

THE MODERN CANADIAN FAMILY

**The Modern Canadian Family:  
The Content of Mother and Father Stereotypes in Diverse Family Contexts**

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### Acknowledgements

Once upon a time, there was an old man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning, he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions. Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small boy approaching. As the boy walked, he paused every so often and as he grew closer, the man could see that he was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The boy came closer still and the man called out, “Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?”

The young boy paused, looked up, and replied “Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can’t return to the sea by themselves,” the youth replied. “When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water.”

The old man replied, “But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. I’m afraid you won’t really be able to make much of a difference.”

The boy bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he turned, smiled and said, “It made a difference to that one!” adapted from *The Star Thrower*, by Loren Eiseley (1979)

Comme l’a si bien dit Peter Straube (2011), nous sommes tous des agents du changement. Cependant, si vous êtes comme moi, il vous est déjà arrivé de penser : « À quel point puis-je réellement faire une différence? ». Lorsque je me surprends à entretenir un tel discours intérieur, j’essaie toujours de me raviser et me remémorer cette histoire. Peut-être ne vais-je pas changer le monde en découvrant une cure pour enrayer le cancer ou la famine, mais je peux tout de même faire ma part. Cette thèse fait partie du patrimoine que je lègue, en espérant qu’elle fasse une différence, ne serait-ce que pour une seule personne.

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### **Content of thesis and contributions of authors**

This dissertation follows a monograph format and has two main objectives: (a) Describe the stereotypic content associated with divorced, single, step, same-sex, and adoptive parents in comparison with married parents, and (b) Determine whether certain participants' sociodemographic variables are significantly associated with the stereotypic content. The writer of the thesis appears as first author and the research supervisor appears as co-author. The contribution of each author is as follows: the first writer reviewed and synthesized the literature, conceptualized and designed the project, wrote the ethics' application, collected and analyzed the data, and wrote the thesis. The research supervisor played a consultant role by overseeing all research activities.

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### Abstract

Considerable empirical evidence supports the existence of parental stereotypes. However, the content of these stereotypes is less clear (Valiquette-Tessier, Vandette, & Gosselin, 2015; Valiquette-Tessier, Gosselin, Thomassin, & Young, 2018). Therefore, this study aims to (a) explore stereotypes associated with divorced, step, single, same-sex and adoptive mothers and fathers, in comparison to the stereotypes associated to married mothers and fathers, and (b) assess if a set of independent variables predicts the ratings on the stereotypical content. The procedure employed in this study constitutes the most common strategy for the measurement of stereotypes, that is the three steps method (Bennett & Jamieson, 1999). To fulfill the objectives, one sample *t* tests and linear regressions were conducted. Results showed that married parents are highly regarded despite the parent gender, and that divorced parents are strongly negatively regarded again for both genders. Single, step, and lesbian/gay parents remain generally negatively stereotyped, despite some more positive views that have emerged here and there. Finally, adoptive parents are stereotyped in a manner that is very similar to married parents, and are even seen more positively on some aspects. On the other part, for both mothers and fathers, the gender and parental status all reached statistical significance in predicting stereotypic category a number of times. However, while age was the most often significant predictor within mothers' reduced models, it never appeared as a significant predictor within fathers' reduced models. Moreover, ethnicity was a significant predictor in many fathers' reduced models, but only reached statistical significance in a few of the mothers' reduced models. The number of times relationship status and sexual orientation came up as statistically significant is relatively similar within both mothers and fathers' models, as was educational attainment which never reach statistical significance in any of the reduced models.

*Keywords:* stereotype, attitude, parent, parental role, family, Canada

## Résumé

Des preuves empiriques considérables appuient l'existence de stéréotypes parentaux. Cependant, le contenu de ces stéréotypes est moins clair (Valiquette-Tessier, Vandette et Gosselin, 2015; Valiquette-Tessier, Gosselin, Thomassin et Young, 2018). Par conséquent, cette étude vise à (a) explorer les stéréotypes associés aux parents divorcés, monoparentaux, adoptifs, de même sexe et les parents vivant en famille recomposée, en comparaison avec les stéréotypes associés aux parents mariés et (b) évaluer si un ensemble de variables indépendantes prédit ce contenu stéréotypé. La procédure employée dans cette étude constitue la stratégie la plus courante pour mesurer les stéréotypes, soit la procédure en trois étapes de différenciation sémantique (Bennett et Jamieson, 1999). Des tests-t ainsi que des régressions linéaires ont ensuite été performés. D'une part, les résultats montrent que les parents mariés sont hautement considérés et que les parents divorcés sont les plus négativement perçus. Les parents monoparentaux, ceux vivant en famille recomposée et ceux de même sexe restent généralement stéréotypés négativement, en dépit de certains points de vue plus positifs qui ont émergé. Finalement, les parents adoptifs sont stéréotypés d'une manière très similaire à celle des parents mariés et sont même perçus de manière plus positive sur certains aspects. Concernant le second objectif, tant pour les mères que pour les pères, le sexe et le statut parental ont tous atteint une signification statistique dans la prédiction de la catégorie stéréotypée, et ce, un certain nombre de fois. Cependant, alors que l'âge était le prédicteur le plus souvent significatif dans les modèles réduits des mères, il n'a jamais été un prédicteur significatif dans les modèles réduits des pères. Également, l'ethnicité était un prédicteur significatif dans de nombreux modèles réduits chez les pères, mais elle n'a atteint la signification statistique que dans quelques modèles réduits chez les mères. Le nombre de fois que le statut relationnel et l'orientation sexuelle sont apparus comme statistiquement

significatifs est relativement similaire dans les modèles des mères et des pères, tout comme le niveau de scolarité qui n'atteint jamais la signification statistique dans aucun des modèles réduits.

*Mots-clés* : stéréotype, attitude, parent, rôle parental, famille, Canada

## **The Modern Canadian Family:**

### **The Content of Mother and Father Stereotypes in Diverse Family Contexts**

What constitutes a family? The answer to this question is shaped by personal experiences, attitudes, perceptions, social norms, values, and media representations. The recurring image in most Western societies is of the suburban family with two heterosexual parents in a first-marriage, including a working father and a stay-at-home mother, and their biological children (Arendell, 2000). Social institutions such as mass media, language, legal systems, and religion, still convey the message that this particular family depiction is the normal and functional system against which others are compared. While such a family setting does accurately depict some families, many other family constellations exist and function under diverse circumstances (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Indeed, parents may be married, cohabiting, separated, divorced or never married. Thus, they may parent alone, with a partner of opposite or same-sex, co-parent with a partner in the context of a first-marriage or be divorced, separated and co-parent with a former partner, and even with the new partner of their former partner (Statistics Canada, 2012a). The relationship between a parent and a child may be a biological tie or one created through stepparenting or adoption (Statistics Canada, 2012a). These few scripts, among many others, illustrate the diversity characterizing families nowadays.

However, despite the significant growth of studies exploring a variety of family configurations (e.g., Arditti & Lopez, 2005; Camilleri & Ryan, 2006; Choi, Thul, Berenhaut, Suerken, & Norris, 2005; Claxton-Oldfield & O'Neil, 2007; Fingerhut & Peplau, 2006; Rincon & Lam, 2011; Schultz & Leigh, 2004), families still tend to be evaluated in comparison to one standard, that is the nuclear family with heterosexual parents in a first-marriage and their biological children (e.g., Miall & March, 2005; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Walsh, 1996). It would seem that even if contemporary discourse acknowledges different types of families (e.g.,

Giuseppina, Pacilli, Taurino, Jost, & Van der Toorn, 2011; Herbstrith, Tobin, Hesson-McInnis, & Schneider, 2013; Planitz & Feeney, 2009), some traditional ideologies persist (e.g., Arditti & Lopez, 2005; Parke, Coltrane, Borthwick-Duffy, Powers, Adams, Fabricius, Braver, & Saenz, 2004). If this is the case, then less traditional families may risk being stigmatized or discriminated against by policies and social norms (Eichler, 1997; Leonard, 1997; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Nicholson, 1997).

The present thesis has two general aims: (a) to describe and compare the stereotypical content related to different parental roles, more specifically divorced, step, single, same-sex and adoptive mothers and fathers, in comparison to the stereotypical content associated to married mothers and fathers, and (b) to identify if certain participants' sociodemographic characteristics predict the stereotypic content related to the different parental roles, particularly age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, educational attainment, as well as relationship, and parental statuses. Same-sex and adoptive parents referred to married and not married parents. The marital status of those parental roles was not specified during data collection so participants could look at them one way or the other. Findings will be interpreted in light of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (1979). For the purpose of this study, Canadian students and parents will represent the populations who will determine the content of stereotypes related to the six parental roles investigated.

### **An Overview of Stereotypes**

Two recent reviews conducted on stereotypes and parenthood (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018) revealed common problems in the field of stereotypes associated to parenthood, such as the lack of distinction between some terms like stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination that are often used interchangeably. Thus, a clear understanding of the definition of stereotype and terminology distinction is essential in order to grasp the essence

of this concept. The following sections are based on Schneider's work (2004) since he produced, to our knowledge, the most comprehensive synthesis of the vast body of social and cognitive research on stereotypes published over the past century. The work of other important authors was consulted (e.g., Macrae, Stangor, & Hewstone, 1996; Spears, Oakes, Ellemers, & Haslam, 1997; Stangor, 2000; Stangor & Crandall, 2013), but none have been as thorough as Schneider (2004) at analyzing the body of work, summarizing it in a timely manner, and distinguishing the different terms used by researchers. Schneider's volume (2004) is by far the best resource, in addition to being easily readable and featuring many examples facilitating the understanding of each concept. For all these reasons, Schneider's book (2004) was used as a main reference to structure the next sections.

**The definition of stereotype.** The word "stereotype" comes from the conjunction of two Greek words: *stereos* ("solid"), and *typos* ("a model") (Schneider, 2004). Thus, the term stereotype refers to solid or rigid models.

**Early conceptions and studies of stereotypes.** The American journalist Walter Lippman was a pioneer in the study of stereotypes and made a significant contribution to the meaning of the concept in his book *Public Opinion* (1922). He was actually the first to use the word as we somewhat understand it today, that is *characteristics that are applied to others* (Lippmann, 1922). Lippmann (1922) viewed stereotypes as pictures in our heads functioning as rationalizations to maintain social standing. Particularly, he was concerned with the quasi-environment which is inserted between the human being and his real environment. According to him, in order to deal with a world which is too complex, the human being constructs a picture of the world inside his head, called the quasi-environment. The form of this picture is partially culturally determined, as humans pick out what their culture has already defined for them (Blum, 2004; Jones, 1992; Lippman, 1922; Schneider, 2004). Afterwards, many theorists and

researchers used the term stereotype with a variety of different definitions resembling the one provided by Lippmann (Schneider, 2004; Sills, 1968). Lippmann's (1922) original definition of stereotype was so broad that this led to considerable variance in the subsequent conceptualizations of stereotype (Schneider, 2004). Examples include: "incorrect beliefs" (Katz & Braly, 1935, p. 181), "the attribution of general psychological characteristics to large human groups" (Watson, 1974, p. 80), "fixed ideas about an individual, group, or social status" (Barker, 1991, p. 227), "an inaccurate, rigid, and oversimplified image of members of a social group, especially an outgroup" (Coon, 1994, p. 21), and "generalized impressions that members of one social group use in characterizing members of another group" (Lindgren, 1994, p. 468).

Consequently, the concept of stereotype has been plagued with excess meanings, and this remains an issue nowadays for researchers in the field (Hamilton, 1981; Schneider, 2004; Zanna & Olson, 1994).

Lippmann's work (1922) also gave rise to a wave of major interest in measurement of stereotypes (Schneider, 2004). In fact, in 1933, Katz and Braly conducted an important study, later on generating two follow-ups (Gilbert, 1951). They asked 100 male students from Princeton University to check traits from a list of 84 traits they thought described 10 groups (Germans, Italians, Blacks, Irish, English, Jews, Americans, Chinese, Japanese, and Turks). The traits with considerable consensus of endorsement (more than 50%) for a particular group were seen as stereotypic of that group (Katz & Braly, 1933). The results showed considerable agreement in stereotypes, especially of negative personal traits. Since most of the students did not have any personal contact with members of the groups they had to rate, it was suggested that stereotypes are learned (e.g., through the media, they are cultural products) (Katz & Braly, 1933). For the next 20 years or so, most studies on stereotypes employed the same working definition as Katz and Braly (1933) that is in terms of traits ascribed to various groups (Schneider, 2004). Later on,

Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) published *The Authoritarian Personality*, a research effort attempting to understand the roots of anti-Semitism in the context of Nazi Germany. At that time, stereotypes began to be seen as predictors of discriminatory behavior that found their source in personality dynamics. The book (Adorno et al., 1950) also fostered an agreement that stereotypes are major pathologies of social cognitions linked with prejudice since they are fundamentally incorrect generalizations about groups of people (Schneider, 2004). The growing interest toward the relationship between prejudice and stereotyping led the way to another significant contribution to the field of stereotype. In 1954, Gordon Allport published *The Nature of Prejudice*. Allport devoted most of his book to discussions of various cognitive factors involved in prejudice and stereotyping. For instance, he believed that it is our nature to place things and people in categories, which are like buckets into which are pour traits, features, expectations, values, etc. (Allport, 1954; Schneider, 2004).

By the late 1960s, it appeared like the study of stereotypes had slowed down (Schneider, 2004). Thus, Brigham (1971) performed a classic review that covered about 100 studies on ethnic stereotypes, and he especially underlined the definitional issues of the field. For example, some authors described stereotypes as incorrect generalizations about groups, others suggested that stereotypes are like any generalizations, some saw stereotypes as due to faulty reasoning, while others viewed them as due to faulty experience (Brigham, 1971; Schneider, 2004). In trying to make sense of the disagreements and elucidate what exactly is a stereotype, Brigham (1971) elaborated a taxonomy of the meanings of the stereotype construct. He divided the definitions of stereotype into six groups (Brigham, 1971):

- (1) Stereotype not defined as bad, rather it is a generalization (e.g., “Stereotype may be defined as the tendency to attribute generalized and simplified characteristics to groups of

people in the form of verbal labels, and to act towards the members of those groups in terms of those labels.” (Vinacke, 1949)).

- (2) Stereotype not defined as bad, rather it is a category/concept (e.g., “A stereotype is commonly thought of as involving a categorical response, i.e., membership is sufficient to evoke the judgment that the stimulus person possesses all the attributes belonging to that category.” (Secord, 1959)).
- (3) Stereotype defined as a bad generalization/category/concept, because it is incorrectly learned (e.g., “Unlike other generalizations, stereotypes are based not on an inductive collection of data, but on hearsay, which is insufficient to justify the generalization.” (Klineberg, 1951)).
- (4) Stereotype defined as a bad generalization/category/concept, because it is overgeneralized (e.g., “A stereotype is an exaggerated belief associated with a category.” (Allport, 1958)).
- (5) Stereotype defined as a bad generalization/category/concept because it is factually incorrect (e.g., “A stereotype is a fixed impression, which conforms very little to the fact it pretends to represent, and results from our defining first and observing second.” (Katz & Braly, 1935)).
- (6) Stereotype defined as bad generalization/category/concept, because it is rigid (e.g., “Stereotype... the disposition to think in rigid categories.” (Adorno et al., 1950)).

Brigham’s work (1971) highlighted a commonality in the majority of the meanings of the construct, being the set of beliefs about the personal attributes of a social group (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Brigham, 1971; Hamilton, 1981). Thus, this reveals researchers' almost unanimous agreement on stereotypes' mere essence- that is the commonly held beliefs (Six & Eckes, 1991). Considering this reason, for the purpose of this thesis, stereotypes will be defined as a set of

beliefs about the personal attributes of the members of a particular social category (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981). The previous definition of the stereotype construct is not proposed as a single best definition but as combining essential defining features of the term as it has been used by social scientists (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Brigham, 1971). This definition captures the essential characteristics that stereotypes have, in the sense that everyone would agree on this much (Schneider, 2004).

*Are stereotypes inaccurate, bad and generalized?* Despite the previous agreement on the essence of the stereotype concept (Brigham, 1971), there remains three considerable differences of opinion in the stereotype literature, for which no absolute answer has been provided so far (Schneider, 2004). First, is whether stereotypes are generally inaccurate and false. The second is whether stereotypes are bad not only in their consequences, but in the reasoning processes that gave birth to them. Third, are stereotypes shared among people or individual beliefs (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Schneider, 2004)? The available literature on these issues refers to the work of early authors. It is as if the debates on these questions ceased to generate new research after the 2000s. One reason for this is the shift from studying stereotypes through trait ascriptions to studying the cognitive processes involved in stereotyping (Hamilton, 1981; Schneider, 2004). Despite propositions in the 1950s and 1960s that stereotypes are linked with other structures involved in cognitive activity, only a few studies during those years had a cognitive focus (e.g., Allport, 1954; Fishman, 1956; Gordon, 1962; Vinacke, 1957). The cognitive perspective has produced many insights into the role of abstract knowledge structures (e.g., schemas, prototypes, theories, etc.), and the way our cognitive structures work to help us process information (e.g., Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Hamilton, 1981; Hamilton, Stroessner, & Driscoll, 1994; Leyens, Yzerbyt, & Schadron, 1994; Schneider, Hastorf, & Ellsworth, 1979). Nevertheless, this approach

does not look deeply at questions that remain without a clear answer, such as whether stereotypes are true or false, positive or negative, and acquired from individual experience or cultural tuition (Schneider, 2004).

On one hand, many social scientists assumed that stereotypes are inaccurate. It is rather easy to find evidence that some stereotypes are untrue because when reporting stereotypes, most people focus on negative traits, and it seems unlikely that most groups are characterized mainly by such negative features (Schneider, 2004). To stress the inaccuracy of stereotypes, some theorists have maintained what has come to be known as the “kernel-of-truth hypothesis” (e.g., Abate & Berrien, 1967; Campbell, 1967; Judd & Park, 1993; Swim, 1994). The hypothesis suggests that stereotypes are based on some reality, although they usually exaggerate the extent to which a particular group is characterized. This means that groups are seen as having more of some features than they really possess (Fishman, 1956; Jussim, McCauley, & Lee, 1995; Schneider, 1996). Other researchers generated abundant evidence that people can be accurate, at least, in their stereotypes about gender (e.g., Diekmann, Eagly, & Kulesa, 2002; Hall & Carter, 1999; McCauley, 1995; McCauley & Thangavelu, 1991; Swim, 1994), nationality (e.g., Triandis & Vassiliou, 1967), physical attractiveness (e.g., Ashmore & Longo, 1995; Feingold, 1992), race (e.g., McCauley & Stitt, 1978; Ryan, 1996), academic performance on ethnic groups (e.g., Ashton & Esses, 1999), and college majors (e.g., Judd, Ryan, & Park, 1991; McCauley, 1995). One of the reasons why there is disagreement relative to the accuracy of stereotypes is because the concept was defined in a diffuse manner, resulting in several ways of conceptualizing and measuring accuracy (Schneider, 2004). For instance, Swann (1984) puts forth what he calls “circumscribed accuracy”, which refers to the ability of people to predict the behavior of others in a fairly concrete situation. Another way accuracy is defined is in terms of consensus

judgments. A stereotype is considered accurate if a given judge matches the consensus of other judges (Hagendoorn & Linssen, 1994; Kolar, Funder, & Colvin, 1996; McAndrew et al., 2000; Triandis et al., 1982; Vinacke, 1949). Thus, what can we conclude about the accuracy of stereotypes? Very little actually. It is certainly clear that some people hold inaccurate stereotypes, but we also know that often stereotypes are accurate (Schneider, 2004).

On the other hand, when looking at stereotypes, there is a tendency to emphasize that they are bad (e.g., Barker, 1991; Coon, 1994; Katz & Braly, 1935). One possible justification to explain this conception is that stereotypes often focus on the negative rather than the positive features. Another reason as to why stereotypes are perceived as bad is that they can result from faulty reasoning processes and gathering insufficient information (Schneider, 2004).

Furthermore, the term “stereotype” etymologically refers to some sort of rigidity. In fact, Katz and Braly (1935), Meenes (1943), Adorno, and colleagues (1950), Bogardus (1950), Sanford (1956), Katz and Stotland (1959), Rokeach (1968), Sinha and Upadhyay (1960), and Simpson and Yinger (1965) have stressed rigidity as an additional reason explaining why stereotypes are perceived as bad. According to these authors, a stereotype can be seen as rigid only if it is not modified in the face of new information. Fishman (1956) emphasized that while stereotypes are indeed resistant to change, they are not unchangeable since most of us have stereotypes that do change over time. Stereotypes might also be seen as bad because they are applied freely and indiscriminately, namely they do not always allow for exceptions. However, this is one of the reasons why they are also useful, precisely because they free us from having to think too much (Schneider, 2004). So are stereotypes good or bad? Many traits can be seen as positive in some situations and negative in others, as good by one group and bad by another. The content of stereotypes varies depending on the target, the perceiver, the context, etc. which makes it impossible to judge of their good or bad nature without considering such variables (Schneider,

2004).

Finally, are stereotypes shared or individual? Prior to 1970, the majority of social scientists who studied stereotypes assumed them to be generalizations shared with other members of a culture, generalizations which may still describe situations that are extant, although to a lesser extent than that expressed in a generalization (e.g., Allport, 1954; Bogardus, 1950; Campbell, 1967; Gilbert, 1951; Krech, Crutchfield, & Ballachey, 1962; Rokeach, 1968; Schoenfeld, 1942; Wedge, 1966; Zawadzki, 1948). To many psychologists, the crucial difference that distinguishes a stereotype from a generalization is the way in which the stereotype is arrived at (Bogardus, 1950; Sanford, 1956; Zawadzki, 1948). They stated that the main difference is that, unlike other generalizations, stereotypes are based not on collection of data, but on hearsay, rumors, and anecdotes—in short, on evidence which is insufficient to justify the generalization (Bogardus, 1950; Sanford, 1956; Zawadzki, 1948). Before television and when segregation along race, ethnic, gender, religious, and class lines was more pronounced, what most people knew came from hearsay. People used to live more segregated lives than they do now, thus it is not a surprise that stereotypes reported in early studies matched culturally prescribed views (Schneider, 2004). Even today, the content of stereotypes is usually shared among people, and their shared nature seems to make them even more legitimate and true (Gardner, Kirby, & Finlay, 1973; Schneider, 2004; Stangor & Schaller, 1996). Of course, culture may provide stereotypes for us to deploy. Nonetheless, culture doesn't force itself upon individuals, but rather provides a template to help us organize our social experiences so that our everyday interactions are facilitated (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998; Tajfel, 1981; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). The truth is that it is very hard, even impossible, to divide the roles of culture and individual experiences in forming stereotypes, which is why stereotypes should not only be defined in terms of whether they have been or have not been produced by the larger culture

(Schneider, 1996; Spears et al., 1997; Stangor & Jost, 1997). For example, a subgroup can hold a stereotype because of members' common individual experiences, despite that the stereotype was not culturally produced (Schneider, 2004).

***Terminology distinction.*** Almost 50 years after the term stereotype was coined (Brigham, 1971), researchers use it with little consistency (i.e. rarely define what a stereotype exactly is in their study, what it includes and excludes) (Valiquette-Tessier, Vandette, & Gosselin, 2015; Valiquette-Tessier, Gosselin, Thomassin, & Young, 2018). Moreover, to our knowledge, since 2005, no study made the effort to clarify the distinction between stereotypes and other related concepts (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Indeed, the concept of stereotype is intrinsically related with feelings about other people and behaviors toward them. Thus, one cannot discuss stereotypes without considering their relationships with prejudice and behavior (Schneider, 2004). Roughly speaking, Schneider (2004) emphasizes that stereotypes are category-based beliefs about people, prejudice consists in a set of affective attitudes, and discrimination refers to behavioral dispositions. Beliefs, affects, and behaviors are not easy to separate, but while they may seem part of the same package because interdependent, they are clearly distinct (Schneider, 2004).

The word “prejudice” comes from the Latin *praejudicium*, meaning “an unreasonable dislike of a particular group of people or things, or a preference for one group of people or things over another” (Collins, 2018). Overall, the word is frequently thought of as connoting a negative judgment. Yet, it is possible for a person to be prejudiced in favor of something or someone, but, in such cases, it is important to explicitly mark it since the word prejudice often connotes negativity. Prejudice can then be defined as the set of affective reactions we have toward people as a function of their category memberships (Schneider, 2004). The most common view among writers in the area is that stereotypes act as a bridge to rationalize

the hostility felt by the prejudiced person (e.g., Allport, 1954; Ehrlich, 1962; LaViolette & Silvert, 1951; Saenger, 1953; Simpson & Yinger, 1965). The concept of prejudice is also related to stigmas. Although we certainly have stereotypes of groups that are positive, when we dislike a certain group, we are motivated to stereotype them in ways that give our negative affect a cognitive foundation. Such groups are called stigmatized groups (Schneider, 2004). A stigma is an attribute or characteristic that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular context (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). This definition includes such conditions as AIDS, homelessness, mental illness, obesity, etc.

Concerning the behavioral dimension, the word “discrimination” springs from the Latin *discrimino*, and is “the practice of treating one person or group of people less fairly or less well than other people or groups” (Collins, 2018). It has long been stated that stereotypes have relevance to behavior (Brigham, 1971). However, there is a paucity of data pertaining to the relationship between stereotypes and discriminatory behaviors, especially since researchers interested in stereotypes have usually not employed behavioral measures. Therefore, interpersonal and situational conditions under which such discriminatory behaviors may or may not take place have yet to be specified. Until considerable research concerning these issues is carried out, discussion of the stereotype-behavior relationship will remain speculative and vague (Brigham, 1971; Schneider, 2004).

Moreover, the literature pertaining to stereotypes often uses the terms stereotype and attitude interchangeably, as if they were synonyms (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). This might be due to the fact that, by definition, attitudes are seen by some authors as encompassing stereotypes (e.g., Camilleri & Ryan, 2006; Choi et al., 2005; Claxton-Oldfield, O'Neill, Thomson, & Gallant, 2005; DeJean, McGeorge, & Carlson, 2012; Giuseppina et al., 2011; Herbstrith et al., 2013; Rincon & Lam, 2011). Indeed, attitudes are defined as

internalized beliefs about an object, person or event, allowing to situate these objects, persons, and events on a scale going from positive to negative, favorable to unfavorable (Bem, 1970). One important nuance is that attitudes can be motivated by incoming information, but they can also rely on prejudice or stereotypes (Bem, 1970).

**The development of stereotypes.** There has been little empirical work on the origins of stereotypes (i.e., where they come from, and why they exist), and even less recent research on the topic. In part, this is because they are a salient portion of our culture—for example, they are translated on television and in the movies, and sometimes parents and teachers deliberately or inadvertently preach them (Schneider, 2004). Nonetheless, two approaches have been put forth to structure our views of where stereotypes come from: the social cognition approach and the cultural approach.

The more modern perspective, the social cognition approach, forgoes assumptions about the cultural heritage and focuses on how stereotypes impact the processing of information (e.g., Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Oakes & Turner, 1990; Spears et al., 1997). This approach further examines how prejudices, attitudes, values, and beliefs can give rise to stereotypes. However, how these very expectations, prejudices, values, and beliefs are acquired is not looked at (McGarty, Yzerbyt, & Spears, 2002). The social cognition perspective does not seem to scratch the deeper origins, except for suggesting that one potentially important field from which stereotypes may spring are personal experiences with people from various groups (McGarty et al., 2002). Stereotypes are reflections of our experiences because the latter influence the way we interpret raw data before us through the lens of our own mental systems (Schneider, 2004; McGarty et al., 2002). Linked to this notion that stereotypes are a function of people's experiences, is the implicit personality theory which refers to a network of perceived relationships among traits within a given domain (Bruner, 1990). This means that people infer

that certain traits go together or build around a person after they know something of their central traits (Bruner, 1990; Schneider, 2004). For example, a kind person is usually seen as warm, generous, and attentive.

In contrast, it is easy enough to argue that culture provides the content of many of our stereotypes (Macrae et al., 1996). Culture may even encourage the adoption of certain roles that in turn give rise to particular behaviors (Macrae et al., 1996). For instance, women are often assigned to nurturing roles and men to provider roles. Consequently, women are frequently stereotyped as nurturers and men as providers. Linked to the cultural approach is the notion that stereotypes are the results of socialization (Katz, 1976). Socialization can occur through both direct (e.g., explicitly telling children what to believe about members of a specific community) and indirect (e.g., to convey lessons about people, even though that was not their intention) influences (e.g., parents, school, religious groups, peers, media, etc.) (Katz, 1976). Socialization agents constantly reinforce the use of some stereotypes, until children (a) learn which features are associated, (b) attach some affect or emotion to those features, and (c) learn acceptable and unacceptable behaviors (Schneider, 2004). Despite this, culture often functions as a simplified explanation since none of us, even children, absorb cultural lessons through some mental osmosis. The cultural approach thus lacks precise models of how culture enters the human mind (Milner, 1996).

Therefore, two large and somewhat diffuse categories of explanations for why we develop certain stereotypes exist—they can be products of our cultures or produced by our own experiences. These categories are nevertheless not mutually exclusive (Schneider, 2004). All or nearly all of our stereotypes are based on mixtures of what we have been taught, seen and experienced. Experiences are themselves products of culture, and we cannot simply separate one from the other because they are integrally bound together (Schneider, 2004). Furthermore, these

two explanations underemphasize one of the most profoundly social features of our lives- that is communication (Schneider, 2004). Stereotypes are especially forged in everyday conversations and consist of the most powerful vehicle for creating consensual meanings and cultural understandings (Hardin & Higgins, 1996; Lau, Chiu, & Lee, 2001). Janet Ruscher (1998) initiated a research program that investigated the consequences of communicating stereotypic information. It was found that when members of a group talk about members of an out-group, they tend to emphasize their stereotypic qualities and the homogeneity of the outgroup (Ruscher, 1998). Meanwhile, participants' perceptions of a target tend to become more stereotypic after such discussions (Kashima, 2000; Lyons & Kashima, 2001; Ruscher & Hammer, 1994). All in all, communication increases the use of stereotypes, and stereotypes that were acquired from second-hand conversations tend to be more extreme and homogeneous than those taken from direct experience (Thompson, Judd, & Park, 2000).

