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Changes in the Meanings Associated to Paternity in Men From Temuco, Chile Cambios en los significados asociados a la paternidad en hombres de Temuco, Chile

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In the last two decades Chilean society has undergone significant changes that have had an impact on roles within the family. Various studies on parenting show that men today are more involved in parenting, and exert emotional and vertical paternity; however these practices coexist with more traditional roles influenced by age-group and socioeconomic status. The aim of this study is to analyse changes in the meaning of fatherhood for men in Temuco, a city located in the south of Chile, comparing different generations and socioeconomic sectors. Multiple-case design was used. The population were Chilean men, young (18 to 25 years old) and adults (45-65 years old); and three socioeconomic sectors, low, middle and high. Six discussion groups were conducted by the researchers helped by male research assistants. The information obtained was analysed and the units of meaning identified were transformed into categories; these were compared in order to identify similarities, differences and links between them. The results show more marked differences in the adult group than among young men, where greater homogeneity is found between socioeconomic levels. Some coincidences were recorded between socioeconomic sector and age-group, for example high valuation of paternity and interest in active participation in parenting.

Keywords: Parenthood, Chilean men, masculinity, meanings of paternity.

En las dos últimas décadas la sociedad chilena ha sufrido importantes transformaciones que han impactado significativamente los roles familiares. Los estudios sobre paternidad muestran que los varones actualmente están más involucrados en la crianza y ejercen una paternidad más afectiva; sin embargo, roles y prácticas coexisten con modelos tradicionales, asociados a la edad y el nivel socioeconómico. El objetivo del presente estudio fue analizar los significados de la paternidad en hombres Temuco, una ciudad del sur de Chile, comparando diferentes generaciones y niveles socioeconómicos. Se utilizó un diseño de casos múltiples; la muestra estuvo constituida por hombres jóvenes (18 a 25 años) y adultos (45-65 años) de nivel socioeconómico alto, medio y bajo. Se desarrollaron 6 grupos de discusión conducidos por las investigadoras y ayudantes de investigación varones. Con la información obtenida se identificaron unidades de significado, las que se transformaron en categorías; estas fueron analizadas en términos de semejanzas, diferencias y relaciones entre sí. Los resultados muestran diferencias importantes entre jóvenes y adultos, y diferencias menores entre niveles socioeconómicos del mismo rango etario. Los significados compartidos por todos los participantes fueron alta valoración de la paternidad, relevancia del padre e interés en participar activamente en la crianza.

Palabras clave: paternidad, hombres chilenos, masculinidad, significados de la paternidad.

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Introduction

The transformations imposed by globalisation and modernity have had a significant impact both on institutions, such as family life, and on individual subjectivities (Giddens, 2000). In Chile, particularly in the last two decades, a pattern of accelerating change has been observed in various planes of national life, influenced by economic and political opening-up. On the economic plane, per capita income has quintupled, leading to increased consumption and mass access to goods and services, which however is not equally spread among the population due to the inequality of income distribution (Larrañaga & Rodríguez, 2014). At the same time women's share of the labour market has grown from 31.3% in 1990 to 48.3% in 2013, while the Human Development Index (HDI) has risen from 0.604 to 0.851 (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas [INE], 2015a; Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el desarrollo [PNUD], 2010).

On the social plane the transformations have followed the same trends as in many Western democracies: Concentration of the population in the cities has reached 86.6% (INE, 2003); average school attendance has risen from 9.7 years in 1990 to 12 years in 2013; and access to the new information and communications technologies has become generalised (Ministerio de Planificación, 2013; Ministerio de Transportes y Telecomunicaciones, 2016). Types of family have also diversified. Although the nuclear family remains the most frequent structure, the passing of the divorce law in 2004 has increased the number of reconstituted or re-assembled and one-parent families, 80% of the latter headed by a woman (Calvo, Tartakowsky, & Maffei, 2011). Meanwhile single-person homes and those composed by four generations have increased with the ageing of the population (Gutiérrez & Osorio, 2009). Couple relationships have also undergone changes, young people are marrying later; in 2000 the average age was 26.1 for women and 28.8 for men, while in 2011 it had risen to 32.2 for women and 35.1 for men (INE, 2014). There is also a trend away from institutionalisation in couple relationships, expressed in an increase in the number of consensual unions at all socioeconomic levels,

and of children born out of wedlock which reached a figure of 71.0% of births in 2015. Finally there has been a significant fall in the fertility rate, from an average of 5.4 children in the 1960s to 1.79 in 2013 (INE, 2015b; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2016).

Among individuals, a greater degree of individualisation is apparent and also an increase in social diversity. Individual rights prevail over family rights and personal realisation over family interests, in an ethic of self-realisation and individual success (Gutiérrez & Osorio, 2009). All this implies an increase in individuals' capacity to choose for themselves the type of life that they want, with traditional values viewed as options rather than obligations (Arriagada, 2005).

This new scenario has had a significant impact on the condition of women, reducing gender inequalities as reflected in the Gender Development Index (GDI), from 0.561 in 1960 to 0.849 in 2006 (PNUD, 2010). This reduction has resulted largely from an explicit policy of promoting equality between men and women driven by the Chilean State in response to the demands of women's organisations, installed in the public agenda towards the end of the military dictatorship (Valdés, 2012). In recent years, State intervention through an active legislative agenda to promote the protection of women and children has led to a more profound transformation, converting the issue from a private matter to a public and legal one, weakening the patriarchal family model characterised by authority exercised by the father over his wife and children, and calling into question the traditional model of masculinity (Arriagada, 2005; PNUD, 2002).

According to De Keijzer (2010), masculinity is a set of values, attributes, functions and conducts –supposedly essential in men– which are socially constructed. As the social construction of masculinity means different things in different epochs, it is more appropriate to talk about masculinities, which are hierarchically inter-related and give rise to a hegemonic masculinity. This refers to the practice of gender relations through legitimisation of the patriarchy, guaranteeing a dominant role for men and a subordinate one for women (Connell, 1997; Kimmel, 1997). Thus from the position of hegemonic masculinity the man positions

himself, within the social hierarchy of the patriarchy, at a level of greater power with respect to women and other men according to his economic level, age, race, sexual condition, etc. This hegemonic masculinity represents the most common frame of reference for men, with certain identifiable mandates such as heterosexuality, paternity and remunerated work (Ceballos Fernández, 2012; Olavarria, 2001).

Studies on masculinity form a relatively new field in Latin America. The first reflections and theoretical postulations were raised in the 1970s by feminist Latin American academics, who extended the area of questioning about men by questioning male domination and female subordination. Systematic research into men as a study object began in the 1980s. Discussion broadened from the 1990s and various research lines appeared related with masculine identities, sexual and reproductive health, paternity in young men and adolescents, etc. (Olavarria, 2003).

Given the relative nature of the concept of masculinity, it cannot be understood without reference to femininity and the sex-gender system which organises relations between men and women (Connell, 1997). These relations are in a transitional stage in Chile, as is reflected in the report *Gender: The challenges of Equality*. This report, based on a sample of 3,150 interviewees throughout the country, recognises five types of relationship between men and women. The first is the Traditional one (18% of the sample), consisting mainly of adult men and women aged over 50, of low and middle social levels with high participation in religious groups, who consider the complementarity between man and woman in their traditional roles, loving and supporting each other, to be fundamental. Then, *Machista* (18%), who consider that the world is governed by the hierarchical law of the father: the men are rulers and providers, the women obey and are mothers and wives. 80% of this group are men of a low socioeconomic level, particularly strong in the south of the country. The Pragmatic one represents 26% of the sample and found in middle socioeconomic and age ranges. This position considers that roles can be interchangeable according to needs, but that differences and traditional morals should be maintained. The Fighters (15%) group consists principally of separated women in the middle

sectors of society, who consider that society is unjust, that they give everything but men enjoy the benefits. And the Liberals form 23% of the sample; for them differences do not exist, people are all equal and autonomous. Young men and women of high socioeconomic level predominate in this group (PNUD, 2010).

The coexistence of these styles reflects a process of transition from traditional to new practices and discourses. It is found both in Chile and in other Latin American countries, where young people with higher levels of education are developing more equal gender relations. This demonstrates the capacity of youth to transform both older value schemes and concrete traditional practices. Thus the machista model of masculinity is being questioned, and a new model of man is proposed, one who carries out his public and domestic duties and has more developed affective and communicational capacities (Aguayo, Sadler, Obach, & Kimelman, 2013; Aravena & Baeza, 2010; Formental Hernández, Hernández Pita, & Fernández de Juan, 2015; Fuller, 1997; Pech Salvador, Rizo García, & Romeu Aldaya, 2007; Puyana Villamizar & Mosquera Rosero, 2005; Vázquez García & Castro, 2009).

Paternity

Paternity is defined as a field of cultural and social practices and meanings related with reproduction, the bond which is –or is not– established with children, and caring for them (Fuller, 2000). For men it is a fundamental part of their identity, a central axis of their masculinity, experienced as the end of their juvenile period and signifying the re-ordering of their lives and entry into a new stage with full social recognition (Olavarria, 2001). Paternity is the milestone which converts the man into an adult, when he acquires a public identity as representative of his family group (Viveros, 2000).

As in masculinity, there are different experiences, or paternities, which translate into different ways of being a father and exercising his attributes. The stages in the male life-cycle are present in the way in which paternity is exercised: a 20-year-old man with a baby a few months old is very different from a 50-year-old man with children out in the world or completing their studies. Therefore paternity is associated with various factors such as the stage in life reached by

the father, his historical and cultural context, and the social group to which he belongs (Olavarría, 2003).

Traditionally, a man's children certified his capacity to procreate, and thus his virility; they continued his name, inherited his belongings –but without any genuine emotional relationship, which was developed with the mother (Badinter, 1993). Over the last two centuries Western societies have seen changes in the father's place and prerogatives. The current redefinition of paternity is part of the de-institutionalisation of the family, with greater female presence in the labour market, and new laws governing civil relationships and granting political, social and cultural rights to women. These factors have contributed to the erosion of paternal power and a diversification in how it is assumed (Valdés, 2009).

The new representations of paternity show an inter-generational break, with the appearance of attributes linked to affective proximity and communication with his children –in contrast to the authoritarian, violent, absent and distant father, who is however the economic mainstay of his family. This model of paternity grows out of the new paradigm of psychological child-raising, in which the children's behaviour is understood by studying their psychology. The object of child-raising is mental equilibrium, and it stresses the importance of taking into account the children's needs, rights and ways of acting and thinking (Valdés, 2009). Fathers today seek to express affection and maintain healthy communication; to support and promote their sons' and daughters' initiatives; to be receptive and available; to establish demands, restrictions and limits while presenting an attitude of play and amusement (Amorín, 2007). However, as Goody says (as cited in Valdés, 2009), social practices tend to be resistant to political, religious, cultural and/or economic changes, reproducing the familiar over several generations. Fuller (2005, p. 37) recognises that the exercise of paternity is marked by the co-existence of traditional and modern codes; the absent father, characterised by his scarce participation in the family's everyday life and by emotional distance and authoritarianism, is criticised today by the younger generation. As the author states the demands of masculinity require men to emphasise their commitments to the public space

and to homo-social activities, making it difficult for them to be present in their children's upbringing. In middle-class families these obstacles take the form of the long working days necessary to maintain a medium income, while in lower socio-economic strata precarious job histories endanger men's position as the main providers of the household (Fuller, 2005).

In recent years research in Chile shows that younger men, city-dwellers and/or those with completed school education are those who seem to question most strongly the traditional model of paternity, and who show most consistency between discourse and practice (Aguayo & Romero, 2006; Gallardo, Gómez, Muñoz, & Suárez, 2006; Matamala Sáez & Rodríguez Torres, 2010). Thus men from the upper-middle social strata in Santiago say that they play with their children, and help to protect and educate them, unprompted, as well as child-care activities such as feeding younger children. In contrast to the lower socio-economic strata, they more frequently prefer to carry out child-care activities together with their partners (Olavarría, 2005). A similar trend shows the International Masculinity and Equity Survey, where age and educational level were significant variables related to father's involvement in child rearing and household tasks (Aguayo, Correa, & Cristi, 2011).

In this context, the present study proposes to analyse the transformations in the meaning of paternity in men in Temuco (a city of 330.000 inhabitants, located 670 km south from Santiago, the capital city of Chile), comparing different generations and socioeconomic levels. On this basis we propose the following objectives:

1. - Describe the meaning of paternity constructed by young and adult men.
2. - Compare the meanings of paternity constructed by young and adult men from different socioeconomic levels.

The inclusion of the age dimension is justified by the fact that different stages suppose different development tasks. Furthermore, identity as a construct relates to the socio-historical context (Íñiguez, 2001), and it is therefore to be expected that young Chilean men, who were born and grew up under democracy in a globalised society, will

construct discourses more inclined to break with tradition than earlier generations. The inclusion of the socioeconomic dimension is justified by the high indices of inequality and segmentation in Chilean society, which mould discourse and meaning (INE, 2011).

Method

Design

A qualitative study was conducted using a multiple-case design, taking as dimensions: age-group, with two values (young [Y] and adult [A] men); and socioeconomic level with three values (low [L], middle [M] and high [H]), thus generating a matrix of six observations.

Participants

Participants were selected through a convenience sampling method. The sample consisted of 44 Chilean men, between 18 and 65 years, young men (18 to 25 years) and adult men (45 to 65 years) of different socioeconomic levels as shown in table 1. Three levels were established: low, with eight or fewer years of schooling; middle, with 9 to 15 years of formal education; and high, with more than 17 years of formal education. To determine this variable we used the educational level achieved as a proxy for the adult men, and the educational level of their parents for the young men.

Table 1
Sample characteristics

Groups	Number of participants	Age range	Institution	Years of schooling	Socio economic status	Occupation
1	9	18-22 years	School for adults	Parents incomplete high school studies	Low	Students
2	9	19-24 years	University/ Youth national institute	Parents incomplete university studies	Medium	Students/part time jobs
3	4	19- 24 years	University	Parents complete university studies	High	Students/ part time jobs
4	8	45-55 years	Construction company	Middle school diploma	Low	Laborer workers
5	6	45-60 years	University	High school diploma	Medium	Janitors administrative assistant/clerks
6	8	45-65 years	University	Master /Ph.D diploma	High	University professors

Data collection technique

Discussion groups were used for data collection, since this method allowed us to identify the meanings of certain topics constructed by the participants in the group based on their experiences, beliefs and emotions. Group discussion was organised around a set of guiding

questions constructed by the authors and relating to different areas associated with masculinity. These questions served as a support tool and aide-mémoire to ensure that all the main topics were covered (Taylor & Bogdan, 2004). The questions were presented following an organisational sequence from the more general to the more

specific. Given the amount of information obtained in the discussion groups, the present article brings together the contents related with paternity; the rest of the information will be reported in another article.

Procedure

To create the sample, we contacted various educational and social institutions in the city of Temuco where men who fitted the profiles required for the study worked or studied. We made broad but focussed calls for volunteers in each institution in order to form the study groups.

The group discussions were held in sequence over a period of 6 months. Each group was led by a researcher and a male research assistant and each meeting lasted approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. Before each discussion started, the participants were handed an informed consent which explained that their participation would be anonymous and voluntary, that the discussion would be recorded with sound recording and field notes, that they could withdraw from the research at any time and that they could have access to the results on request. It was stressed that the data would be treated as confidential by the researchers and would only be used for this research project.

The study formed part of Diufro Project D14-0002, which was assessed by the Ethics Committee of Universidad de La Frontera, Temuco, Chile.

Analysis plan

The information obtained was transcribed, replacing the participants' names with numbers to preserve confidentiality. Once this was done, the information was complemented with the researchers' field notes and the document was reviewed to obtain a general overview of the information. The first level of open coding was then carried out, which consisted in selecting units of meaning which emerged from the answers to the guiding questions. These units, consisting of paragraphs, were transformed into categories by an inductive process, each category being given a code representing its meaning.

The second level of coding –at a greater level of abstraction– consisted in comparing the categories, identifying similarities, differences and possible links between them. In this process

the categories were gradually reduced until the central elements of the analysis were reached (Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2010).

In compliance with criteria for scientific rigour, during information collection the data were validated using a set of questions to guide the group discussion. The discussions were recorded with audio equipment and in field notes kept by researchers and research assistants, and textual transcriptions were used to back up the meanings and interpretation of the results. A cross-check was also carried out with the participants. The results were validated by triangulation by the researcher during data coding and analysis, and by external review for verifiability.

Results

We present below the categories which emerged from the data analysis, identifying similarities and differences in the dimensions defined by the sample, and relations of meaning between them (figure 1). The central nuclei were: Value attached to paternity understood as a highly gratifying life experience; paternity as transcendence, conceived as a significant emotional experience which goes beyond the view of paternity as biological condition; responsibility and demands understood as requirements inherent in exercising paternity, perceived differently according to socioeconomic level; and loss of paternal authority felt by adult men as a weakening of their paternal role, explained in large measure by greater State intervention in regulating family relations. These nuclei and the emerging categories are broken down below.

The category value attached to paternity, which is defined as one of the best experiences that a man can have, presents striking transversality since it appears in young and adult men of all socioeconomic levels, reflected in the following expressions:

...I personally believe that the best thing that can happen to a man is becoming a father... (Y, H, 1); ...seeing your child born (Y, L, 3); ...yes, seeing your child born (Y, L, 8); ... today being a father is the greatest experience, in fact it is the

basic pillar of my existence, I work for him every day, I do many things for him and I think that for me this is the most beautiful thing I have experienced, he is my pride and joy (A,L, 6).

Linked to this high value –particularly among young men and in contrast to the perceptions of older men– is the active participation in the children's upbringing, understood as an interest in being affectively and materially involved in the child's upbringing, sharing roles equally with the mother:

... and he used to go off to work, or watch TV, and the wife was responsible for bringing up the child. I believe that that has changed, or is changing and will go on changing; the man will be much more closely involved in bringing up the children (Y, H, 1); ... today the man, apart from the fact that he is consciously assuming a greater responsibility in looking after his child and being a father... (Y, H, 3); ... more and more men want to take part in bringing up their children (Y, H, 2); ... being a father and teaching all that you are learning to your child so that he... can make the most of his life... (Y, L, 9); ... and I realise that I am worried about my daughter's clothing and hygiene and that I am her father... (Y, M, 4); ... and that he has an important role in his children's upbringing (Y, H, 6).

Unlike the young men, the members of the adult group express different opinions about taking part in their children's upbringing. The high socioeconomic level group see themselves as more involved in their children's upbringing than their fathers were with them:

... fathers today are much more maternal than they used to be; we take maternal care of our children, changing diapers, giving them the bottle, preparing their food, reading to them, making up stories, playing, things that fathers used not to do (A, H, 1); ... We are fantastic fathers compared to how our fathers were. All the generation of fathers that I know, my

friends, take them out on trips, go out cycling, go to see them (A, H, 6).

In the middle and low socioeconomic levels, involvement and interest in the children's upbringing is differently expressed, since men assume that raising children is primarily women's responsibility and that the father should "collaborate in the task", since his main role is that of provider:

... to help in the house and look after the children, and bring them up, in conjunction with his partner of course (A, L, 2); ... today the man is so to speak the provider. He goes from home to work and from work to home and he does not have much contact with his partner or with his children in general (A, M, 1).

A category which was shared by young and adult men of the different socioeconomic levels was the importance of the father in bringing up sons, understood as a natural proximity which facilitates identification with the father:

... I had sisters, but because my father didn't get involved with them my mother brought them up (A, H, 4); ... my father used to say to my mother, "you look after the girls and I'll look after the boys", so each of them worked with their own gender to share what they had in common (A, M, 2); ... I think it is very important anyway, because if a couple have a "little boy", it goes without saying that this boy is going to become a man some day and it is important that his father should be present; he should be a role model, and obviously this overlaps with subjects linked with sexuality, gender identity and so on... (Y, H, 6).

With respect to the meaning of paternity, the category paternity as transcendence appears regardless of the generation or socioeconomic level, since it implies leaving a legacy and transmitting values, teaching and experience:

...well of course I see the subject of paternity more as what you said, about

participating in the child's upbringing and transcending in another way, not by your genes, but by care and protection (A, H, 6); ... if I do my job as a good worker I will leave a legacy for my children or people close to me who will perpetuate your image; and you can leave a legacy for the children (A, M, 6); ... I believe that the man in the house has to do his bit by teaching his children values, but in your example of course it will not be any good teaching my child values if I am a disaster round the house. Teaching him good manners, good behaviour and so on, giving him values, because otherwise we will never get anywhere (A, L, 4); ... it has more to do with passing on your values, your beliefs, your way of seeing life, your strengths. I think that for me that is what being a father is about, rather than the biological side (Y, L, 2).

For young men, regardless of socioeconomic level, the category responsibility and demands comes up; for them, being a father means assuming responsibility for the children's children's present and future material needs, and particularly their emotional needs, giving affection, security and containment:

... because it has been shown that if the father has a secure bond with his child, the child will have much better social skills and other skills which will help him get on better in social environments, in life,... (Y, H, 3); ... I think that as a father one must give security; it is like giving him all the basic things –apart from emotional aspects which are also basic– financial support, security, being responsible for the child's emotional side and future... (Y, M, 3); ... I would not want to have a child until I have a roof, something to give the child, not just bring him into the world like that (Y, L, 1).

Other categories in the young men's group are related only with their socioeconomic level. Thus for young men in the middle socioeconomic level being a father implies tension, expressed in two aspects: on the one hand, finding the right biological and social moment to become a father,

which do not necessarily coincide; and on the other, the conflict between their personal needs and satisfying the needs of the children. Young men express it in these terms:

... the way I see it, it's like a friend of mine: he sees his father and he doesn't mean anything, because he cannot work anymore, he's unemployed and he isn't fit to work, physically. So I think my age (20) would be the ideal age to become a father, I have strength and energy, I can do anything. If you have a child at 40 you won't be able to enjoy it, you will be working all the time, so I think that age... (Y, M, 3); ... I think that afterwards you are going to want to travel, do a post-graduate degree or something abroad, and the child will need stability. I can't take it with me from country to country just as I want (Y, M, 2).

For young men in low socioeconomic levels however, becoming a father as a teenager means becoming an adult, which implies assuming responsibility for the child's needs, postponing personal projects:

...when he has a child he has to "get his act together". He has to look for a job, he has to study and work to assume responsibility for what he has done; and obviously take care of the mother, because she will not be able to work for a while, and take care of the child (Y, L, 3); ... a child is not going to depend on your grandmother or whoever you depend on, it is going to depend on you. So you have to accept the responsibility, and when it begins to grow...(Y, L, 3); Being a father means taking care ... having a child is an adult thought, because I know that I am going to have to restrict my time and things like that (Y, L, 8).

Among the adult men, regardless of socioeconomic level, paternal authoritarianism is an important category, understood as the authoritarian model for relations with their children under which they were socialised but which is now being questioned:

...authority today is totally different from the role of authority of our fathers. We were really afraid of them; it was not a friendly relationship. Most things we did not ask our fathers, they were not sources of knowledge or experience (A, H, 8); ... for our part, or my part at least, I can say that if we used a bad word my mother would take the wooden spoon and break it across my back, and I don't think I am really a delinquent (A, M, 1); ... I am a great fan of old-fashioned upbringing, but I know that with me they will be alright, I know that when I have to scold them it is for their own good, and it is for something that when we talk about it later, when they are grown-up, they will say, "yes, you were right" (A, L, 7).

The category loss of paternal authority appears in adult men of all socioeconomic levels; they relate it with two factors: adult men of high and low socioeconomic levels associate it with State intervention, through laws for the protection of women and children; while in middle and high socioeconomic levels it is associated with the use of information and communications technologies. The perception of State intervention is reflected in the following statements:

...and discipline becomes privatised, even judicialised; all conflicts of authority in the home now become law cases, they are not resolved socially, let alone in the family, in public spaces... And this undermines father's authority tremendously (A, H, 3); ... I ticked him off and gave her a slap and told her that what she was doing was wrong, and she called the police. And the police came to the house to arrest me for violence (A, L, 4); These laws are taking the man's rights away..., because in the old days these laws didn't exist... the man had to teach his children how to do things, guide them on the right path or try to make them better than him, but now... (A, L, 8).

From the viewpoint of adult men of the high and middle socioeconomic levels, the greater skill of their children in the use of information and

communications technologies has undermined paternal authority and modified their relationship:

... I think that technology has acted against us, because if you weren't brought up with technology, or you are a bit slower –or slower a lot– than your children..., then you lose authority over them, don't you? ... "I'm not going to explain it to you, it's not worth the trouble", just like that –it's not worth explaining it to you, you'll never understand. It would never have occurred to me to say that, to talk that way to my father (A, H, 3); ... WhatsApp makes me mad, and when he writes to me by WhatsApp... Sometimes he hangs up and sometimes he slaps me down and I want to talk, but he has a different way of relating. But I feel that it is a challenge to my authority (A, H, 2); ... The more technology allows us to be connected, the more it disconnects us. Because I tell my daughter, if we are talking and she takes out her mobile phone, I say to her: "listen, to talk to you I have to look into your eyes, because I have to see your reaction, your face, and you mine; to see your reaction. So how can you do that?". This is something that we are losing (A, M, 2); ... but it is you who has to teach them to eat properly, to sit up at table, not to eat... Now with this chatting... one day it reached the point where my niece was beside me and they were sending chats to each other across the table (A, M, 7).

Unlike adult men, young men, particularly in the high socioeconomic level, perceive that State intervention favours fatherhood:

... This change is due more to political decisions, for example today the father can take paternity leave for a certain number of months together with the woman. This helps the father to form a better bond with the child and helps in his upbringing (Y, H, 2); ... the man participates in the pregnancy; and having him participating in the pregnancy, listening to the baby... so I think that the politics have made men more participative in paternity than before (Y, H,

4).

Finally, although all the men who took part in the study perceive changes in the meaning and exercise of paternity between themselves and the previous generation, it was the group of adult men in the high socioeconomic level who showed the greatest awareness of living through a transition period between the authoritarian model of paternity, which is questioned by most of the participants, and a new model of paternity, which is under construction. According to the participants, this model should be based on a democratic paradigm, stressing mutual affection, support, guidance, containment and setting limits as the central elements:

... I believe that that is what it is about; not imposing a criterion, not imposing an

experience, but helping and supporting the child to reflect on his context, on how to act, how to proceed, what direction to take in order to choose for the best (A, H, 7); ...I believe that paternity is a mixture of love and knowing how to set limits; we have to be very careful when we talk –you must explain something to the child in such a way that you see what decision is going to take. Paternity is setting limits to the field in which the child can take a decision and where cannot (A, H, 8); ... paternity has always been about showing power, but today it is important for showing care. And that is the victory of our times, because it has changed quite recently. That it is socially acceptable for a man to love, that he can be caring and affectionate and kiss his children (A, H, 4).

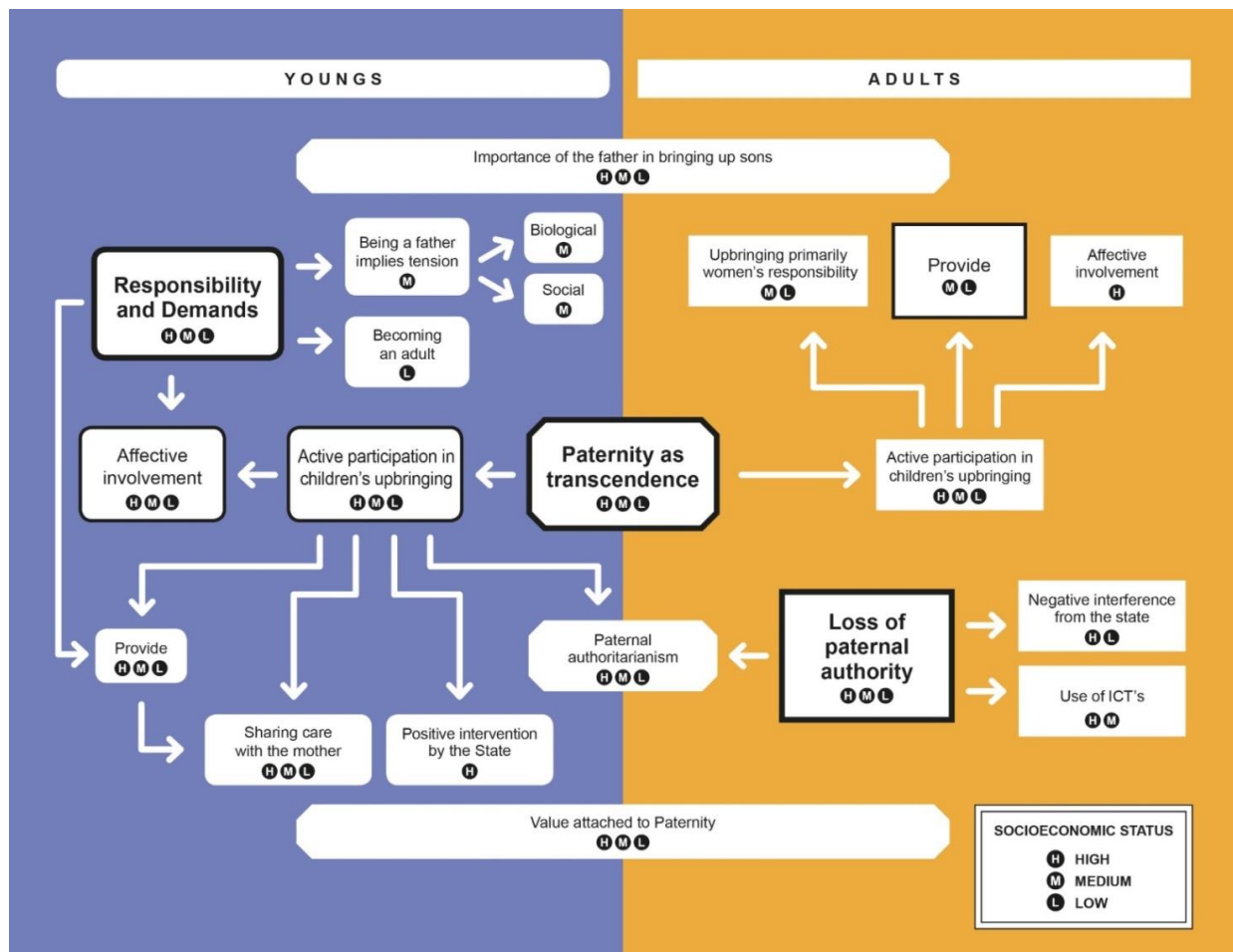


Figure 1. Meaning of paternity in young and adult men.

Discussion

Valuing paternity as a bonding, affective experience, and recognising that it is in a state of transition are features common to all the groups, and this is consistent with the global trend of new models of masculinity which, among other aspects, give a new meaning to the father-figure as an important affective reference in children's upbringing, as various studies have shown (Aguayo & Romero, 2006; Amorín, 2003; Fuller, 2000; Olavarria, 2005; Valdés, 2009).

However, this value attached to paternity presents subtle differences between adult and young men: the discourse of the adult men grows out of the comparison between the experience of having been children with their current role as fathers, while young men mainly echo the social value represented by paternity in Chilean society. In young men perception of the demands of paternity is related to awareness of the great responsibility that it brings, significantly more than in previous generations (Olavarria, 2005). On the other hand, the fact that they lack the emotional experience of fatherhood may perhaps inflate the costs and sacrifices which it implies; and given the characteristics of their own stage of development they do not see in themselves the competences needed to fill the role of fathers. This perception of demands does not appear in the discourse of the adult men, which may be related to their temporal distance from the demands of early upbringing and/or the fact their standards as fathers were different and their experience was probably of cooperating with or "helping" the mother, who had the main responsibility for bringing the children up.

The perception of paternity as demand also presents subtleties among young men depending on their socioeconomic level. In the middle level we find a tension between the demands of the knowledge society, which imposes an increasingly specialised education on young people that they see as incompatible with the demands of bringing up children. In the lower levels the tension is caused by early fatherhood, which implies suddenly becoming an adult and assuming the child's needs, to the detriment of their personal projects, by giving up their studies and starting to work since there is no economic support which would enable them to continue

with the natural occupations of adolescence (Cruzat & Aracena, 2006; Olavarria, 2005). Thus assuming paternity early is an ambivalent experience: although it marks the man as an adult, it conflicts with the adolescent ideal of freedom, conquest and competition, meaning that fatherhood can be seen either as an achievement or a loss (Fuller, 2000).

Despite this, the discourse of young men reflects an interest in taking part in raising their future offspring, and they are critical of the older generation whom they perceive to be little involved in the everyday care of their children. It is striking that the adult men of the high socioeconomic level agree with the young men in their critical assessment of their fathers, feeling significantly closer to and more involved with their children, unlike their own fathers. This is the nostalgia they feel for a closer, more affectionate father-figure, a phenomenon which Osherson calls "the wounded father within" (Osherson as cited in Amorín, 2007). It would be interesting to know what sort of paternity is really exercised by this group, since the point of comparison with their own fathers may distort their perception of their own performance. Adult men of low and middle socioeconomic levels, although they recognise that external conditions have changed the way in which paternity is exercised, do not show a critical assessment of the model provided by their fathers, possibly because of a lack of space for reflection about themselves (Fuller, 2000; Valdés, 2009).

Looking at the more traditional aspects of the discourse of young and adult men in the different socioeconomic levels, we find the importance attached by fathers to bringing up their male children. This importance is expressed at two levels: as a facilitator of identification with the conducts, attitudes and roles of the male sex, thus avoiding the risk of the boy developing what they think is a feminine behaviour (Olavarria, 2001); and as an authority to regulate the behaviour and attitudes of their sons, to ensure respect for the rules and as a safeguard of integrity (Mora, Otálora, & Recagno-Puente, 2005).

Associated with this, the adult men perceive that paternal authority has been weakened by increased State intervention in family relations, and by the general incorporation of information and communication technologies. On the one

hand fathers feel that they have lost the right to exercise discipline within the family, while the young men consider that by passing new laws – for example allowing fathers paternity leave– the State acts as a protecting factor which facilitates the exercise of paternity (Arriagada, 2005; PNUD, 2002). On the other hand, information and communication technologies have changed how people interact, replacing face-to-face contact with contact through electronic media, and placing children in a position of superiority due to their greater skills with technology, so that adults now learn from children (Amorín, 2003). This inversion of roles is no small matter, since the fathers' authority as a right acquired on the basis of knowledge and experience is called into question.

Adult men, especially those in the high socioeconomic level who have had more opportunity for self-reflection than the middle and low groups (Aguayo & Romero, 2006; Gallardo, Gómez, Muñoz, & Suárez, 2006; Matamala Sáez & Rodríguez Torres, 2010), feel that they are at a crossroads. They are critical of the model represented by their fathers and, according to their discourse, have exercised a more democratic, horizontal paternity; however they feel equally questioned by the demands of the current generation who were socialised in a democratic, globalised context. The perplexity and frustration experienced by these adult men reflects the difficulty of constructing or exercising a model which differs from that of their fathers. The new model presents two challenges: to develop a model of paternity which requires the exercise of the necessary authority to protect their children in a society where authority has been de-legitimised by our recent past; and secondly, but no less important, to develop a model of paternity which is not an imitation of maternity (Dulac, 1998; Valdés, 2009).

Finally it may be noted that although significant differences are observed between the discourses of adult and young groups of different socioeconomic levels, greater homogeneity is found within the young group, which would reflect a generation with more opportunities and less inequality than their fathers'. It is the task of these young men to construct this new model on the mixture of their experiences as children and the changes produced by socio-historical

processes play.

As a limitation of the current study can be mentioned the use of discussion group as data collection technique. Although discussion groups facilitate access to participant's perceptions, tend to favour consensus within the group, minimizing tensions and divergences (Smithson, 2000).

The present study looks at the meaning of paternity for southern Chile's urban men; however, given the country's cultural variability, an important challenge for future research is to investigate these meanings in men living in the north of Chile, characterised by a mining culture, in rural zones and in indigenous groups. All this will help towards a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and guide the definition of public policies.

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