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A longitudinal analysis of the support for counter-stereotypical gender roles in Chile: Consensus on communal men but discord on agentic women

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Abstract

Traditional gender roles establish rigid patterns of behavior for men and women. Agentic roles are assigned to men, who are expected to lead in the public sphere, while communal and domestic tasks are the domain of women. However, in a context of accelerating social change in Chile and elsewhere, support for traditional gender roles is no longer either fixed or stable. Attitudes are constantly evolving, revealing diverse patterns of change and highlighting the need to analyze and understand the course of this evolution. The aim of the present work was to conduct a longitudinal study of the extent to which individuals support counter-stereotypical roles. We used data from four waves (2016, 2018, 2021, and 2023) of the Longitudinal Social Study of Chile (ELSOC)—a nationally representative longitudinal panel survey launched in 2016 (N = 2,927). We employed Latent Class Growth Analysis (LCGA) to identify distinct subgroups of Chileans based on their support for counter-stereotypical roles. Results show that, in general, individuals have expressed enduring support for the adoption of communal roles by men. However, trajectories for counter-stereotypical female roles are much more heterogeneous. While almost half of participants support counter-stereotypical female roles, a quarter of the sample presents a marked decrease in support over time. We also explore the predictors and outcomes of the different trajectories. We discuss these results in the light of the enduring social barriers that women continue to face.

Introduction

Gender defines how individuals create, perpetuate and confront social norms (Martin & Slepian, 2020; Zia, 2023). Gender roles—the notion that men and women are good at and should focus on different but complementary social tasks—has been one of the main barriers to achieving more equal societies. These roles put men in charge of public roles and assign women to domestic and caregiving functions. Nowadays, with gender equality enjoying greater support than before, we could expect less backing for traditional perspectives and stronger agreement with counter-stereotypical roles. However, gender attitudes are ambivalent, diverse, complex and constantly evolving (Eagly & Sczesny 2019). As such, research on this matter must be constant. The aim of this work is to analyze support for counter-stereotypical gender roles from a longitudinal perspective; namely the belief that men should assume greater responsibility for childcare and housework -communal role- and that if mothers pursue a professional career agentic role-, this will have negative consequences for their children (Begall et al., 2023; Grunow et al., 2018). Further, we test whether different groups of individuals present different levels of support and trajectories over time.

Gender role beliefs determine how men and women should behave and the social dimensions with which each should be concerned (Eagly, 1978). Men are expected to occupy public roles associated with agency, such as political or financial leadership. By contrast, the roles assigned to women are communal and concern the private sphere, such as domestic tasks or providing emotional support to others (Eagly & Koenig, 2021; Ellemers, 2018). This division between agency and the communal is crucial to understanding and confronting gender inequality, and it impacts widely on the development of both men

and women. Individuals infer the stereotypes of men and women based on this division of labor. In turn, these gender stereotypes can affect the interests of men and women and determine their skills to command and manage agentic or communal social tasks (Sczesny et al., 2019). Furthermore, agentic and communal gender roles influence how individuals shape their identities and how they define themselves (Madera et al., 2025).

Gender roles emerge based on biosocial processes, producing gender-differentiated behaviors, cognitions and emotions (Eagly, 1978). Through a distinguishable process of socialization (Eagly & Wood, 2012), internalization of gender roles begins in early childhood, and boys and girls develop their gender identity according to agentic and communal roles (see Cerbara et al., 2022; King et al., 2021). This strengthens during adolescence (Leaper, 2000; Wood & Eagly, 2002), when gender attitudes are influenced by individual, family, peer and structural variables (see Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2024; Patel, 2021). During this period, support for gender roles are shaped by myriad factors, such as traditional attitudes expressed by teachers (Ullrich et al., 2024), exposure to stereotyping representations (Santoniccolo et al., 2023), pressure to conform to gender norms (Halimi et al., 2021) or to others' expectations and influence (Kaur & Vig, 2024; Schroeder & Liben, 2021). Contextual and societal factors, such as participation of women in the labor force, are also crucial aspects of the gendered division of roles, showing the relevance of contextual effects beyond individual-level variables (see Cislaghi 2022; Mandel & Lazarus, 2021). In this sense, the development of support for gender roles at the societal level might have a critical impact on individual attitudes.

The risk of agentic/communal division of the sexes

Gender roles contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequality from childhood to adulthood. It also poses a threat to social welfare given that both the communal and agentic spheres are fundamental to building equal and sustainable societies. Further, the division of social roles by sex has adverse consequences for both men and women. On one hand, compared to men, women use more communal language when describing themselves, and this has a negative effect on perceptions of their leadership in typically masculine jobs (Madera et al., 2025). In fact, if the job is associated with agency rather than with communal attributes, less experienced women present low levels of fit, which is associated with reduced commitment to work, low professional identification and poor career efficacy (Van Veelen & Derks, 2021). Furthermore, regardless of occupation type, working longer hours is associated with higher levels of guilt among mothers who support traditional gender roles—guilt that, in line with the idea that men should carry out agentic roles, is not reported by fathers with traditional attitudes (Aarntzen et al., 2020).

On the other hand, fathers who take longer paternity leave are viewed more negatively than those who take shorter leave (Gartzia et al., 2018). Furthermore, men who conform to traditional masculinity show a higher prevalence of mental health issues and experience more trouble when it comes to obtaining psychological help (Wong et al., 2017).

Supporting counter-stereotypical roles has positive consequences and contributes to improving gender equality. Women enrolled in traditionally masculine roles present more counter-stereotypical associations in terms of personal career identity and gender-career stereotypes (Dunlap & Barth, 2023). In addition, men who engage in the care of their children show better levels of psychological health (Knoester et al., 2007). This commitment to communal roles is also beneficial for their female partners and their relationships (Croft et al., 2018; Meeussen et al., 2019). Carrying out counter-stereotypical roles in terms of housework and paid employment has further positive benefits for offspring: income brought home by mothers and time spent by fathers with their children or doing housework is associated with gender-egalitarian beliefs in adolescents (Cano & Hofmeister, 2022).

How have gender roles developed?

The roles assigned to men and women seem to have changed over time, as well as gender stereotypes – which are extremely related to gender roles (Sczesny et al., 2019). We could expect that, in a context of current social change, counter-stereotypical roles might receive greater support nowadays. However, there has also been backlash against feminism (IPSOS, 2023; Reyes-Housholder et al., 2025), thus this evolution might be neither clear nor straightforward. In sum, the perception of how men and women should be and behave is not unique, according to different studies.

It seems today there is less differentiation of the two genders in terms of certain dimensions and stereotypical characteristics (Charlesworth et al., 2022, Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). In fact, male and female adolescents tend to describe themselves in a similar way in terms of agency and communion (Korlat et al., 2021). We could expect, then, that gender roles are less restricted. However, evidence suggests that it is not that simple. The literature has also pointed to considerable stability of the sex division of roles and gender stereotypes in recent decades (Haines et al., 2016), continuing today (Jiménez-Moya et al., 2022). Changes have arisen in certain dimensions, but there is no agreement as to the direction of this transformation. For instance, in specific societies, women are expected to fulfill masculine and agentic traits more than before, but it is more challenging for men to acquire typically feminine roles and traits (Gartzia, 2022; Gustafsson Sendén et al., 2019). Women therefore still present higher rates of communal dimensions compared to men (Eagly et al., 2020). However, in other contexts, men and women are perceived similarly in terms of traditionally feminine traits but diverge on masculine characteristics (López-Zafra & García-Retamero, 2021). These complex patterns suggest, first, that gender role beliefs are multifaceted and tangled attitudes that are constantly evolving; and second, that to understand the evolution of these transformations, longitudinal studies must be used to explore how support for gender roles is transforming (Kretschmer, 2024).

The present research

A wide range of research has focused on whether and how gender roles have changed, comparing attitudes at different points in time. Studies have found that support for counter-stereotypical roles is not unequivocal. This might be related to the fact that, despite advances in gender equality, negative

reactions and anti-feminist backlash are on the rise (IPSOS, 2023; Zehnter et al., 2021). In this complex context, the aim of the present work is to study current support for counter-stereotypical roles using a longitudinal approach—a perspective that is rarely applied but crucial to advancing our understanding of how gender roles are changing. This design will allow us to analyze, first, whether different groups report differing degrees of support, and second, whether they present different trajectories over time. In other words, we will examine how support for counter-stereotypical roles has changed for each group over the years. Furthermore, we will test the role of sociodemographic factors and two ideological variables, which were measured in 2016 as predictors of adherence to these different trajectories in subsequent years, namely gender, age, political orientation, educational level, preference for right-wing authoritarianism, and social dominance orientation – that will be described in the next section. According to previous literature, we could expect that women and younger, left-wing adults with higher levels of education will show greater support for counter-stereotypical roles (e.g., Begall et al., 2023; Fitzpatrick Bettencourt et al., 2011; Huddy et al., 2000; Lizotte et al., 2020; Timur Sevincer et al., 2024; Scarborough et al., 2018). By contrast, individuals who express support for right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation are expected to show lower levels of sympathy with counter-stereotypical roles (e.g., Christopher et al., 200; Brandt & Henry, 2012; Nicol & Tóth-Király, 2025).

Finally, we explore whether different trajectories of support for counter-stereotypical roles in recent years (2016–2021) predict related discriminatory attitudes, such as hostile sexism and support for gender labor rights in the future (2023). Both are forms of negative attitude toward women: the first constitutes an explicitly negative evaluation of women; the second posits that men and women should not have similar labor rights, benefiting men over women. We could expect that those groups who show strong support for counter-stereotypical roles will also report lower levels of sexism and greater support for equal labor rights in the future.

We used data from the Longitudinal Social Study of Chile (ELSOC) to measure the extent to which a representative sample of Chileans support counter-stereotypical roles, namely the belief that men should assume greater responsibility for childcare and housework (i.e., support for men in communal roles), and that if mothers pursue a professional career, this will have negative consequences for their children (i.e., support for women in agentic roles) (Begall et al., 2023; Grunow et al., 2018). In recent years, Chile has experienced rising support for gender equality, expressed through a growing feminist movement and mass protests led by female students across the country (Miranda & Roque, 2021; Follegati Montenegro, 2018; Ponce, 2020). However, there has also been backlash against feminism, with negative attitudes expressed toward equality and support for more conservative perspectives and leaders (Reyes-Housholder et al., 2025). These opposing views are in evidence around the world (IPSOS, 2025). We might expect, therefore, that attitudes toward counter-stereotypical gender roles result in a diversity of perspectives and trajectories over time.

Method

Participants and design

We analyzed data from the Longitudinal Social Study of Chile (ELSOC), which was based on a representative, probability-based sample of Chilean adults aged 18 to 75 residing in urban areas (COES, 2025). There were seven waves of the survey. It was launched in 2016, and data has been collected annually—except during the pandemic year (2020)—by means of structured interviews conducted over four months. The latest available wave is from 2023. The study was approved by the research ethics committee of the host university. The baseline sample (T1, 2016) included 2,927 participants (M_{age} = 46,09, *SD* = 15.29; 39.7% male, 60.3% female). Due to attrition, a refreshment sample was added in 2018, incorporating 1,519 new participants. The last wave (T7, 2023) included 2,726 participants (M_{age} = 52.09, *SD* = 15.13; 63.8% male, 36.2% female). Our key variables on gender roles were included in only four waves (2016, 2018, 2021, and 2023).

Measures

Main variables

Counter-stereotypical male role. Participants reported the extent to which they agree with the items "Men should assume a greater degree of responsibility for childcare than they currently do" and "Men should assume a greater degree of responsibility for housework than they currently do," using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 "*Strongly disagree*" to 5 "*Strongly agree*" (Begall et al., 2023). The Spearman correlation between the two items demonstrated good reliability across the four waves (ρ_{w1} = .79; ρ_{w2} = .72; ρ_{w3} = .80; ρ_{w4} = .48), and their average was therefore used as an indicator of male gender roles.

Counter-stereotypical female role. Participants reported the extent to which they agree with the items "A working mother can establish a relationship with her children that is as warm and strong as a mother who does not work" and "A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works," using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 "*Strongly disagree*" to 5 "*Strongly agree*" (Begall et al., 2023). We reversed the second item so that both are interpreted in the same way. The Spearman correlation between the two items showed poor reliability across the four waves (ρ_{w1} = .22; ρ_{w2} = .18; ρ_{w3} = .31; ρ_{w4} = .23). We therefore judged it essential to treat them separately, considering that the first item might capture a more subtle or indirect attitude toward female gender roles related to nurturing, while the second might depict a more radical or overt attitude concerning the negative consequences of women engaging in agentic roles. Thus, we could expect different patterns of results for each item.

Predictors (2016)

Gender and age. Participants reported their gender (0 = men, 1 = women) and their age.

Political orientation. Participants positioned themselves at a point on a political orientation spectrum according to their political views, ranging from 0 "*left*" to 10 "*right*", with 5 labeled as "*center*."

Education. Participants reported their educational attainment: 1 "*No education*," 2 "*Primary or preparatory education incomplete*," 3 "*Primary or preparatory education complete*," 4 "*Secondary education incomplete*," 5 "*Secondary education complete*," 6 "*Post-secondary technical education incomplete*," 7 "*Post-secondary technical education complete*," 8 "*University, undergraduate, incomplete*," 9 "*University, undergraduate, complete*," and 10 "*Postgraduate studies*."

Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA). We used four items (e.g., "What our country really needs instead of more civil rights is a good stiff dose of law and order") ranging from 1 "*Totally disagree*" to 5 "*Totally agree*" (α = .80, Altemeyer, 1998).

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO). We used two items (e.g., "We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed") ranging from 1 "*Totally disagree*" to 5 "*Totally agree*" (ρ = .60, p < .001, Pratto et al., 2013).

Outcome (2023)

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Hostile sexism. Participants reported the extent to which they agreed with the following two statements: "In the name of equality, many women try to obtain certain privileges", and "In general, when a woman is fairly defeated, she complains about having suffered discrimination" (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The response scale ranged from 1 "*Strongly disagree*" to 5 "*Strongly agree*" (ρ = .42, p < .001).

Gender labor rights. Participants reported the extent to which they agreed with the item: "When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women" (European Social Survey; 2008; Leschke & Jespen, 2014; Pew Research Centre; 2012). The response scale ranged from 1 "*Strongly disagree*" to 5 "*Strongly agree*."

Results

Analytic Approach

We categorized individuals based on their response patterns regarding their support for counter-stereotypical gender roles over time. Analyses included both men and women, given that gender attitudes are not necessarily related with sex, but with attitudinal dimensions (see McGarty et al., 2009). However, individuals' gender was included as a predictor of the adherence to the different groups. We performed Latent Class Growth Analyses (LCGA) using the *lcmm* package in R (Proust-Lima et al., 2017) to identify potential profiles of change in gender roles from 2016 to 2023. Initially, we estimated a model with a single-class trajectory for each counter-stereotypical role: male, subtle female, and overt female. Subsequently, we estimated models with 2 to 6 classes to compare and identify the best-fitting model for our data. To provide starting values for the multi-class models, we used the one-class solution as the baseline. We included both linear and quadratic trajectories in all models to account for both linear and

curvilinear changes for each latent class. Moreover, following the assumption that individuals within a class follow similar trajectories (Muthén & Muthén, 2000), we estimated the models using fixed effects. We employed an automatic grid search to run the estimation function with a maximum of 100 iterations, aiming to identify the parameters that maximize the model's likelihood (Proust-Lima et al., 2017).

The data and syntax supporting the findings are publicly available in online resource (https://osf.io/9bfke/overview?view_only=18664fb115c64348b6bbc5e0ceff65b0).

Model Selection and Class Trajectories

We relied on the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), and entropy to select the optimal models. BIC and AIC indicate a better fit when their values are lower (Muthén, 2004), while higher entropy values indicate more precise differentiation of participants into distinct classes (Sinha et al., 2020). The trajectories of the three models selected can be seen in Fig. 2, and full information is provided in Tables S1–S3 (see Supplementary Material).

Counter-stereotypical male role

For the LCGA models of counter-stereotypical male roles (Fig. 1, top), BIC and AIC values decreased as additional latent classes were specified, reaching their lowest values in the five-class solution. However, the inclusion of a sixth class resulted in a deterioration of model fit, with fit indices increasing to levels comparable to those observed in the four-class solution. Entropy was high for the two-, three-, and four-class solutions (approximately .95), but declined in the five-class solution, although it remained within acceptable limits (entropy = .66). Closer inspection of the four- and five-class solutions indicates that the primary difference between these models concerns the structure of the largest latent class. In the four-class solution, a single class encompassed 96% of the sample. In the five-class solution this large class was partitioned into two classes. First, LC3 comprised 68.43% of the sample (*intercept* = 4.16, $p < .001$) and it was labeled as "High counter-stereotypical group". Second, LC1 comprised 27.57% (*intercept* = 4.36, $p < .001$), labeled as "Counter-stereotypical group". Both classes showed highly similar intercepts and nearly flat slopes over time, indicating stable and comparably counter-stereotypical positions across the study period. This subdivision appears to account for the reduction in entropy observed in the five-class solution, suggesting increased classification uncertainty between these two closely related classes. In sum, a vast majority of the sample (96%) showed high levels of support for the notion that men should assume greater responsibility for childcare and housework that they currently do. In both solutions, the remaining three classes were small, together accounting for 4% of the sample: LC2 encompassed 1.91%, labeled as "Low-to-high counter-stereotypical group (*intercept* = 1.88, $p < .001$); LC4 comprised 1.73%, and was labeled "Moderate-to-low counter-stereotypical group" (*intercept* = 3.71, $p < .001$); and LC5 encompassed 0.36% (*intercept* = 4.31, $p < .001$), "High-to-moderate counter-stereotypical group" These groups showed different trajectories across time (see Fig. 2), but given their small size, they seem trivial tendencies, compared to the largest classes. Taken together, these results point to a predominant and temporally stable support for counter-stereotypical male roles over recent years.

Subtle counter-stereotypical female role

For the LCG models of the subtle counter-stereotypical female role (Fig. 1, middle), the BIC and AIC values decrease as more classes are included, until the model with four latent classes is reached. Then, when a fifth class is included, the AIC indicator remains practically unchanged, with the BIC increasing slightly. Furthermore, entropy increases considerably with four latent classes compared to the other solutions. These results suggest that the 4-class solution is the model that fits the data best (BIC = 32225.15; AIC = 32122.76) and discriminates more effectively between latent growth classes (entropy = .57).

The latent class with the largest sample proportion (LC1) comprised 44.53% and was labeled the "Counter-stereotypical Group." It starts from a high initial level of support for counter-stereotypical female roles (*intercept* = 4.09, p < .001) and, although it declines (*s* = -0.12, *p* < .001) with a slight positive curvature (*q* = 0.01, *p* = .003), the effect of the trend change is small, ending at high final levels. Thus, this class showed high and stable support for the notion that working mothers can establish a warm relationship with her kids. The second largest class (LC2 = 26.69%) was labeled the "High-to-Low Counter-stereotypical Group". It also begins from high initial levels subtle counter-stereotypical female role (*intercept* = 3.94, *p* < .001), but the group experiences a substantial decrease of support (*s* = -0.88, *p* < .001) that gradually moderates over time (*q* = 0.07, *p* < .001), ultimately ending with less support for agentic female roles. Thus, this group reduces their support for the counter-stereotypical female role across time.

The two remaining classes (LC3 = 12.71% and LC4 = 16.07%) begin showing low levels of support (2.05 and 2.06, respectively). However, the former, labeled the "Low-to-High Counter-stereotypical Group" shows a very pronounced increase (*s* = 1.77, *p* < .001) that attenuates toward the end (*q* = -0.22, *p* < .001), thus ending at high values of support for counter-stereotypical female roles. The latter, named the "Low Counter-stereotypical Group" displays a slight initial decreasing trend (*s* = -0.19, *p* < .001) with a slightly increasing tendency toward the end (*q* = -0.05, *p* < .001). Nevertheless, it finishes showing relatively low support for the belief that -as mothers who do not work- working mothers can establish warm relationships with their children.

Summing up, results shows that support for counter-stereotypical female roles is far from being unanimous, when measured with the subtle item. Different groups of individuals present diverse levels of support and, interestingly, different trajectories over time.

Overt counter-stereotypical female role

For the LCG models of the overt counter-stereotypical female role (Fig. 1, bottom), the BIC and AIC values increase as more classes are included, which suggests that including more classes reduces the fit of the model. These results suggest that the one-class solution is the model that provides a better fit to the data (BIC = 19310.58; AIC = 19284.98). This group holds counter-stereotypical beliefs initially (*intercept = 3.94*, p < *.001*), with small variations over time (*s* = 0.06, *p* < .001, *q* = -0.01, *p* = .001, Fig. 2, bottom). Thus, the whole sample shows high support for counter-stereotypical female roles (i.e., agentic

role) when measured with the overt item, as they do not agree with the fact that children are likely to suffer if their mother works.

Predictors (2016)

Given that the trajectories for counter-stereotypical male roles and overt female role were mainly homogeneous over time, subsequent analyses focused exclusively on the subtle counter-stereotypical female role. We ran three multinomial log-linear models using the *nnet* package in R (Venables & Ripley, 2002) predicting different levels of support for the subtle counter-stereotypical female role as a function of gender, age, political orientation, education, RWA and SDO. This three-step approach allows us to examine whether these factors were associated with a specific class without this information affecting the estimation of the latent classes (see Asparouhov & Muthén 2014). We used the largest latent class as reference, the Counter-stereotypical Group which showed high levels of support for the subtle counter-stereotypical female role across time.

Results indicated that the odds of belonging to the Counter-stereotypical group (vs. High-to-Low Counter-stereotypical Group, OR = 0.89, $p < .001$; vs. Low-to-High Counter-stereotypical Group, OR = 0.88, $p < .001$; vs. Low Counter-stereotypical Group, OR = 0.92, $p = .028$) were higher for individuals with higher levels of education. Moreover, the odds to belonging High-to-Low Counter-stereotypical Group (vs. Counter-stereotypical Group, OR = 1.22, $p = .012$) were greater for individuals scoring higher on RWA. Thus, highly educated individuals were more likely to show stable support for the notion that a working mother can establish a similar warm and strong relationship with her children as a mother who does not work, whereas people who reported high levels of RWA were more likely to show a decrease of the support for this notion.

Gender, age, political orientation and SDO showed no significant results. Full information is provided in Tables S4–S6 (see Supplementary Material).

Outcomes: Hostile sexism and gender labor rights (2023)

Finally, we examined whether membership of the latent growth classes predicts differences in beliefs in hostile sexism and gender labor rights in the final wave of the study (2023). As explained, subsequent analyses focused exclusively on the subtle counter-stereotypical female role. We conducted a multivariate analysis of variance with the four groups that emerged for the subtle counter-stereotypical female role as independent variables and beliefs in hostile sexism and gender labor rights as dependent variables.

Results showed a statistically significant overall effect of latent growth classes on the combined dependent variables, Hostile Sexism and Gender Labor Rights [*Pillai's Trace* = 0.01, $F(6, 5404) = 4.10$, $p < .001$]. Follow-up univariate ANOVAs indicated that this multivariate effect was driven solely by significant differences in Gender Labor Rights [$F(3, 2714) = 6.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .01$], whereas differences in Hostile Sexism were non-significant [$F(3, 2706) = 1.90$, $p = .127$]. Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test for Gender Labor Rights reveal that the High-to-Low Counter-stereotypical Group ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.06$)

show significantly higher rates (vs. Counter-Stereotypical Group, $M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.03$, $p = .002$; vs. Low Counter-stereotypical Group, $M = 2.28$, $SD = 0.95$, $p < .001$). Thus, individuals who showed low levels of support for the subtle counter-stereotypical female role (i.e., agreed to a lesser extent with the idea that a working mother can establish a similar warm and strong relationship with her children as a mother who does not work) presented stronger support for the notion that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women, showing lower levels of gender labor rights. No other pairwise comparisons showed significant results.

Discussion

Gender roles are a barrier to achieving gender equality. Women are still expected to fulfil communal roles, while agentic roles are associated with men. However, these attitudes are not straightforward, evolving in different ways and to different extents (Charlesworth et al., 2022; Longobardi et al., 2022). The aim of the present work was to describe these changes from a longitudinal perspective in Chilean society. We analyzed the support for counter-stereotypical gender roles, namely men taking care of children and doing housework, and women as working mothers.

The vast majority of the sample (96%) present stable support for counter-stereotypical male roles. In other words, they show greater support for the idea that men should take care of their children and do the housework, and they maintain this attitude over time. This agreement hints that the notion that men should play communal roles that have traditionally been carried out by women seems to receive strong approval. This may be considered a crucial change given that it has long been held that the time and effort a mother invests in her child is essential to that child's well-being, and that her time is more important than that of the father (e.g., Haines & Stroessner, 2019; Liss et al., 2013). This generalized support could imply positive changes in attitudes and behaviors. The fact that men are now expected to concern themselves with their children and domestic matters may mean that men who play communal roles are no longer viewed negatively, as was the case previously (e.g., Bosak et al., 2018; Raymondie & Steiner, 2022). Furthermore, it should bring benefits for women, whose male partners are now more willing to take the lead in domestic affairs (see Croft et al., 2018; Meeussen et al., 2019). However, it is crucial to analyze whether this attitudes have real impact on actual behaviors.

When it comes to support for counter-stereotypical female roles, results are much more heterogeneous. Regarding what can be framed as an explicitly negative attitude toward agentic women (i.e., "A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works"), results show a general lack of approval. Almost the whole sample agrees both that men should engage in communal roles and that the children of working mothers will not suffer as a result. However, it seems that diversity and different trajectories for supporting counter-stereotypical women arise from a more subtle negative attitude: that a working mother will establish a less warm relationship with her children. This belief does not explicitly determine that women should not take agentic roles or that doing so will harm their children, as the other item establishes. Rather, in line with benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Rudman & Glick 1999), it punishes women who engage in agentic behavior by perceiving that they will not be able to build a

proper relationship with their children—in other words, they will not be able to engage adequately in communal roles.

Four clear trajectories emerged in this case. While almost half of the sample (44.53%) showed strong and stable support for counter-stereotypical female roles over time, a minority group (16.07%) showed weak support over time. Interestingly, two developing trajectories emerged. A significant portion of the sample (26.69%) showed strong support in 2016 but reported a clear weakening of support over time. This group initially showed high levels of agreement with the idea that a working mother can establish a relationship with her children that is as warm and strong as a mother who does not work, but this support dwindled over time. Thus, at some point, this portion of the sample began to consider that engaging in agentic tasks prevents women from carrying out traditional communal roles of care. Furthermore, a smaller group (12.71%) showed the opposite change: they initially reported weak support for counter-stereotypical female roles, but this support increased over time to high levels of agreement with the idea that working women are able to establish warm relationships with their children.

Thus, although a large portion of this representative sample strongly supports female counter-stereotypical roles, there are still smaller groups who do not agree, and whose view is evolving in different directions. These minority groups that show resistance to the notion that women should occupy agentic roles might be related to current backlash against feminism, which is based on traditional views regarding how men and women should behave (e.g., Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Korolczuk et al., 2025; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017). Although these are small groups, their impact within societies is remarkable and increasing (see IPSOS, 2025), and expressed, for instance, in support for right-wing parties who defend traditional values (Reyes-Housholder et al., 2025).

These results suggest that, nowadays, both men and women are expected to fulfil communal roles, but there is disagreement when it comes to agentic roles (see López-Zafra & García-Retamero, 2021). A substantial portion of the sample seems to defend traditional gender roles, believing that engaging in agentic behaviors will have negative consequences for women's relationships with their children. This macro-level attitude may impact women's willingness to take up a professional career (see Cislaghi 2022; Mandel & Lazarus, 2021). In fact, the stronger the support for traditional roles that mothers report, the fewer hours they work (Aarntzen et al., 2020). Summing up, stable support for counter-stereotypical roles is seen regarding communal roles for men and agentic roles for women, but in the latter case, only when the attitude measured is more explicitly negative. Varied and changing beliefs are seen in regard to more subtle attitudes concerning the consequences of women taking on agentic roles. Although there appears to be a tendency to support counter-stereotypical roles, when there is room for resistance to equality—comparing subtle items with more explicitly negative attitudes—a pattern of social punishment of agentic women emerges.

Results show that support for gender roles is not a settled attitude, but can develop, especially when it comes to female roles. The key question is what factors predict these changes. According to our results, educational level appears relevant: reporting a high level of education increases the likelihood of

supporting counter-stereotypical female roles in an enduring way. Furthermore, individuals with higher levels of RWA were more likely to belong to the group that initially supported counter-stereotypical roles but withdrew their support over time, rather than the group that whose support for counter-stereotypical roles remains stable. Thus, in line with previous studies, presenting high levels of right-wing authoritarianism increases the likelihood of abandoning support for gender equality over time (e.g., Christopher et al., 200; Brandt & Henry, 2012; Nicol & Tóth-Király, 2025). It could be that, in a context in which gender equality goals are achieved every day, right-wing authoritarians resist this change, by engaging in more traditional attitudes. Gender, age, political orientation and SDO did not predict adherence to the different trajectories.

Differing degrees of support for counter-stereotypical roles are also related to other gender attitudes. In the case of support for counter-stereotypical female roles, individuals who belong to the High-to-Low Counter-stereotypical Group presented weak support for equal labor rights compared with the Counter and Low Counter-stereotypical Groups. Therefore, presenting a trajectory that evolves from strong to weak support for women in agentic roles serves as a predictor of the belief that when jobs are scarce, these should be reserved for men. Interestingly, this developing pattern over time is more closely related to weak support for equal gender rights in the future, compared even to the group that shows consistently weak support for agentic women. As we have noted, RWA seems to be related to a decrease in support for gender equality over time.

The limitations of our study also allow us to suggest directions for future research. First, the items used to measure support for counter-stereotypical gender roles could be improved in many ways. Male and female gender measures are not entirely comparable, as one set of items focuses on the consequences of engaging in counter-stereotypical behaviors—in the case of women–while the other set only explores the notion that men should take on counter-stereotypical roles. Also, communal and agentic roles could be measured more broadly to include dimensions such as emotional support or leadership. Second, although our results seem to be consistent with the current global backlash against feminism (IPSOS, 2025; Korolczuk et al., 2025; Preston et al., 2025), our sample represents the Chilean population. Future research should therefore look for differences and similarities in different contexts and societies. Third, we need to go beyond sociodemographic factors that might impact the development of support for gender roles and engage in a deeper exploration of attitudinal or ideological variables. It is crucial to understand those factors that predict changes in support for counter-stereotypical roles.

This data should guide us in imagining and designing appropriate solutions and interventions by which to reduce the traditional gender role division. In a context in which support for gender equality coexists with a backlash against feminism (see Jiménez-Moya et al., 2022), endorsement of counter-stereotypical roles seems especially vital to achieving equality (e.g., Chhaochharia et al., 2022; Dunlap & Barth, 2023; Ehrtmann & Wolter, 2018). However, exposure to or engagement in counter-stereotypical roles and behaviors implies costs not only in terms of how individuals are perceived and judged, but also in relation to personal threats or risks to identity that might impact self-concept, self-esteem and personal skills (e.g., Berger et al., 2022; Bosak et al., 2018; Heilman et al., 2024; Jiménez-Moya et al., 2025;

Raymondie & Steiner, 2022). How do we promote counter-stereotypical gender roles in a way that does not imply costs or risks for men and women? How do we improve or promote specific factors that predict support for counter-stereotypical perspectives? The challenging outcomes of adhering to counter-stereotypical roles and the factors that predict support for it must be integrated into interventions aimed at reducing support for traditional gender roles (e.g., Olsson and Martiny, 2018; Olivetti et al., 2018). Further, structural changes are fundamental (see Carbado et al., 2013; hooks, 2000). For instance, a social context in which men have more successful and better-paying jobs than women perpetuate traditional gender roles, beyond individuals' attitudes and choices.

In line with the evidence that gender biases are malleable (King et al., 2021), we show that support for traditional gender roles is diverse and has been changing in recent years, but not always in a way that promotes equality between men and women. In general, there is apparent agreement that men should engage in communal roles, but a significant portion of participants still perceive that the adoption of agentic roles by women will have negative consequences. Also, these perspectives are in constant flux, revealing multiple developing perspectives on the matter. Longitudinal studies focused on how and why these changes occur are needed to detect and reduce gender inequality.

Declarations

The authors declare no competing interests.

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Figures

Figure 1.
The Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), and entropy for 1-6 class latent class growth models for male (top), subtle female (middle), and overt female (bottom) gender roles.

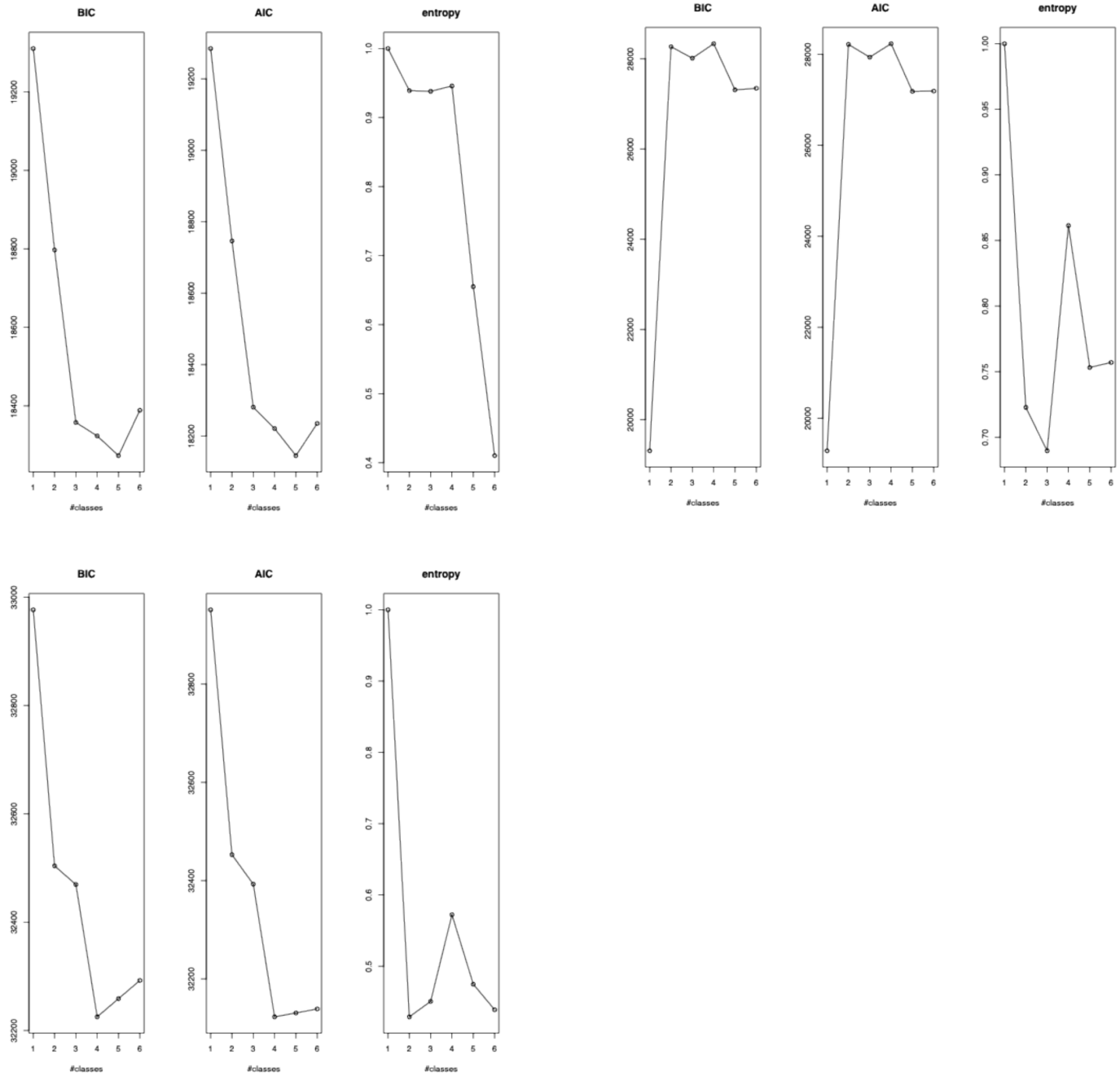


Figure 1

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Figure 2.
Latent class growth trajectories for male (top), subtle female (middle), and overt female (bottom) gender roles between 2016 and 2023 (LC: Latent Class).

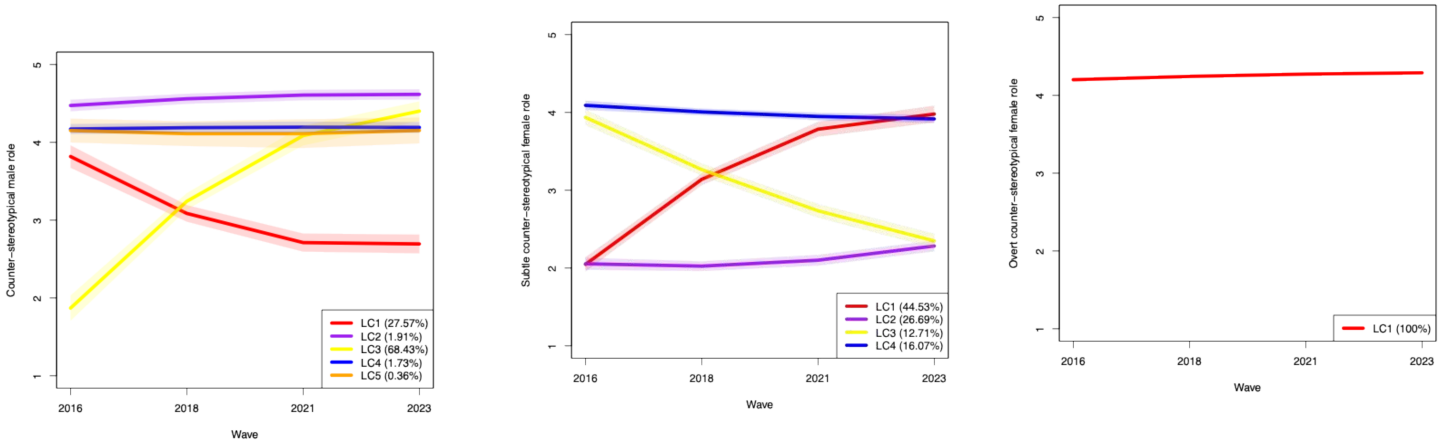


Figure 2

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