**How stereotypes work.** Thinking about people in terms of their social category memberships is a functional way of dealing with the world since it gives predictive control over the environment and a heads up in deciding on appropriate behavior (Anderson, 1991; Ross & Murphy, 1996; Schneider, 2004). Hence, in modern cognitive psychology, the notions of categorization and schemas have been used to represent the prior knowledge or prior theories held in memory (Schneider, 2004). Many authors (e.g., Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Hamilton, 1979; Jones, 1982; Samuels, 1973; Schneider, 2004, 1992; Smith, 1990; Tajfel, 1969; Taylor, 1981, Vinacke, 1957) consider those processes as always necessary for stereotyping to occur.

***Categories and categorization.*** Following this latter train of thought, the most basic cognitive process involved in stereotyping is seen by many as categorization because it allows to know more than one can immediately see or hear through the classification of a specific target as

a member of a category to which stereotypes may apply (e.g., Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Hamilton, 1979; Jones, 1982; Samuels, 1973; Schneider, 2004, 1992; Smith, 1990; Tajfel, 1969; Taylor, 1981, Vinacke, 1957). Categorizing is handy when the time comes to infer information about the characteristics of people who belong to certain social groups, especially when the information is not directly provided by our senses (e.g., Lee, Jussim, & McCauley, 1995; Medin, 1988; Oakes & Turner, 1990) or simply when it is impossible to gather because of a lack of time or motivation to do anything more thorough (Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, & Jetten, 1994). Of course, using social categories will only be informative to the extent that the stereotypes held by the individual about that category are accurate (Lee et al., 1995).

What consists of a category was originally defined by two main views: the classic view and the prototype view (Schneider, 2004). Classical categorization first appeared in the work of the philosopher Plato who introduced the approach of grouping objects based on their similar properties (Schneider, 2004). Classically, categories were assumed to be collection of examples that share important defining attributes. For example, cups are objects with handles, capable of holding liquids, shaped in a circular way, and so on. The classical view presumes these defining features or attributes are sufficient to categorize. As a result, objects that have all the defining features count as members of the category (Anderson, 1991; Komatsu, 1992; Medin, 1989; Smith & Medin, 1981). While some concepts fit well in this model (e.g., legal definitions), most categories in everyday life do not fit the classical view. The problem is that some objects fit the definition of a category but are not necessarily part of it (e.g., certain bowls fit the definition of cups given above), while other objects do not fulfill the criteria for membership but are still part of the category (e.g., cups for drinking Chinese tea) (Armstrong, Gleitman, & Gleitman, 1983). On the other hand, there is the prototype view, developed by Rosch (1978). According to this view, most category boundaries are fuzzy— it can be hard to know at what point a cup becomes a

bowl, even if we all have a sense of what a cup and a bowl are (Rosch, 1978). Rosch (1978) believed that within a particular category, there are members that are prototypic of the entire category. For example, a cardinal is a more representative bird than a penguin. In this way, a prototype lies at the center of the category rather than at the fuzzy perimeters (Rosch, 1978). Nonetheless, the problem with this view is that relevant prototypes change from situation to situation (Roth & Shoben, 1983). What prototypes are seen as most typical can be unreliable across contexts and sometimes even within the same individual over time (Barsalou, 1989).

There exists an alternative to the classic and prototype views: the exemplar approach (e.g., Hintzman, 1986; Jacoby & Brooks, 1984; Kahneman & Miller, 1986; Smith & Zárate, 1992). This perspective is based on the assumption that our cognitive representations are concrete rather than abstract, more specifically concrete memory representations (Hintzman, 1986). As opposed to the prototype view, the exemplar view does not require that the exemplar for a category be the best representation in some statistical sense; it may only be representative because it is vivid or salient (Hintzman, 1986; Jacoby & Brooks, 1984; Kahneman & Miller, 1986; Smith & Zárate, 1992). So when someone thinks about dogs, one does not have a list of defining features (classic view), nor does one have a mental image of some average dog (prototype view). One rather has available memory traces of many dogs encountered (Hintzman, 1986). The exemplar model specifies that not every feature of every exemplar be attended to, stored, or retrieved. Some memories may decay over time (Smith & Zárate, 1992). Also, when a perceiver runs into new instances, he or she compares the new stimuli to memories of past instances. When a new stimulus matches a past exemplar closely enough, the new stimulus is classified as a member of that category (Schneider, 2004). The exemplar model holds the advantage of allowing for the influence of context. Indeed, this model easily accommodates contextual information by seeing categories as inherently fluid (Sia, Lord, Blessum, Ratcliff, & Lepper, 1997). Nonetheless, the

main theoretical problem with the exemplar model is that it assumes an enormous amount of storage of concrete information. At the extreme, everytime one encounters a new stimulus, he or she must perform a set of mental calculations (Schneider, 1991). A few researchers (e.g., Judd & Park, 1988; Medin, Altom, & Murphy, 1984; Smith, 1990) state that we clearly resort to a mixture of the classic, prototype, and exemplar views. People store information both about groups and about the individuals with their corresponding features composing those groups (Judd & Park, 1988). Prototype representations tend to be favored when perceivers are learning about categories (Wattenmaker, 1991), but exemplars are favored when the perceivers focus on individuals (Smith, 1990; Smith & Zárate, 1990).

Things get more complicated when considering that people are more sophisticated stimuli than objects since, unlike objects, they do not fit as nicely into ready-made category, and they are likely more ways of classifying people than objects (Lingle, Altom, & Medin, 1984; Schneider, 2004). Thinking about others in terms of their group memberships is known as social categorization—the natural cognitive process by which individuals are placed into social groups (Allport, 1954). Social categorization occurs when thinking of someone as a man (versus a woman), an old person (versus a young person), a Black person (versus an Asian or White person), and so on (Allport, 1954). Categorizing people according to their social group memberships often results in responding to those people more as members of a social group than as individuals (Allport, 1954). Many of the social categories are based on perceptible cues, which makes classification fairly easy (e.g., gender and attractiveness). However, some social categories are not readily apparent (e.g., history of mental illness) (Holland, Holyoak, Nisbett, & Thagard, 1986). Another way of putting this is that features of social categories are usually much more subject to interpretation (Wattenmaker, 1995). So why do we think of this person as a mother rather than as a wife, a teacher, or a woman? Three general answers have been provided

as to why humans use some categories and not others: primary categories, category accessibility, and basic categories (Schneider, 2004).

First, it seems that some categories are so fundamental that they have pride of place. Brewer (1988) argued that age, gender, and race are especially likely to be primary categories because they are perceptually salient cues, and among the first social categories that children learn. Secondly, while some categories are used fairly automatically, there are times when other categories are used simply since they are more accessible in a given situation (Macrae, Mitchell, & Pendry, 2002). Finally, Rosch (1978) discussed another factor affecting categorization, that is the level of generality. Most things exist in a hierarchy of categories. For example, a dog can be seen as an animal, a mammal, a carnivore, a canine, a dog, etc. Yet, when we see a dog, why do we usually call it a dog instead of a mammal? Rosch (1978) states that some categories are more basic than others, and those basic categories are found at some intermediate level of generality. Corter and Gluck (1992) added that basic categories are more informative, in the sense that they facilitate inferences about features of category members. In other words, basic categories tell us more about someone to help us differentiate him or her from others (Schneider, 2004).

**Schemas.** The notions of categorization and categories are linked with the concept of schemas because in cognitive psychology, they also represent the prior knowledge stored in the memory (Schneider, 2004). Schemas are generally defined as theories about categories which function as frameworks for understanding what we see and hear and allowing the inference of features that cannot be immediately perceived (Oakes & Turner, 1990). While a person might possess quite impoverished theories regarding a specific category, the same person might have extensive theoretical ideas about other categories (Schneider, 2004). Stangor and Lange (1994) further described schemas as bits of information attached to cognitive nodes (i.e. cognitive bridges) that are themselves linked to categories to which stereotypes might be attached.

Similarly, Ganong, Coleman, and Mapes (1990) talked about schemas as clusters of associated facts and thoughts for attending to, encoding, and retrieving information. Therefore, when one feature of a schema is recalled or becomes salient, the other elements of the same schema come to mind (Ganong et al., 1990). Schemas fulfill specific functions, such as the interpretation and labeling of stimuli, and providing information in case of missing data (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). They are especially important because they reduce the amount of information needed to ponder and make our interactions more efficient (Kawakami, Young, & Dovidio, 2002; Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994). For example, activating a schema when one is forming impressions of people uses fewer cognitive resources than forming impressions without schemas (Schneider, 2004).

The concept of schema has been paired with a series of overlapping cognitive stages involved in information processing: (a) attention, (b) labeling and interpretation, (c) memory, and (d) inferences (Schneider, 2004). First, some studies revealed that people attend especially to information inconsistent with their expectations and schemas (e.g., Hilton, Klein, & von Hippel, 1991; Prull, 2015; Stern, Marrs, Millar, & Cole, 1984; Swann, & Pelham, 2002). For instance, when someone has expectations about a group, he or she can monitor the behaviors of members to see whether it fits his or her schemas. In the eventuality that it does, then attention may be transferred to other matters (Swann, & Pelham, 2002). However, the perceiver may also be struck by inconsistent information about a target, consequently capturing an undue amount of attention because schemas do not like being molested by inconsistent data (e.g., Hilton et al., 1991; Prull, 2015; Schneider, 2004; Stern et al., 1984; Swann & Pelham, 2002).

Attentional mechanisms open a gate for certain information to be further processed, but they do not guarantee that further processing will take place (Schneider, 2004). Indeed, humans' senses are exposed to a great deal of information, new and old, provided to us at a fast pace. The

human mind makes conscious and unconscious choices about which is useful and accurate (Schneider, 2004). If the information is further processed in order to be labeled and interpreted depends also on the availability of the schema (whether certain schemas are available when we need to retrieve them from memory, i.e. its activation potential), and its applicability (the goodness of fit of the incoming information with the schema) (Yang, 2015). People with strong schemas label and interpret information supporting their schemas more rapidly and favorably (e.g., Koehler, 1993; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979; Miller, McHoskey, Bane, & Dowd, 1993; Munro & Ditto, 1997; Schneider, 2004; Yang, 2015) then when they are confronted with information or sources who disagree with their schemas (e.g., Giner-Sorolla & Chaiken, 1994; Prull, 2015; Vallone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985). Since schemas automatically try to self preserve themselves from being invalidated, divergent information will often be seen as biased (e.g., Giner-Sorolla & Chaiken, 1994; Prull, 2015; Vallone et al., 1985). Keltner and Robinson (1997) came up with the argument that humans view the world from a perspective of naive realism. Humans assume that they are in touch with reality, and that their cognitions, beliefs, attitudes, etc. reflect reality. Since they believe they are anchored in reality, information that disagrees with them must be out of touch with reality and thereby biased (Keltner & Robinson, 1997).

Overlapping with labeling and interpretation are the encoding and retrieval of information from memory. Schemas aid encoding and retrieving information, specifically schema-consistent material (e.g., Anderson & Pichert, 1978; Dooling & Lachman, 1971; Schneider, 2004). Nonetheless, other authors (e.g., Bower, Black, & Turner, 1979; Friedman, 1979; Hilton & von Hippel, 1996; Light, Kayra-Stuart, & Hollander, 1979; Pezdek, Whetstone, Reynolds, Askari, & Dougherty, 1989) rather underlined that, in a short term period, inconsistent information is retrieved better than the consistent information, but only when people are allowed to process information thoroughly, which is not that frequent in everyday life because of a lack of cognitive

resources. According to these authors (Bower et al., 1979; Friedman, 1979; Hilton & von Hippel, 1996; Light et al., 1979; Pezdek et al., 1989), during encoding, incongruent information receives additional processing as people try to re-establish the congruence among their schemas. This leads the incongruent information to being linked to other items of information. On the other hand, congruent information slides in without effort and does not get as linked to other items of information. Thus, during recall, the inconsistent items will have more links with other items, which serve as retrieval cues (Bower et al., 1979; Friedman, 1979; Hilton & von Hippel, 1996; Light et al., 1979; Pezdek et al., 1989; Schneider, 2004). Those findings bring up the following question: If in processing information about members of a stereotyped group people tend to remember more information that is inconsistent or incongruent with the stereotype, how come stereotypes are not dissolved under the weight of such disconfirmations? One possible explanation is that over time discrepant information is forgotten more rapidly than consistent information (Graesser, Woll, Kowalaki, & Smith, 1980). Usually the amount of stored disconfirming information is much smaller than the amount of confirmatory information, because discrepant information is seen as an exception, which makes it lose some of its salience over a longer time period (Rothbart, 1981; Weber & Crocker, 1983).

Finally, schemas facilitate the inferences we make about people and objects (Taylor & Crocker, 1981). In an important experiment conducted by Locksley, Borgida, Brekke, and Hepburn (1980), subjects were told that a target (male, female or not identified by gender) had performed either assertive or passive behaviors in one of three problem situations. The problem situations involved being harassed while shopping, having to interrupt a student favored by the professor in order to make a point, and having to break into a group conversation at a party in order to meet a likable person. The target's behavior (behavioral information) was manipulated by varying how he or she responded to each of the three problem situations, ranging from

assertive to passive behaviors. The assertive responses consisted of forcefully telling the other character to go away (situation 1), interrupting the favored student (situation 2), and breaking into the group conversation at the party (situation 3). The passive responses consisted of just ignoring the other character (situation 1), waiting in frustration but never making the point in class (situation 2), and never breaking into the group conversation (situation 3). It was expected that on ratings of assertiveness, gender would have an effect because men are perceived as more assertive than women. Findings however showed that on ratings of assertiveness, the gender label had no effect, while the actual behavior did, meaning that subjects relied on available behavioral information. Therefore, the researchers suggested that schemas and stereotypes only play a role in inferences about others when there is not other incoming information available (Locksley et al., 1980). Subsequently, several studies have shown that stereotypic inferences are significantly reduced or even eliminated when incoming information is present (e.g., Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Glick, Zion, & Nelson, 1988; Jussim, Nelson, Manis, & Soffin, 1995; Macrae, Shepherd, & Milne, 1992; Mettrick & Cowan, 1996; Weisz & Jones, 1993). This corpus of studies generated many reactions because it was unclear if researchers were stating that incoming information *always* or *sometimes* has precedence over schema information and stereotypes. A number of researchers (e.g., Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Dipboye, Fromkin, & Wiback, 1975; Jackson & Cash, 1985; Swim, 1993) advanced that if our schemas and stereotypes could get blown away so easily at every incoming data, it is hard to imagine that some people get victimized by them. These last authors rather believed that sometimes incoming information (e.g., individual attributes like gender, ethnicity, occupation, etc.) is more important than schemas and stereotypes, sometimes it is the opposite, and sometimes they interact together (e.g., Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Jackson & Cash, 1985; Swim, 1993). Kunda and Thagard (1996) pointed out that another reason why it is hard to say whether schemas and stereotypes or incoming information

have more weight in inferences is that they may differentially affect various types of inferences. For instance, when it comes to trait ratings (such as assertiveness), behavioral information tends to dominate schemas and stereotypes, but for more complex judgements, stereotypes often dominate (Kunda & Thagard, 1996). Despite that the specific reasons why one dominates over the other are not quite known and remain understudied, especially since the 2000s, it appears clear that incoming information and schemas are not mutually exclusive and they may very well interact (Schneider, 2004). Lastly, a few authors (e.g., Bless, Schwarz, & Kimmelmeier, 1996; Forgas, 1995; Schwarz, 1990; Schwarz & Clore, 1983; Wyer, Clore, & Isbell, 1999) added that inferences we make about people are not only based on schemas, stereotypes and incoming information. They are also affected by our moods—how one feels affect the content of stereotypes, as well as the processing of information. Good moods generally suggest that the world is fine, whereas sad moods may act as a cue that all is not right and there is a need to restore understanding and closure (e.g., Bless et al., 1996; Schwarz, 1990; Schwarz & Clore, 1983). Further, anger and anxiety can be quite intrusive because they generate many related thoughts. Thus, angry and anxious people are more likely to use their stereotypes as aids in processing information (e.g., Bless et al., 1996; Schwarz, 1990; Schwarz & Clore, 1983).

**Main measures of stereotypes.** Now that the concept of stereotypes has been defined, the following section presents measures of stereotypes because an *intimate* relationship exists between the two. For instance, those who believe that stereotypes are collective (e.g., Katz & Braly, 1933; Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, & Broverman, 1968) build their measures on the extent to which traits are shared by a number of people. Thus, the way stereotypes are measured is hardly neutral and is the reflection of conceptual baggage. Measurements of stereotypes can be categorized into two general categories: direct and indirect measures (Schneider, 2004).

***Direct measures.*** Direct measures of stereotypes include three main methods- that is free responses, attribute checking, and attribute rating (Schneider, 2004). First, free responses is the easiest way to assess the content of stereotypes—it simply consists of asking people what traits or features they associate with a given group, and to answer the question, subjects generate descriptors (e.g., adjectives or short sentences) (Katz & Braly, 1933). Free response methodologies have been extensively used to study stereotypes (e.g., Allen, 1996; Deaux, Winton, Crowley, & Lewis, 1985; Devine & Baker, 1991; Eagly & Mladinic, 1989; Esses, Haddock, & Zanna, 1994; Esses & Maio, 2002; Haddock & Zanna, 1998; Jackson, Lewandowski, Ingram, & Hodge, 1997; Monteith & Spicer, 2000; Niemann, Jennings, Rozelle, Baxter, & Sullivan, 1994). Nonetheless, free responses alone are not ideal measures since they may not pick up essential content of stereotypes (Schneider, 2004). Some of the content of stereotypes is largely implicit and not readily available to consciousness. In other words, we all have traits we can ascribe to groups but rarely access. For example, I know bananas are a good source of potassium but will not automatically have thoughts about potassium levels when I eat or think of bananas (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Schneider, 2004). Moreover, free response methods have not been used more often because of the difficulty to score and code such responses, which might be one of the reasons why no recent study using this method alone was found (Schneider, 2004).

To overcome the problems associated with their free response measures, an attribute checking technique was also introduced by Katz and Braly (1933) for their Princeton study on racial and ethnic stereotypes. The two researchers created a list of 84 traits, compiled through pretesting and their own a priori judgments, and asked subjects to select those which seem typical of Germans, Italians, Blacks, Irish, English, Jews, Americans, Chinese, Japanese, and Turks (Katz & Braly, 1933). After subjects performed this trait selection task for each of the 10 groups,

they were instructed to select the five traits that seem the most typical of the group in question. Percentages of subjects who had checked each trait as one of the five most typical traits for each group were presented (Katz & Braly, 1933). Of course, such a procedure is simple, and less intrusive than free responses, because subjects do not even have to generate the traits or features (Schneider, 2004). However, a few criticisms toward this kind of procedure remain underlying. On one hand, subjects are forced to report traits or features. For example, a subject may not hold stereotypes about Jews, and having no useful stereotypes of his own to draw on, he might be tempted to rely on hearsay or knowledge about what others think. Consequently, the traits reported are not necessarily those he personally believes go with Jews, but those that seem culturally right (Schneider, 2004). On the other hand, important aspects of the stereotype might be missed simply because subjects were not involved in the choice of stimuli, and one can only find stereotypes selected by the investigators (Schneider, 2004). Another problem with procedures like the Katz and Braly (1933) one is that it limits opportunities for sensitive analysis of stereotypes held by individuals. Attribute checking measures of stereotypes are based on consensus within a group, and do not allow for individual differences (Schneider, 2004).

Limitations associated with Katz and Braly's (1933) attribute checking technique brought the same two researchers to develop the attribute rating procedure, where subjects rate on a scale the extent to which each trait applies to each group (e.g., How likely is it that women are assertive? I think 40% of women are assertive) (Katz & Braly, 1933). Such measures have the advantage of providing a number that can be analyzed statistically and used in several comparisons (Schneider, 2004). Nevertheless, one cannot be exactly sure how people are making these judgments. Subjects are possibly using some sort of criterion or example as a rough guide to likelihood. Still, it remains discomfiting to realize that such a measure is frequently employed with a lack of knowledge about which baseline is used (Schneider, 2004).

*Indirect measures.* In light of the shortcomings related to direct measures, some researchers (e.g., Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz 1998; Jones & Sigall, 1971) have begun to use indirect measures of stereotypes. Practically, they allow to access nonconscious associations, and eliminate some of the reactivity (e.g., Do direct measures of stereotypes force or encourage people to think about groups in ways that they normally would not do?) and self-presentation issues (e.g., socially desirable responding) that affect most direct measures. Indirect measures include two main categories, that is reaction time measures and memory measures (Schneider, 2004).

Among reaction time or latency measures, direct association measures can be used (Amodio, 2014). Subjects are asked to perform some task, and the speed with which they perform it is measured. This type of measure assumes that when pieces of information are associated in memory, a task that involves inferring one from the other will be performed more rapidly than when the items are not closely associated (Schneider, 2004). Thus, one way to measure if a trait is associated with a group is to ask subjects to answer whether the group generally has that trait, and to measure latency of answering (e.g., Amodio, 2014; Brewer, Dull, & Liu, 1981; Lalonde & Gardner, 1989; Macrae et al., 1994). An additional way to extract a stereotype indirectly was elaborated by Gaertner and McLaughlin (1983) who developed a lexical decision task. Subjects are asked to look at a pair of letter strings and to decide whether both are words. Findings revealed that when the stimuli are both real words, subjects can answer “yes” faster when the words are associated (DOG-CAT) than when they are not (DOG-FAT). The same result was found between Blacks and stereotype traits such as “lazy” (Gaertner & McLaughlin, 1983). More recently, Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz (1998) suggested another indirect measure of stereotypes called the implicit association test (IAT), which became the most popular reaction-time implicit measure used to assess stereotypes and prejudice

(Schneider, 2004). Basically, subjects completing an IAT have to map two sets of associations onto a common response with the expectation that they will do much more rapidly when the two sets are consistent with one another (Greenwald et al., 1998). For instance, if it is assumed that most White subjects have some negative associations to Blacks and more positive ones to Whites, producing the same response to (a) Black names or faces and negative features and (b) White names and positive features should take a shorter amount of time, compared to when (a) Black names and positive features and (b) White names and negative features map onto the same responses (Greenwald et al, 1998).

Concerning the measurement of stereotypes with memory measures, while direct memory measures rely on people's abilities to report what they can remember (e.g., subjects recall more negative words for older people and positive words for younger people (Perdue & Gutman, 1990)), implicit memory measures are based on the premise that some aspects of memory may not be fully available to our consciousness (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Thus, to access such hidden memories, one commonly used implicit memory measure of stereotypes is the word completion task (e.g., Anderson, 1999; Gilbert & Hixon, 1991). A person who cannot consciously recall that he or she has recently seen the word "polite" may still be more inclined to fill in the blanks for P\_LI\_\_ with "polite" than with "police" (Schneider, 2004). For example, a study by Gilbert and Hixon (1991) showed that after exposure to an Asian woman, people were more likely to fill in the blanks with an Asian stereotype term, such as polite, than with a non-stereotype term like police.

One last important implicit way of measuring stereotypes is by using the bogus pipeline procedure (Jones & Sigall, 1971; Sigall, 1967). A difficulty in measuring stereotypes is that people may not tell the truth about their beliefs because they do not want to admit holding certain stereotypes. To get around this problem, the bogus pipeline procedure was established (Jones &

Sigall, 1971; Sigall, 1967). In this procedure, the participants are convinced that the experimenter can access their “true” beliefs, only by consulting a questionnaire that they completed at a prior session. Once the participants are convinced that the researcher is able to assess their “true” beliefs, it is expected that they will be more honest in answering the rest of the questions, to avoid being caught lying (Jones & Sigall, 1971). Conclusions show that the bogus pipeline is indeed efficient since people expressed more stereotypes when they are in the procedure than when they are asked the questions more directly (e.g., Akers, Massey, Clarke, & Lauer, 1983; Alexander & Fisher, 2003; Jones & Sigall, 1971).

Indirect and implicit measures are definitely in vogue nowadays, especially since they eliminate many potential problems with direct measures (Greenwald et al., 1998; Schneider, 2004). Does this mean that the use of direct measures should be dropped? Probably not. Stereotypes are complex and their multiple facets are picked up by different ways of measuring. However, indirect and implicit measures are cumbersome to use because they require testing subjects individually in computer labs (Schneider, 2004). To sum up, this means that no measure is always better. Depending on researchers’ objectives, there will continue to be many situations in which direct measures of stereotypes are the weapon of choice and conversely (Schneider, 2004).

**Some implications of the use of stereotypes.** This section addresses stereotypes’ implications. Unfortunately, most of the original literature on this topic is quite dated, mainly because the research in the past decades did not focus on the consequences of stereotypes but rather on the cognitive processes behind them (Schneider, 2004; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Therefore, more recent authors tend to cite the work of past authors, explaining why this section presents earlier work as its main source of references.

Stereotypes are not intrinsically harmful but are often seen as so because many theorists

regarded them as wrong (i.e. inaccurate) and bad (e.g., Adorno et al., 1950; Katz & Braly, 1935; Klineberg, 1951; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). In fact, they are helpful because they streamline thought processes, and direct initial behaviour when meeting people for the first time (Devine, 1989; Eagly & Diekmann, 2005; Hamilton, 1979; Troilo, 2013). If initial expectations can be modified when additional information is acquired, stereotypes can be rather beneficial (Blalock & Mcevoy Develis, 1986; Troilo, 2013). Yet, stereotypes have some potentially negative social implications (e.g., Brigham, 1971; Ganong et al., 1990; Schneider, 2004), especially if they function as preconceived conclusions or rigid judgments about people (e.g., Macrae et al., 1994; Tryon, 2014). Those negative social implications might arise when the perceiver's beliefs or behaviors are not adjusted as additional information is acquired to create nuances or exceptions to the existing schema. For example, erroneous expectations can bias the processing of information in such a way that new information is not evaluated fairly (Hamilton, 1979; Tryon, 2014). The problem with bias is that people think their stereotypes are accurate, despite a lack of objective information or contradiction of existing information (Schneider, 2004). Another example demonstrating how stereotypes can be detrimental works through cognitive behavioural confirmation, which is a process that reinforces stereotypes by creating information that supports them and ignoring information that could discount them (Hamilton, 1979; Myers, 2015; Tryon, 2014). Humans preferentially seek out information that confirms hypotheses based on their existing schemas, whether they are conscious of it or not (Darley & Gross, 1983; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Tryon, 2014). However, cognitive behavioural confirmation suggests that information congruent with the stereotype may be considered and information not fitting with it dismissed or distorted to be assimilated into the existing stereotype (Darley & Gross, 1983; Snyder & Cantor, 1979; Snyder & Swann, 1978; Tryon, 2014).

Another potential problem with stereotyping is the influence it might have on interactions with members of stereotyped groups. These groups may be treated differently, and misunderstandings, discrimination, disapproval, devaluation, rejection, etc. are likely to occur (Amir, 1969; Levine & Campbell, 1972; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008). This can get to the point where stereotypes are internalized by the members of a stereotyped group and influence how they perceive and value themselves as well as act (Ganong et al., 1990; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008). Stereotype threat is a concept illustrating how stereotypes can influence oneself's performance on important tasks (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). In some cases, stereotypical beliefs can have a positive effect on performance, but in other cases, because these beliefs are negative, they create self-fulfilling prophecies such as poor performance. Such decrements caused by the knowledge of the stereotype are called stereotype threats (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). For instance, White men performed more poorly on a math test when they were told that their performance would be compared with that of Asian men, and Whites performed more poorly than Blacks on a sport-related task when it was described to them as measuring their athletic ability (Aronson, 1972).

Lastly, stereotypes can lead to outgroup homogeneity, that is an overgeneralization of stereotyped characteristics or the tendency to view members of outgroups as more similar to each other than members of ingroups (Linville, Salovey, Fischer, 1986; Ostrom & Sedikides, 1992; Meissner & Brigham, 2001). Thus, acknowledgement of variation among individual members of the outgroup is not considered, which can reduce a particular group to a caricature that bears little resemblance to any group member (Aronson, 1972; Mayovich, 1972). Outgroup homogeneity occurs in part due to a lack of contact with outgroup members compared with ingroup members, and the quality of interaction with outgroup members is often more superficial (Stangor, 2000). This social distance creates a mental distance that prevents people to learn about the outgroup

members as individuals, and consequently differences among group members are disregarded or remain unknown (Stangor, 2000).

Now that a better understanding of stereotypes' terminology, way of operating and developing, as well as their measures and implications were established, the following section will address another important concept of this thesis, that is the family and parental roles. The next pages will allow to review the most relevant literature on the topic of stereotypes and parenthood.

### **The Modern Family**

**Canadian families.** An array of combined socioeconomic, historic, and demographic transformations are taking place worldwide, such as new living arrangements, rising female employment, better educated cohorts of men and women, an emphasis on higher order needs (i.e., self-actualization, need for recognition, etc.), postponement of both marriage and parenthood, the growth of ethnic and racial groups in our societies, in the context of past and current immigration policies, and an increase of births outside of marriage (Lesthaeghe & Neidert, s.d.). These changes are modeling the social ecology of entire societies. Nonetheless, people's way of thinking and stereotyping are not so easily transformed (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2005). For instance, despite the latest Canadian demographic data (Statistic Canada, 2012a) that clearly illustrate the impacts of the socioeconomic transitions, and how traditional family patterns have been shaken up (Bos et al., 2005), recent reviews of the literature demonstrate that the traditional nuclear family with two heterosexual parents and biological children is still seen as the "best" setting for raising children (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018).

Notwithstanding this perception of the traditional family as the epitome of family constellations, the number of children per family declined from 2.7 in 1961 to 1.9 in 2011, and more households are comprised of couples without children in 2011 (29.5%) than couples with

children (26.5%). Further, the number of non-married, non-intact, non-biological and non-heterosexual<sup>1</sup> Canadian families (e.g., divorced, single, step, same-sex, adoptive, etc.) has considerably increased over time (Statistics Canada, 2012b). In 1961, married couples represented 91.6% of families (Statistics Canada, 2012a). This percentage fell to 67% in 2011, a decrease largely attributed to the growth of common law couples (Statistics Canada, 2012a). The increased rates of divorce and separation (four Canadian marriages out of 10 ending in divorce in 2011 (Institut Vanier de la Famille, 2001) resulted in an important rise in single families in Canada. The number has nearly doubled over the last 50 years, moving from 8.4% in 1961 to 16.3% in 2011, accounting for a total of 1,527,845 lone parent families (Statistics Canada, 2012a). Of this total, 1,200,295 households (78.5%) were led by a single mother in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012a). However, male lone-parent families grow at a faster rate than female lone-parent families (+16.2% vs +6.0% in 2011) (Statistics Canada, 2012b). This is due to an increase number of fathers being granted custody of their children (Statistics Canada, 2012b).

The Census also shows a growing number of stepfamilies representing approximately 13% of all couples with children or 464,335 households in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012a). Of these, 271,930 families are simple stepfamilies, meaning that all children in the family are the biological or adopted children of only one parent, whose birth or adoption occurred before the current relationship. The remaining 192,410 stepfamilies are classified as complex (Statistics Canada, 2012a). Since children more commonly live with their mother after separation or divorce, three quarters of all Canadian stepfamilies are stepfather families (Statistics Canada, 2012a). It is essential to underline that these statistics probably underestimate the number of people involved in a stepfamily because family statistics are usually based on the residential

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<sup>1</sup> Statistic Canada did not break down the non-heterosexual families as married and not married, so we presume both are confounded.

family unit. Therefore, a stepfamily only exists if stepparents and stepchildren live in the same household (Claxton-Oldfield, Garber, & Gillcris, 2006). As such, while a child can be part of two stepfamilies at the same time (e.g., if both parents have formed new stable unions), Census data will only count one stepfamily (the one that holds custody of the designated child) (Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2006).

Moreover, the latest Census counted 64,575 same-sex couple families, representing 0.8% of all couples in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012a). The majority of these households are formed around a lesbian couple (91%), with 16.5% reporting living with a child at home, amounting to around 10,315 lesbian mothers in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2012a). It is important to mention that many children living in a same-sex family were probably born in previous marriages (Black, Gates, Sanders, & Taylor, 2000; Statistics Canada, 2012a). Indeed, about half (49.7%) of same-sex couples with children are stepfamilies (Statistics Canada, 2011).

The 2006 Canadian Census also showed a total of 603,743 households living with an adopted child (Statistics Canada, 2006). While 23% of all adoptions were from couples with no biological children, 56% were by parents with at least one biological child (Statistics Canada, 2006). The Adoption Council of Canada (2008) specifies that approximately 2,600 domestic adoptions and 2,000 international adoptions happen every year.

Similar demographic trends have been noted in other countries. For example, in 2013, in France and Sweden, between a third to a half of children were born outside of marriage, and, during the same year in the United States, 41% of children under the age of 18 were born to unwed parents (Child Trends, 2013). The diversification in family constellations across the world highlights the importance for family researchers to pay attention to these different groups, and how they are perceived (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018).

**The ideology of the nuclear family.** In many societies across the world, the nuclear family is still seen as a natural imperative, as well as a universal, necessary, and ideal entity of moral superiority (e.g., Farber, 1973; Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Scanzoni, 2004; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). The nuclear family is represented as a first-marriage union between a mother and a father that have biological children (e.g., Coontz, 1992; Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Miall & March, 2005; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). In this idealized view, men and women hold distinct, although complementary, predictable social roles delineating motherhood and fatherhood (e.g., Arendell, 2000; Candib, 1989; Ganong & Coleman, 1995). Women are highly represented in domestic roles versus paid employment roles, as well as roles that call for higher communality such as nurturance, sensitivity to and concern for others, warmth, selflessness, etc. (e.g., Arendell, 2000; Hays, 1996). Alternatively, men are often placed in roles that call for higher agency, involving independence, self-confidence, dominance, self-assertion, self-expansion, etc. Thus, fathers are expected to fulfill the role of breadwinners by providing for their families in a financial manner (e.g., Matlin, 2007; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). These social roles lead people to perceive mothers and fathers with narrow lenses which restrict motherhood and fatherhood conceptualizations (Riggs, 1997). Additionally, the literature on motherhood and fatherhood has largely been examined from a Western cultural standpoint, neglecting variations based upon race and ethnicity (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Indeed, White mothers and fathers are often described as the norm and their experiences are universalized, thus feeding a dominant discourse, which marginalizes nonwhite parenthood (e.g., Arendell, 2000; Hays, 1996; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018; Verbian, 2006). An example is provided by Twine's (2001) study looking at White women who become transracial mothers (e.g., mothers involved with a Black man). These mothers are depicted as transgressive and they are subjected to assumptions about their maternity, morality,

sexuality, and respectability only because they do not follow the norm (Twine, 2001).

Furthermore, in his study, Townsend (2002) highlighted several assumptions regarding fathers.

He states that fathering entails the following responsibilities: (a) to be married to the mother of his children, (b) to live with his children, (c) to be the only adult male in the household, and (d) to provide for and protect the children (Townsend, 2002). However, these assumptions only reflect the experiences of middle class, White, heterosexual fathers described as a benchmark.

Recent data in the field of stereotypes and parenthood supports the notion that the nuclear family remains the standard to date (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Despite the various family configurations that co-exist nowadays, researchers find that mothers and fathers continue to question whether to focus on parenting or breadwinning (e.g., Troilo, 2013; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Indeed, men and women who follow prescribed norms are viewed more positively in North America and elsewhere in the world (e.g., Arditti & Lopéz, 2005; Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2006; Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2005; Dow, 2015; Elliott, Powell, & Brenton, 2015). This is not surprising considering that stereotypes are not easy to change- nor are social norms. Recent studies support the idea that fathering and mothering are becoming more complex, in the sense that they both include caring and breadwinning behaviors (Troilo, 2013). However, the portrait of what a family is or should be, is still very much linked to the nuclear family with two heterosexual parents, married for the first time, and their biological children (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018).

***Motherhood.*** Motherhood involves the dynamic activity of mothering, which is a socially constructed set of activities, attributes, and relationships involved in nurturing and caring for people (Arendell, 2000; Forcey, 1994). The study of motherhood expanded dramatically over the 20<sup>th</sup> century and became more multidisciplinary (Arendell, 2000). At first, the field of research

was mainly focused on the quality of mothering and its supposed effects on a child (e.g., Mischel & Fuhr, 1988; Roxburgh, 1997). However, today's scholars consider a broad range of topics such as mothers' activities, for instance in the workplace, understandings' of what it is to be a mother in a variety of contexts, and experiences, such as balancing work and family (e.g., Arendell, 2000; Benin & Keith, 1995; Hughes & Galinsky, 1994; Marshall, Barnett, & Sayer, 1998; Neal, Chapman, Ingersol-Dayton, & Emlen, 1993; Presser, 1995; Sears & Galambos, 1993; Waldfogel, 1997). This shift is partly explained by the adoption of an ecological perspective, which requires examination of individual behavior embedded in a network of interlocking systems, such as the extended family, the culture, and the economic, political, and social spheres (Arendell, 2000; Gerson, Alpert, & Richardson, 1984).

Regardless of those developments, the research published at the turn of the century still suggests that the category mother is entwined with notions of femininity, and women's gender identity is reinforced by mothering (Arendell, 2000; Chodorow, 1989, 1990; Glenn, 1994; Hays, 1996; McMahan, 1995). In other words, motherhood is presumed to be a primary identity for most adult women, to a point where womanhood and motherhood are treated as synonymous identities and categories of experience (Arendell, 2000; Hays, 1996). Yet, not all women are mothers, and nurturing and caring are not exclusive domains of women (Arendell, 2000; Forcey, 1994; Rothman, 1994; Ruddick, 1994; Schwartz, 1994). Such views lead to the expectation that mothers are part of a homogenous group, that there are defining characteristics of the group, and that there is a naturalness about the category (e.g., Bastian & Haslam, 2006; Brescoll & LaFrance, 2004; Dar-Nimrod & Heine, 2011; Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2000; Keller, 2005; Park, Banchevsky, & Reynolds, 2015; Rothbart & Park, 2004; Rothbart & Taylor, 1992; Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Estrada, 2001; Yzerbyt, Rocher, & Schadron, 1997).

Such expectations feed off another concept associated with the motherhood literature- that is the intensive motherhood ideology (Hays, 1996). This ideology conveys the conviction that mothers should be the central caregivers to children and should always prioritize the child's needs above all other activities (Hays, 1996). Through in-depth interviews and survey questions, 38 mothers with different social classes and employment statuses took part in Hays' (1996) study and described intensive motherhood as "good childrearing that requires the day-to-day labor of nurturing the child, listening to the child, attempting to decipher the child's needs and desires (...), and placing the child's well-being ahead of their [mothers'] own convenience" (p. 115). According to Hays (1996), the intensive mothering ideology not only communicates the idea that motherhood is essential to women, and real motherhood is based on a biological connection, but also that being a mother is the most important role a woman must ever have. Thus, good mothers are always there for their children (child-centered), emotionally involved, and self-sacrificing (Arendell, 2000; Bassin, Honey, & Kaplan, 1994; Hays, 1996). Hays (1996) emphasized that intensive methods of childrearing can only be accomplished when mothers deprioritize their own needs and personal goals, which means that no room is left for employment because it limits mothers' availability to their children. Consequently, the growth and development of children relies almost exclusively on mothers who are expected to have nearly super-human capacities to nurture and guide (Ganong & Coleman, 2004; Ganong & Coleman, 1995). Following social role theory (Eagly, 1987), which postulates that individuals behave according to a set of socially determined rules based on their social role transmitted through socialization processes, it is understood that women have mostly come to adhere to the intensive mothering discourse. Indeed, women believe that mothers are required to be loving, caring, to have never-ending supplies of patience, to be good listeners and communicators, to be understanding and sensitive to children's needs, to discipline competently, be responsible, consistent, fair, and able to handle

any mothering situation (Arendell, 2000; Brown, Small, & Lumley, 1997; Hays, 1996).

Consequently, intensive mothering ideology has become the normative standard by which mothering practices are evaluated (Arendell, 2000), and mothers who do not conform to the script are subjugated to a variety of deviancy discourses (e.g., Arendell, 2000; Fineman, 1995; Kurz, 1995; Sidel, 1996; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015).

***Fatherhood.*** While women are still more tightly tied to the role of mom than men are to the role of dad (Park, Smith, & Correll, 2010), and often portrayed as naturally more nurturing and innately suited to child rearing, for men, parenting is characterized as a learned behavior (Gaunt, 2006). Fatherhood is related to a range of parenting functions and attributes socially constructed and played out in specific circumstances (Townsend, 2002). Scholarly interest toward fatherhood emerged in the 1970s and 80s, but it is really during the 1990s that a more extensive and eclectic social science literature on numerous aspects of fatherhood was produced (Lamb, 2000). A wide range of issues were explored, including diverse forms of fatherhood, father involvement, the father-child relationship, the children's and father's wellbeing and development, and paternal identity (Morman & Floyd, 2006). This expansion created a political platform for public debates around single parenthood, deadbeat dads, androgynous fathers, welfare reform, teenage pregnancy, fathers' rights and responsibilities, and fathers' unique contributions to the child development (Blankenhorn, 1995; Morman & Floyd, 2006). The actual body of work on fatherhood represents a wide-ranging assortment of approaches to creating a sense of meaning and understanding of fatherhood (Morman & Floyd, 2006). It can be organized according to three trends posing three fundamental questions that have captured the interest of researchers: Fathers' presence (Where have fathers gone? What is the impact of fathers' absence of the well-being of the child?, etc.), fathers' involvement (What do fathers actually do? What are

fathers' roles?, etc.), and meaning of fatherhood (What does fatherhood mean?) (Roer-Strier, Strier, Este, Shimoni, & Clark, 2005).

First, the historical approach of paternal roles describes fatherhood within every historical epoch, focusing on the dominant belief about the role of effective and good fatherhood (Marsiglio, Day, & Lamb, 2000; Morman & Floyd, 2006). For example, in colonial times, the father acted as primary moral leader, while in the middle part of the 20th century, the father was seen as primary breadwinner (Marsiglio et al., 2000; Morman & Floyd, 2006). Lamb (2000) referred to the father as a moral teacher or guide before the Industrial Revolution and as a breadwinner from the Industrial Revolution until the Great Depression. Thus, the meaning of fatherhood is mainly a social product; as culture and time change, so do standards of being a good father (e.g., Griswold, 1993; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Morman & Floyd, 2002; Pleck & Pleck, 1997).

Second, the shifting demography of fatherhood examines the contexts in which fathers operates (Morman & Floyd, 2006). For example, Lamb (2004) looked at African American, African Caribbean, Latino, European, Asian, farmer, and divorced fathers, Enderstein and Boonzaier (2015) looked at young South African fathers, and Ito and Izumi-Taylor (2013) compared fathers' thoughts of about fatherhood in the USA and Japan. Others focused on stepfathers (Marsiglio, 2004), single fathers (Heath & Orthner, 1999), nonresidential fathers (Braver & O'Connell, 1998), and teenage fathers (Marsiglio & Cohan, 1997).

A third approach, focused on father involvement, looks at paternal involvement in three ways, that is accessibility (i.e. presence and availability), engagement (i.e. direct contact and caregiving), and responsibility (i.e. arrangement of resources associated with taking care of the children) (e.g., Behnke, Taylor, & Parra-Cardona, 2008; Lamb, Pleck, Charnow, & Levine, 1987;

Lasser, Fite, & Wadende, 2011), Morman & Floyd, 2006). Associated with this line of work, is the study of the unique contribution a father makes to the development of his children, in a co-parenting relationship with the mother (e.g., Dienhart, 2001; Lasser et al., 2011; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Tamis-LeMonda, Shannon, Cabrera, & Lamb, 2004; Wood & Repetti, 2004).

Another approach, the good-bad dad approach, assesses fatherhood on a dichotomous continuum ranging from descriptors like reluctant, absent, dysfunctional, or violent to descriptors like contributing, loving, full, and equal participant performing his duties as father (Morman & Floyd, 2006; Utrata, 2008). Central to this line of analysis is the assumption that some men are bad fathers and others are good. This framing of men as either good or bad fathers presents a dichotomous and contradictory picture of fatherhood (Troilo & Coleman, 2008). More focus is definitely being placed on the importance of the role of the father and the positive contributions good fathers make (Morman & Floyd, 2006). Nevertheless, another perspective highlighting the children neglected, abused, and rejected by bad and absent fathers is constantly raised within this approach (e.g., Fox & Benson, 2004; Furstenberg, 1988; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Pleck, 2004; Utrata, 2008).

A fifth approach that assesses fatherhood is the deficit approach, which compares the role of the father to that of the mother (Miall & March, 2005; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Roer-Strier et al., 2005). Many criticized this approach since motherhood is usually framed as the dominant, privileged, and preferred model for parenting (Park et al., 2010). Fathers are then seen as subordinate to mothers, second-best substitute, or helpers in the parenting process (Marsiglio et al., 2000; Miall & March, 2005). Scholars who have criticized this line of work call off mother-privileged assessments and advocate for the promotion of both motherhood and fatherhood for their similar and unique contributions (e.g., Cummings, Goeke-Morey, & Raymond, 2004; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Fuligni & Brooks-Gunn, 2004; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004).

The developmental perspective is another approach for understanding fatherhood (Morman & Floyd, 2006). It considers influences of the micro, meso, and macro levels of social life that construct meanings for the role of the father. By analyzing sociological issues such as gender, race, economics, religions, etc., it provides a lens from which to explore the many facets of fatherhood (Costa, Pereira, & Leal, 2015; Costa, Almeida, Anselmo, Ferreira, Pereira, & Leal, 2014; Frias-Navarro, Monterde-i-Bort, Pascual-Soler, & Badenes-Ribera, 2015; Frias-Navarro, Monterde-i-Bort, Barrientos-Delgado, Badenes-Ribera, & Cardenas-Castro, 2014; Marsiglio & Cohan, 2000).

Finally, the generative fathering perspective emphasizes effective fatherhood as perpetuating the next generation of fathers through the care and nurturing provided by the current generation of fathers (Morman & Floyd, 2006). Thus, fatherhood is seen as a genuine and sacrificial task, including caring and attention (e.g., Floyd & Morman, 2005; Floyd & Morman, 2001). In concordance with this last approach, are related concepts of the Good Father and the New Father (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). As it was found in the most two recent reviews of the literature pertaining to stereotypes and parenthood (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018), fathers are more often depicted as loving, affectionate, involved, nurturing, and consistent. In other words, it is frequently expected that fathers fulfill the roles of teacher, protector, provider, and be devoted, available, attentive, involved role model figures (Marsiglio et al., 2000; Marsiglio, Hutchinson, & Cohan, 2000; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018).

### **Early Research on Stereotypes Associated with Family and Parenthood**

Motherhood and fatherhood are highly valued in Canada and the United States (Arendell, 2000; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). In fact, earlier North American researchers (e.g., Greene, 1963; Polit, 1978; Rainwater, 1965; Rollin, 1970)

demonstrated that individuals who deliberately choose to not have children have been generally negatively stereotyped in the past. For example, Polit (1978) found that voluntary childless people were stereotyped as less socially desirable, less well adjusted, less nurturing, less friendly, less good natured, more autonomous, rebellious, nonconventional, self-centered, immature, and more socially distant than individuals with children. Callan's (1985) results supported these conclusions. He found that voluntary childless people were stereotyped as more individualistic, career oriented, selfish, materialistic, as well as less conformist, less loving, less devoted, less likable, and less emotionally mature than parent groups. The same study revealed that involuntary childless adults were stereotyped as lonely and not satisfied in old age (Callan, 1985). Differences were also highlighted in early research on parents with few versus many children. For instance, women who only want one child were stereotyped as self-centered, lacking in responsibility, selfish, sick, cold, and self-reliant, while women who want seven or more children were stereotyped as patient, kind-hearted, sweet, likeable, happy-go-lucky, and loving their husband (Rainwater, 1965). Callan (1985) pointed out that parents with larger families were stereotyped more positively as having happy marriages, being nonmaterialistic but hard working, and being less individualistic. The smaller the family was, the less the attribution of positive traits was associated to the parents (Callan, 1985).

In addition to stereotypes linked with parental status, early research also focused on parents' relationship statuses. In fact, Etaugh and Malstrom (1981) and Etaugh and Stern (1984) conducted studies on stereotypes of married, unmarried, widowed, and divorced individuals, providing highly consistent results. On one hand, they found that married persons of both gender were rated as more responsible, and more happy than unmarried individuals, as more reliable, secure and personally satisfied than divorced persons, and as more stable, likable, attractive,

sociable, comfortable with others, and better adjusted than never-married persons (Etaugh & Malstrom, 1981; Etaugh & Stern, 1984). On the other hand, widowed persons were stereotyped more positively than unmarried groups, more specifically they were described as more responsible, stable, dedicated to their careers, and better adjusted than divorced persons, as well as more sociable and attractive than never-married persons (Etaugh & Malstrom, 1981; Etaugh & Stern, 1984). Concerning never-married individuals, they were stereotyped as more responsible, personally satisfied, stable, and dedicated to their careers than divorced persons but as the least well-adjusted interpersonally (Etaugh & Malstrom, 1981; Etaugh & Stern, 1984). In contrast, divorced people were stereotyped as more sociable, attractive, and successful in their jobs than never married individuals (Etaugh & Malstrom, 1981; Etaugh & Stern, 1984). The following year, Etaugh and Petroski (1985) published an additional study on this topic, but only with women as the focus of their research. They arrived at similar conclusions, that is that married women were stereotyped as happier than unmarried women, more reliable, secure, personally satisfied, and better adjusted than divorced women, and as more sociable, secure, influential, attractive, and comfortable with others than never-married women (Etaugh & Petroski, 1985). Once more, widowed women were stereotyped more favourably than unmarried women, possibly because their marital status is a result of circumstances beyond their control. More precisely, widows were stereotyped as more stable and reliable than divorced women, and as more sociable and likable than never-married women (Etaugh & Petroski, 1985). Again, divorced and never-married women were the most negatively stereotyped groups. Yet, divorced women were still stereotyped as more sociable, likable, and comfortable with others than never-married women, while never-married women were stereotyped as more stable and reliable than divorced women (Etaugh & Petroski, 1985).

As shown in these pioneer studies, relationship and parental statuses are social categories acting as a cue for the formation of stereotypes. A meta-analysis was conducted by Ganong, Coleman, and Mapes (1990) to assess how research had studied relationship and parental related stereotypes. Three questions were addressed in the meta-analysis: (a) Are married adults perceived more favourably than adults who are not married (divorced, single, widowed, and remarried)?, (b) Are adults who are parents perceived more favourably than adults who have not reproduced?, and (c) Are children whose parents are married to each other perceived more favourably than children whose parents are not married to each other? Twenty-six studies published between 1978 and 1989 were found and reviewed. Results support the assertion that individuals from nuclear families were evaluated more positively than individuals from other family constellations. Further, results allowed researchers to conclude with some confidence that married adults were perceived more favourably than adults with other marital statuses (divorced, single, widowed, and remarried). Also, findings indicated that children whose parents were married were stereotyped more favourably than children whose parents were not married. However, the findings for parental status did not point in the direction of a differential evaluation. It could not be concluded that parents were evaluated more positively than adults without children. Yet, when the comparison was simply between parents and *voluntarily* childless adults, it appeared that parents were more positively stereotyped than adults who chose to not have children (Ganong et al., 1990).

To our knowledge, Ganong et al. (1990) meta-analysis was the last review to assess stereotypes related to family structure. Thus, to update our current understanding on this important question, Valiquette-Tessier, Vandette, and Gosselin (2015) conducted a systematic review on the body of literature published between 2003 and 2013 on stereotypes associated with

married, divorced, single, step, same sex and adoptive parents. Seventeen studies formed the researchers' final sample (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). Findings from this review revealed that married parents remain the standard by which other parents are evaluated. Despite positive stereotyped attitudes toward certain other types of parents, married heterosexual biological parents living in an intact family were still perceived more favorably than adults with other relationship and parental statuses. In fact, when a parental type was compared to married mothers or fathers, that parental type was generally regarded less favorably. In other words, traditional parental roles (married and adoptive parents) were mainly stereotyped more positively than less traditional parental roles (divorced, single, step, and same-sex parents) (e.g., Troilo, 2013; Planitz & Feeney, 2009; Troilo & Coleman, 2008; Claxton-Oldfield & O'Neil, 2007; Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2006; Schultz & Leigh, 2004). More particularly, divorced parents were perceived in the most negative manner (e.g., Schultz & Leigh, 2004; Troilo & Coleman, 2008).

It appears pertinent to establish a parallel between the results from Valiquette-Tessier and her colleagues' (2015) systematic review and the meta-analysis completed by Ganong and colleagues (1990). First, in comparison to the 17 articles identified in the systematic review (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015), Ganong and colleagues (1990) found a total of 26 articles published over a period of eleven years (1978 to 1989). While this could suggest that more research was conducted in the field of stereotypes and parenthood thirty to forty years ago, this may also be due to slightly different inclusion criteria, and search methods (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). Additionally, the studies reported in the systematic review (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015) reviewed a broader range of parent stereotypes (married, divorced, single, step, same-sex, and adoptive parents). In the meta-analysis (Ganong et al., 1990), only stereotypes associated with married, divorced, single, widowed, and remarried parents were investigated. Thus, if the inclusion criteria would have been extended to comprise other parental and marital statuses, the

search might have reported even more articles (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). Secondly, the methods used in the last decade to examine stereotypes related to parenthood cover a larger spectre of procedures and techniques (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015), than those reported by Ganong et al. (1990). In fact, studies included in their meta-analysis (1990) tended to all employ a brief written description of the target person as the stimulus (vignette, job application, videotape, etc.). Studies reported in Valiquette-Tessier and colleagues (2015) review used questionnaires, surveys, rating scales, lists of descriptors, vignettes, interviews, and open-ended questions. Finally, participants groups appear to be similar in both reviews, that is mainly university students and professionals such as school psychologists (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015).

When comparing the results from the systematic review (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015) to the ones of the previous meta-analysis (Ganong et al., 1990), it becomes clear that stereotyped attitudes do not appear to have changed drastically in the last thirty years. The main findings have remained stable over the decades and continue to support the idea that married parents tend to be evaluated more positively than parents living in other family constellations, that is the standard against which others are compared (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). In their meta-analysis, Ganong and colleagues (1990) found an overall weighted effect size of  $+0.4918$ , indicating with confidence that married parents were evaluated more favorably than parents in other relationship statuses. Studies reported in the systematic review reported similar results (e.g., Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2006; Herbstrith et al., 2013; Miall & March, 2005; Planitz & Feeney, 2009; Schultz & Leigh, 2004; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008). At the same time, while stereotypes related to family structure have not change considerably, evidence of growing tolerance for divorce, remarriage, and same-sex parenting has also been found (e.g., Camilleri & Ryan, 2006; Choi et al., 2005; Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2005; Troilo & Coleman, 2008).

Other than Valiquette-Tessier and colleagues' (2015) recent review that claimed that the nuclear family is still frequently labelled as "normal", "well equipped" and "functional" while other family constellations are often, although not always, portrayed as dysfunctional or simply less good, some earlier researchers have also stated that members from nuclear families are stereotyped more positively than members from other family configurations (e.g., Bryan, Ganong, Coleman, & Bryan, 1985; Etaugh & Malstrom, 1981; Ganong et al., 1990; Ganong & Coleman, 1983; Morgan & Barden, 1985). Yet, other authors advanced that no difference exists (e.g., Etaugh & Foresman, 1983; Goldsteing-Hendley, Green, & Evans, 1986). These inconsistencies may be explained by some sociodemographic factors that have been found to affect stereotypes held toward parenthood (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). On one hand, it seems that older individuals entertain more traditional attitudes about marriage and family than their younger counterparts. Thus, older age might translate into more conventional stereotypes related to different parental roles (GoldScheider & Kaufman, 2006). On the other hand, higher education is related with openness to a wider range of family types. Hence, it was found that the more education one has, the more accepting of nonmarital childbearing one is (GoldScheider & Kaufman, 2006). Further, ethnicity influences stereotypes associated to parenthood (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). For example, it appears that Caucasians in North-America and Europe are more accepting of nonmarital childbearing, while Hispanics highly value marriage, suggesting that they are less likely to approve of unmarried parenthood (GoldScheider & Kaufman, 2006; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Moreover, relationship and parental statuses also have an impact (GoldScheider & Kaufman, 2006). Indeed, married adults tend to be more supportive of married parenthood, and parents tend to have more traditional attitudes toward marriage and family than non-parents. In comparison, divorced or separated adults hold less positive attitudes toward marriage (GoldScheider & Kaufman, 2006). Lastly, gender and sexual orientation also influence

stereotypes related to parenthood (GoldScheider & Kaufman, 2006). For instance, Choi and colleagues (2005) found that lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and females' stereotypes toward gay and lesbian parents were significantly less negative than those held by heterosexuals and males in general.

Given demographic transformations, such as the weakening of the marriage institution, increases in nonmarital childbirths, and childbearing occurring later in life, families have been the theatre of a number of important changes over the past decades (Furstenberg, 2014). Valiquette-Tessier and her colleagues' (2015) systematic review was highly useful in the design of this thesis. Indeed, this systematic review highlighted different limitations associated with previous research. Thus, this thesis will address these shortcomings.

(1) most of the research occurred outside Canada, more particularly in the United States (e.g., Arditti & Lopéz, 2005; Behnke et al., 2008; Bermudez, Zak-Hunter, Stinson, & Abrams, 2014; Chaney, 2009; Choi et al., 2005; DeJean et al., 2012; Dow, 2015; Durand, 2011; Elliott et al., 2015; Este & Tachble, 2009; Fingerhut & Peplau, 2006; Herbstrith et al., 2013; Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013; Jerome & Sweeney, 2014; Kwon & Roy, 2007; Lasser et al., 2011; Miall & March, 2005; Qiu, Schvaneveldt, & Sahin, 2013; Rincon & Trung Lam, 2011; Roer-Strier et al., 2005; Sealey-Ruiz, 2013; Taylor & Behnke, 2005; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008; Wilkinson, Magora, Garcia, & Khurana, 2009). The very small pool of Canadian studies (e.g., Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2006; Miall & March, 2005) makes it hard to compare it with the vast American corpus. Furthermore, it is interesting to detect differences, if any, within North America, and explore potential causes of such differences. This thesis will allow for future studies to do so.

(2) most studies only focused on certain parental roles, often limiting themselves to one gender (e.g., focused solely to fathers: Behnke et al., 2008; Chaney, 2009; Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2015; Este & Tachble, 2009; Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013; Kwon & Roy, 2007; Lasser et

al., 2011; Ratele, Shefer, & Clowes, 2012; Roer-Strier et al., 2005; Strier, 2014; Strier & Roer-Strier, 2005; Taylor & Behnke, 2005; Utrata, 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2009; focused solely on mothers: Arditti & Lopéz, 2005; Bermudez et al., 2014; Dow, 2015; Durand, 2011; Elliott et al., 2015; Rincon & Trung Lam, 2011; Sealey-Ruiz, 2013; Wycisk & Kleka, 2014). If mothers and fathers were investigated within the same study, usually no distinction based on gender was made (e.g., Costa et al., 2015; Costa et al., 2014; Frias-Navarro et al., 2015; Frias-Navarro et al., 2014; Jerome & Sweeney, 2014).

(3) in the last decade or so, some parental roles (e.g., adoptive parents and stepmothers) have received little to no representation in studies on parental stereotypes (e.g., only study on stereotypes associated with stepmothers: Christian, 2005; only three studies on adoptive parents: Jerome & Sweeney, 2014; Suter, Reyes, & Ballard, 2011; Troilo & Coleman, 2008). This limit did not allow for comparisons to take place. By documenting how a large array of parental roles are stereotyped, we allow other researchers to produce an evolutive analysis in time as well as several comparisons.

(4) most studies do not include a variety of populations in their sampling and mainly work with college students or professionals such as school psychologists, which limits generalizations (e.g., Camilleri & Ryan, 2006; Eby, Allen, Noble, & Lockwood, 2004; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008).

(5) most authors do not use a theoretical frameworks to interpret their findings (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018).

### **Choosing a Theoretical Framework for the Study of Stereotypes Associated with Parental Roles**

Basic frameworks have been elaborated to conduct research on stereotypes. Among them, two have been highly influential to the field- that is the sociocultural and cognitive orientations

(Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Katz & Braly, 1933; Lippmann, 1922; Schneider, 2004). These are general approaches that have guided the conduct of research over the last century (Shaw & Costanza, 1970).

First, the sociocultural approach, also called the socio learning perspective, focuses on society (Hess & Blanchard-Fields, 1999). Authors within this framework look at the evolution of stereotypes within a particular cultural system, and its modes of transmission (e.g., Giles, Harwood, Pierson, Clément, & Fox, 1998; Silverstein & Parrott, 1997; Speas & Obenshain, 1995). Katz and Braly (1933) were the pioneers in this line of work. They were the first to make explicit the notion of consensus in the definition of stereotypes, thus emphasizing the importance to study stereotypes as a group or social phenomenon (Katz & Braly, 1933). Sociocultural researchers are not interested in *why* stereotypes exist (i.e. their origin) because they believe that stereotypes derive from direct observations of the differences among various groups in a given society. This perspective rather focuses on the *ways of learning* stereotypes, such as media, commercials, periodicals, peer groups, interactions, etc. (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Schneider, 2004; Wilson & Keil, 2001). However, the sociocultural approach does not elucidate how these shared images turn into stereotypes. It is as if what is portrayed in the media is simply absorbed by its audience (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Schneider, 2004; Wilson & Keil, 2001).

Second, the cognitive orientation states that human beings are rational creatures objectively processing and evaluating information (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Wilson & Keil, 2001). As Lippmann (1922) pointed out, reality is too complex to be fully understood. Indeed, the human capacity for processing information is limited (e.g., time wise, resources available, etc.). Hence, cognitive limitations render humans vulnerable to systematic biases in processing information, and these biases play a significant role in the formation and maintenance of stereotypes (Lippmann, 1922; Schneider, 2004). The cognitive perspective supports the concept

that stereotypes act as shortcuts. They help the human being in reducing his complex environment to make sense out of the intricacies of his social world (e.g., Allport, 1954; Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Fishman, 1956; Gordon, 1962; Hamilton et al., 1994; Leyens et al., 1994; Schneider et al., 1979; Schneider, 2004; Vinacke, 1957).

These two orientations suffer from weaknesses as general approaches to the study of stereotypes, which make them unfit as theoretical frameworks for the purpose of this thesis (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981). First, researchers under the sociocultural umbrella entertain the assumption that the transmission and integration of stereotypes are simple, and that members of a particular society acquire the exact same stereotypes as a result of being part of a certain culture (e.g., Giles et al., 1998; Silverstein & Parrott, 1997; Speas & Obenshain, 1995). This thesis does not only aim at identifying the most common stereotypes held toward parents but also the ones held by a significant minority. Further, since the cognitive approach is directly concerned with perceptual-cognitive factors, it emphasizes *processes* rather than *descriptive outputs*. This framework uses fine-grained analyses of the mechanisms involved in perception, such as models of information-processing and memory (e.g., Allport, 1954; Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Fishman, 1956; Gordon, 1962; Hamilton et al., 1994; Schneider et al., 1979; Schneider, 2004; Vinacke, 1957). In other words, contemporary cognitivists are no longer invested in global evaluations of the targets but in times, recall, recognition of particular information (Leyens et al., 1994). Yet, the goal of the present thesis is to identify the *content* of the stereotypes associated with mothers and fathers in a variety of modern family situations.

Researchers in the field of stereotypes and parenthood rarely use and explicitly detail a theoretical framework to interpret the stereotypical content associated to mothers and fathers (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Based on Valiquette-Tessier and her colleagues' two reviews of the literature, the most frequently employed theoretical

frameworks are: (a) the ecological theory (Behnke, Taylor, & Parra-Cardona, 2008; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; parenthood is thought of in terms of contexts, like the microsystem, the mesosystem, and the macrosystem), (b) the symbolic interactionist framework (Taylor & Behnke, 2005; social roles, such as being a parent, are linked to societal expectations that influence the behaviors and actions conducted by the individuals in a prescribed role), (c) the intersectionality paradigm (Bermudez et al., 2014; multiple contexts, systems of privilege, oppression, ideologies, and social locations intersect to produce unique and diverse expressions of lived reality and family life), and (d) the social constructivist theoretical perspective (Strier, 2014; draws on participants' everyday experiences as a way to understand the meanings they attach to their lived realities of parenthood under the hardship of structural inequalities, such as unemployment and poverty). All of those approaches help researchers understand the complex interplay of influencing agents in shaping stereotypes relative to parents. In this sense, it facilitates knowledge being expressed in social contexts, never free or detached from specific influences (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). The above-mentioned authors call for the importance of using a theoretical framework for studying stereotypes about parental roles that takes into consideration multiple contextual variables at play in the development and maintenance of stereotypes (Behnke et al., 2008; Bermudez et al., 2014; Strier, 2014; Taylor & Behnke, 2005).

Therefore, it becomes clear that the chosen theoretical framework has to focus on the *content* of stereotypes, held by *large groups* as well as *minorities*, within environments in which evolution occurs. Thus, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1977, 1979) attracted our attention because the theory encompasses some aspects of the other frameworks used in the past, such as social roles, ideologies, social locations, and structural inequalities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Also, the theory's multisystemic framework seems well-suited for the integration of various environments in order to gain a general but also precise

comprehension of stereotypes associated with different parental roles (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Indeed, Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 3) proposed that the developing child is surrounded by layers of relationships (i.e. embedded structures or sub-environments), like a set of nested Russian dolls. The inner circle, which he called the microsystem, refers to settings in which the child has direct, face-to-face relationships with significant people such as parents, friends, and teachers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). There are usually cross-relationships between these small settings (e.g., parents talk to teachers), and these connections are called the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Beyond this point, is an outer circle of people indirectly involved in the child's development, such as the parents' employers, family health care workers, school administrators, etc. This is called the exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1979) also described a macrosystem, referring to the cultural and economic conditions of the society, and a chronosystem, meaning that the nested relationships are situated in time. Overall, the sub-environments are interdependent, interact, and contribute to each other in some way (Lau & Ng, 2014). Since the Ecological Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1977, 1979) is well known, we will only briefly described the different levels.

**Microsystem.** The microsystem is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face and immediate setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A setting in the microsystem is defined as “a place where people can readily engage in face-to-face interactions” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). Examples include such settings as family, school, peer group, and workplace. Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasized the importance of the lived experience or phenomenological dimension of the individual in the microsystem. Indeed, the way a person perceives a situation or environment gives a meaning to this particular setting.

**Mesosystem.** Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner (1979) discussed interrelations between two

or more settings in which the developing person is an active participant. He named this set of interrelations or links the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Examples include the relations between home and school, school and workplace, etc. Therefore, the difference between the two systems is that, whereas at the microsystem level social connections occur within one setting (e.g., home or school), at the mesosystem level, connections take place across settings (e.g., between school and the gym) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Exosystem.** Moving on to the exosystem, this ecological level is defined as “one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by what happens in that setting” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 237). In other words, the exosystem represents events that do not directly involve an individual, but still have an impact on that individual (Lau & Ng, 2014). For a child, this could be the relation between the home and the parent’s workplace.

**Macrosystem.** The most outer circle, the macrosystem, consists of the overarching pattern of micro, meso, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture or subculture, with reference to the belief systems, customs, lifestyles, values, etc. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, the macrosystem is similar to a larger and broader canvas associated with overall cultural climate of a given environment (Lau & Ng, 2014).

**Chronosystem.** Lastly, to acknowledge that environments can change over time, the chronosystem reflects consistency over time and changes in patterns of environmental events and sociohistorical conditions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Examples linked with the chronosystem are the changes over the life course in family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, place of residence, and so forth (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The chronosystem exemplifies Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) belief that individuals’ environments change through time as they further develop.

The strength of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory (1979) is the emphasis on the

bidirection of the impact and influence between an individual and his or her environmental sub-systems through the meso and exosystems. The individual's influence is as prominent as the environmental influences because Bronfenbrenner insists on the phenomenological and perceived lived experience, thus emphasizing the human behavior as act-in-context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Lau & Ng, 2014). In addition, the sociological and ideological influences are also highlighted by the macro and chronosystems. In fact, socio-politico-economic, cultural, and temporal forces are seen as vehicles for consistency, change or progress in societies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Lau & Ng, 2014).

### **This Thesis**

One of the two main goal of this thesis is to describe and compare, in a Canadian setting, the stereotypical content related to different parental roles, more specifically divorced, step, single, same-sex and adoptive mothers and fathers, in comparison with the stereotypical content associated to respectively married mothers and fathers. It is important to reiterate that no distinction was made pertaining to the marital status of any parental roles because the various combinations gave place to too many scenarios that complexified uselessly the data collection (e.g., married, not married, remarried, widowed and remarried, common law-partners, divorced and now single, etc.). Indeed, this thesis did not aim at exploring and highlighting fine-grained differences or specificities at those levels.

Specifying the content of any stereotype is not an easy task since stereotypes are not static concepts (Schneider, 2004). To grasp their essence, we decided to use the same design favored by the majority of previous researchers (Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008)- that is a three-step procedure (open response, adjective checklist, and rating scale) to assess the content of stereotypes. This three-phase data collection procedure is a particularly popular method since it maximizes the strengths of each individual procedure and

minimizes its weaknesses (Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Schneider, 2004; Stangor & Lange, 1994). Indeed, the open responses procedure captures attributes that are central to people's stereotypes, while the adjective checklists includes many attributes, thus assessing several components within a stereotype. Concerning rating scales, they have the advantage of indicating the extent to which an attribute characterizes a group, therefore allowing the measure of the strength of the stereotypes (Madon, 1997).

**Questions and research hypotheses.** In order to fulfill the first objective, the following questions and hypotheses will guide the research process.

***Questions.***

- (1) For descriptive purposes, what is the stereotypical content associated with divorced, step, single, same-sex, and adoptive mothers when compared to married mothers?
- (2) For descriptive purposes, what is the stereotypical content associated with divorced, step, single, same-sex, and adoptive fathers when compared to married fathers?
- (3) For comparison purposes, does the stereotypical content vary in accordance with the parental role's relationship and parental statuses, and sexual orientation?

***Hypotheses.***

- (1) We expect to find that married mothers and fathers will be associated with more positive stereotypic content than divorced, single, step, lesbian/gay mothers and fathers respectively.
- (2) We expect to find that married mothers and fathers will be associated with similarly positive stereotypic content than adoptive mothers and fathers.
- (3) We expect to find that divorced mothers and fathers will be associated with the most negative stereotypic content of all maternal and paternal roles, particularly when compared to married mothers and fathers.

(4) Even if less negatively stereotyped than divorced mothers and fathers, we expect to find that single, step, and lesbian/gay mothers and fathers will generally be associated with negative stereotypic content, especially in comparison with married mothers and fathers.

Further, for the first time in the last decade in the field of stereotypes associated with parental roles, the second main goal of the thesis is to identify, in a Canadian context, if certain participants' sociodemographic variables, more specifically age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, educational attainment, as well as parental and relationship statuses, are significantly associated with the ratings on the stereotypic content related to the six different parental roles. Based on Valiquette-Tessier and her colleagues' (2015) systematic review, we have found that no researcher since 2000 looked at such a large set of variables. A few studies have examined some variables, such as the gender progressive attitudes (e.g., Arditti & Lopéz, 2005; Costa et al., 2015; Taylor & Behnke, 2005), the political orientation (e.g., Costa et al., 2014), sexual orientation (e.g., Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013; Xu & Yeung, 2013), and religious beliefs (e.g., Costa et al., 2015). However, none have combined all of the selected variables as a set within the same study. To attain this goal, the following question and hypotheses will guide the second part of the research process.

***Question.***

(1) Are certain participants' sociodemographic variables (age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, educational attainment, as well as parental and relationship statuses) significantly associated with the ratings on the stereotypic content associated with married, divorced, step, single, same-sex and adoptive parents in a Canadian context?

***Hypotheses.***

- (1) We expect younger participants to overall endorse a more positive stereotypic content in regards to less traditional parenthood (i.e., single, divorced, step, and same-sex) than older participants.
- (2) We expect Caucasian participants to overall endorse a more positive stereotypic content in regards to less traditional parenthood (i.e., single, divorced, step, and same-sex) than participants who are not Caucasian.
- (3) We expect women to overall endorse a more positive stereotypic content, and that across parental roles.
- (4) We expect more highly educated participants to overall endorse a more positive stereotypic content in regards to less traditional parenthood (i.e., single, divorced, step, and same-sex) than less educated participants.
- (5) We expect non-heterosexual participants to overall endorse a more positive stereotypic content in regards to less traditional parenthood (i.e., single, divorced, step, same-sex) than heterosexual participants.
- (6) We expect participants who are not in a relationship to overall endorse a more positive stereotypic content across less traditional parental roles than participants who are in a relationship.
- (7) We expect participants who do not have children to overall endorse a more positive stereotypic content across less traditional parental roles than participants who have children.

**Contribution.** The present thesis will make a significant contribution to literature, given that it aims to:

- (1) actualize our knowledge and understanding of stereotypes associated with a variety of parental roles, especially since the family configuration considerably evolved over the past

decade (Statistics Canada, 2012a). This is the very first time that such a large array of parental roles was investigated as part of a single study of stereotypes associated with the family;

(2) provide a Canadian perspective in the area of family stereotypes, with two different types of samples, that is one composed of Canadian university students that are not parents, and another one constituted of Canadian parents;

(3) extend the scope of interest by looking at more parental roles, including both genders, within the same study, which will be more inclusive than previous research. By considering fathers and not strictly mothers, this study adopts an inclusive approach to not perpetrate the representation of fathers as secondary agents in the parental process (Ganong & Coleman, 1995). This study is highly relevant considering that less traditional family configurations are often stigmatized or invisible to social systems (Coleman, Ganong, & Fine, 2000; Crosbie-Burnett, 1994; Ganong, 1993), which leads to fewer social norms about modern families, and might produce adverse impacts on family members, for example the internalization of negative views (Coleman et al., 2000; Ganong & Coleman, 1995);

(4) identify the stereotypic content with a three steps procedure (Katz & Braly, 1933) that allows to qualify and quantify parental stereotypes in a richer and nuanced manner; and

(5) look at a set of participants' sociodemographic variables to determine which one, if any, predicts the ratings on the content of stereotypes, an objective that was never accomplished in the field since 2000 (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018).

## **Method**

### **Participants' Recruitment**

Prior to participants' recruitment, the researchers received approval from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (ONT, Canada) to carry out this study. This thesis consists of two types of sampling: three university students' samples (Phases I to III of data collection) and one

community sample of Canadian parents (Phase IV of data collection). The university students' samples were recruited through the Integrated System of Participation in Research (ISPR), a research participation program designed for students enrolled in introductory psychology courses at the University of Ottawa (ONT, Canada). The main researcher created two different studies: one on mothers' stereotypes and another one on fathers' stereotypes. To take part in the first two phases of data collection, participants could be a woman or a man, they had to be a student enrolled in a section of a participating introductory course, understand written English, and could be a parent (or involved in raising a child through stepparenting or adoption) or not. For the third phase of data collection, inclusion criteria remained the same, except for one modification, being that participants could not be parents nor could they be involved in raising a child through stepparenting or adoption. Since we wanted to recruit Canadian adults that did not have children, the ISPR was an easy access to this population, in addition to offering access to individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds. It is important to mention that the recruitment of all four samples was not limited by inclusion or exclusion criteria relative to gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status, and ethnicity. That being said, through the ISPR and prior to accessing the studies, questions were asked to the students in order to determine if they fulfilled the inclusion criteria. For instance, the third sample of students was asked the question "Am I a parent or am I involved in raising a child through stepparenting?". Participants who answered "Yes" were denied access to the studies. If participants fulfilled the inclusion criteria, they could accessed the studies online via [fluidsurveys.com](https://www.fluidsurveys.com), a protected software to create surveys, forms, and questionnaires. Students choose the study they wanted to take part in. Thus, they could decide to only participate in the one on mothers's stereotypes or the one on fathers' stereotypes or both.

The second type of sample consists of a group of Canadian parents. To participate,

parents had to fulfill the following two inclusion criteria: be a woman or a man, understand written English, and be involved in raising at least one child (including stepchildren or adoptive children). Four means were used to recruit parents, that is social medias (Facebook and the blog Life, for instance, a gathering virtual spot where people come together to talk about life), the Stepfamily Research Lab's website, volunteers as well as community organizations working with families across the country (Appendix A). The main researcher contacted the different organizations and sent them invitations explaining the purpose of the studies, outlining inclusion criteria and participation requirements, and providing the study web-link (Appendices C and D for the English and French invitations, respectively). The volunteers working for the Stepfamily Research Laboratory invited members of their personal network who had children (e.g., parents, uncles, grand-parents, etc.) to complete the survey. Individuals interested in completing the studies were able to log onto [fluidsurveys.com](http://fluidsurveys.com) using the web-link provided to them on the notice. Potential parents accross Canada who did not have access to a computer or internet were offered to receive the questions in the mail as a paper copy, with a self-addressed return envelope. They could participate in only the study on mothers, only the study on fathers or both studies. This means that mothers were not obligated to participate in the study on mothers. They could choose to participate in the study on fathers's stereotypes and not the one on mothers's stereotypes, or both.

### **Participants and Procedure**

The procedure employed in this thesis represents the most common strategy for the measurement of stereotypes (Bennett & Jamieson, 1999), and it was used in other studies exploring the same topic (e.g., Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008). The technique was first developed by Katz and Braly (1933) for the measurement of

national stereotypes. It was perfected and now combines the three phases detailed below. We added a fourth phase to recruit a sample of Canadian parents, in order to establish comparisons based on parental status. For each phase, participants were first provided with an online consent form (Appendices E and F for the English and French consent forms, respectively), following which they were asked to click a button indicating that they had read and understood the form and that they agreed to participate in the study. Afterwards, each study was preceded by sociodemographic questions regarding participants' age, gender, educational attainment, sexual orientation, relationship and parental statuses, and ethnicity (Appendix F). To ensure anonymity, no identifiable information was collected from participants, and the anonymity provided by the Internet design aimed to reduce socially desirable answers (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004). Participants were able to terminate the study at any time. However, participants who did not fully complete the online studies were not kept in the final samples. Following ethical research principles, online data was protected with a password, and paper versions of the survey were kept under lock in the Stepfamily Research Laboratory at the University of Ottawa, permitting only the main researchers access to it.

**Phase I: Open-ended format item generation (Fall 2012).** First, using an open-ended method, 48 undergraduate students for the study on mothers and 57 undergraduate students for the study on fathers enrolled in an introductory psychology class at the University of Ottawa were asked to respond to open-ended questions by providing a single word or a short sentence. Since the data collections for the two studies were run independently in ISPR, students who completed both studies were not identified as inter-study duplicates. Therefore, it is possible that the same participant completed both studies, but is counted as two participants- one for the study on mothers and one for the study on fathers. This needs to be kept in mind for all phases of data

collection. A similar number of students provided descriptors in previous studies (e.g., Ganong & Coleman, 1995,  $n = 52$ ; Troilo, 2013,  $n = 51$ ). More than 80% of the participants were women (83.81%), the mean age was 19.60 ( $SD = 4.28$ ), the majority were Caucasians (60%), single (60.95%), heterosexual (93.33%), and did not have children (98.10%) (Table 1 for detailed samples' sociodemographic characteristics). For each of the six maternal roles and the six paternal roles (i.e., married, divorced, single, step, lesbian or gay, and adoptive), they were asked "What do you think our society in general believes to be true, whether or not it is true in your opinion of "insert parental roles"? Please, provide a response through a descriptor or short sentence". The goal was to gather the most prominent descriptors that are widely believed, which is consistent with Ashmore and Del Boca's (1981) definition of stereotypes. Additionally, personal and cultural stereotypes are highly positively related, thus justifying why the questions were asked in this manner (Gordign, Koomen, & Stapel, 2001). The online questions for maternal roles and paternal roles took approximately 20 minutes to answer, respectively.

On the one hand, the online questionnaire was useful to recruit participants all over Canada and not just in the Ottawa-Gatineau region, since potential participants could take part in the study by following a link. Further, the use of online questionnaires reduces the risk of self-presentation concerns and allows to access data that is more raw. Indeed with face to face measures, participants can hold back their true perceptions. Finally, online questionnaires are more time efficient. The data can easily be imported into a database, compared to hand filled out questionnaires, where we had to manually enter the information in SPSS. On the other hand, the use of online questionnaire did not allow us to identify duplicates, that is the same participant who potentially filled out a questionnaire twice or participants who completed both questionnaires on mothers and fathers. Moreover, participants who are interested in such a study

can have hidden interests or deep felt opinions which will tint the results. We however made sure to filter and clean the data. Lastly, online questionnaires are generally non probabilistic, meaning it does not always represent the general population.

During this phase, a total of 322 descriptors were generated for mothers (55 for married mothers, 56 for divorced mothers, 49 for stepmothers, 53 for single mothers, 54 for lesbian mothers, and 55 for adoptive mothers) and 389 descriptors were generated for fathers (71 for married fathers, 61 for divorced fathers, 63 for stepfathers, 69 for single fathers, 61 for gay fathers, and 64 for adoptive fathers). Some participants provided more than one descriptor per parental role, thus explaining why there are more descriptors than participants for each parental role. These numbers are similar to the ones reported by Troilo (2013, 48 descriptors for fathers-in-general and 27 descriptors for men-in-general), and Troilo and Coleman (2008, 141 descriptors).

The descriptors corresponding to each parental role were compiled together to compose twelve distinct lists of descriptors for each parental role examined (married mothers/fathers, divorced mothers/fathers, single mothers/fathers, stepmothers/stepfathers, lesbian mothers/gay fathers, and adoptive mothers/fathers). As previously done by some authors (Madon, 1997; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008), when the same descriptors were provided by more than one participant (duplicates), only one was kept. This data cleaning process left 229 descriptors for mothers (39 married mothers, 42 divorced mothers, 31 stepmothers, 35 single mothers, 42 lesbian mothers, and 40 adoptive mothers) and 281 descriptors for fathers (44 married fathers, 51 divorced fathers, 50 stepfathers, 49 single fathers, 49 gay fathers, and 38 adoptive fathers).

**Phase II: Checklists item reduction (Winter 2013).** Since free responses alone are difficult to score and code, the distinct lists of descriptors for each parental role was presented

individually to a second sample of 195 undergraduate students for the study on mothers and 195 undergraduate students for the study on fathers enrolled in an introductory psychology class at the University of Ottawa. These students were instructed to check all the descriptors they thought are beliefs held by most people and associated with each parental role. More than 80% of the participants were women (83.08%), the mean age was 20.17 ( $SD = 2.43$ ), the majority were Caucasians (75.64%), single (65.13%), heterosexual (93.59%), and did not have children (99.23%) (Table 2 for detailed samples' sociodemographic characteristics). Students went through each of the six lists (one per parental role), if they were participating in the study on mothers or fathers only, or twelve lists if they were participating in both studies. Each participant could make the decision to take part in one or both studies via the Integrated System of Participation in Research. Going through six checklists for one study took approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

Because attribute checking measures are based on group consensus (Schneider, 2004), the main researcher set the criterion of 25% agreement for retention as a stereotyped attribute. This criterion was arbitrarily selected because it was inclusive enough to keep descriptors held by a sizeable minority of the respondents, and thus allow for individual differences, but eliminate unusual idiosyncratic ones. It is common to arbitrarily set a criterion in studies looking at stereotypes since the goal is to stay inclusive in allowing descriptors to remain in the pool (e.g., Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008). For instance, Troilo and Coleman (1995), Ganong and Coleman (2008), as well as Troilo (2013) used a 33% criterion because it was stringent enough to eliminate idiosyncratic stereotyped attributes, while not eliminating those identified by a sizable minority of the respondents. In our case, using a 33% criterion was too stringent and eliminated too many descriptors, hence why we opted for a 25%

criterion. With such a cut-off, we could keep enough descriptors to generate a more nuanced analysis.

The application of the criterion made the number of descriptors drop from 229 to 110 for mothers (26 married mothers, 16 divorced mothers, 10 stepmothers, 15 single mothers, 16 lesbian mothers, and 27 adoptive mothers) and from 281 to 127 for fathers (35 married fathers, 11 divorced fathers, 16 stepfathers, 18 single fathers, 22 gay fathers, and 25 adoptive fathers). This reduction is similar to what Ganong and Coleman (1995) previously reported: the application of a 33% criterion resulted in the number of descriptors to drop from 77 to 58 for married mothers, 80 to 38 for stepmothers, 92 to 40 for divorced mothers, and 76 to 38 for never-married mothers.

### **Phase III: Ratings format item estimations among non-parents' sample (Fall 2013).**

Many descriptors were provided more than once to qualify different parental roles (e.g., brave for single fathers and stepfathers). Thus, once all the descriptors were compiled together, the number of distinct descriptors was 86 for mothers (22 duplicates) and 97 for fathers (30 duplicates). Those final numbers are similar to the ones reported in other studies (e.g., Troilo, 2013, 62 descriptors; Troilo & Coleman, 2008, 80 descriptors). The remaining descriptors were sorted randomly twelve times to compose twelve lists for each parental roles. The random ordering limits the creation of response patterns. If participants choose to only take part in the mothers or the fathers' study, they went through six lists, as opposed to twelve times if they decided to participate in both studies. Filling out each study took approximately 45 minutes to one hour.

A sample of 282 undergraduate students for the study on mothers and 234 undergraduate students for the study on fathers enrolled in an introductory psychology class at the University of Ottawa assessed the degree to which each descriptor was considered an attribute of each parental role. More than 70% of the participants were women (77.52%), the mean age was 18.72 (SD = 3.53), the majority were Caucasians (69.19%), single (66.47%), heterosexual (88.18%), and none

had children (100%) (Table 3 for detailed samples' sociodemographic characteristics).

Participants were instructed to indicate for each descriptor the percentage (between 0% and 100%) of a specified target group they believed possessed the particular descriptor. For instance, they are asked to "Indicate the percentage of stepmothers that you believe have each of the following characteristics. Do not think of women you know personally, but think of stepmothers in general." As previously stated, a limitation with rating format item estimations is that subjects use some sort of criterion or exemplar as a rough guide to likelihood, but researchers are not always aware of which baseline is used (Schneider, 2004). Therefore, we made sure to specify to think of married, divorced, single, step, lesbian or gay, and adoptive mothers and fathers-in-general.

It is highly important to highlight that our first three samples are mainly composed of young Caucasian, childless, heterosexual, single females studying psychology. Our samples are therefore very homogeneous. More specifically, the identification of the descriptors in Phase I by such a group have an impact on all subsequent phases, which is a limitation to consider.

#### **Phase IV: Ratings format item estimations among parents' sample (Fall 2013).**

Finally, the last phase of data collection included 56 parents across Canada for the study on mothers and 62 parents for the study on fathers. Contrary to the students taking part in the three previous phases, participants at this stage had to be parents. They were shown the same twelve lists via [fluidsurveys.com](http://fluidsurveys.com) that was presented to the last sample of undergraduate students, and were instructed to indicate for each descriptor the percentage (between 0% and 100%) of a specified target group they believed possessed each particular descriptor. Father participants could either complete the paternal roles' lists, the maternal roles' lists, or both, and vice versa for mother participants. Since parents were not involved in the choice of stimuli, they were invited to add new descriptors that were not on the lists. Yet, no new descriptors were provided which

might be due to the considerable amount of time required to fill out each study (i.e. approximately 45 minutes to one hour). Almost 80% of the participants were women (78.81%), their mean age was 38.54 (SD = 10.61), the majority were Caucasians (63.56%), in a romantic relationship (85.60%), heterosexual (87.29%), and half possessed an undergraduate diploma (49.15%). All of them had children, with an average of 1.91 child per participant (Table 4 for detailed sample's socio-demographic characteristics). Unfortunately, no sociodemographic information pertaining to where participants lived in Canada, their religious affiliation, and their income was gathered. However, a significant relationship between income levels and educational attainment exists (Strauss, 2012). In fact, the higher the education level, the higher the income. For example, people with professional degrees earned six times as much as people who did not graduate from high school (in 2009: \$128,000 vs. \$20,000) (Strauss, 2012). Furthermore, unemployment rates and educational attainment are strongly related to each other. The better educated the group, the lower the unemployment rate (Strauss, 2012). Finally, regarding ethnicity, for lack of attributing a participant code to parents, it was impossible after coding the sociodemographic data to trace back the specific ethnic affiliation when the category "other than Caucasian/White" was selected.

Given that parents in the current study are from a convenience sample, it was important to determine its representativeness of Canada's population. Compared to population-level statistics, the study's sample was more representative of Canada's ethnic composition (Statistics Canada, 2015a). Visible minorities represent approximately 19.4% of Canada's population (Statistics Canada, 2015a), and they compose 36.44% of the current sample, which constitutes a higher percentage. The percentage of Canadian parents in a relationship in the current study (85.60%) was comparable to Canadian data (83.7% in a relationship; