other studies have pointed out, and that is the preference of the new generations not to have children due to the perceived difficulties for parenting and professional development, and perhaps more embedded and incorporated in the feminine identity. Further research would be needed to see if such a correlation exists. In the femininity/masculinity dimension, men seem to have greater adherence to gender stereotypes than women, and this dimension is the only one that was statistically significant in both gender and childbearing analyses. In the sexuality dimension, stereotypes that justify male sexual freedom more than female sexual freedom were the most adhered to, although to a lower extent than in the Mexican study with which it was compared. The results suggest that gender stereotypes continue to be in existence in Chilean society today and may contribute to the maintenance of asymmetry and inequality, discrimination, and violence against women.
References


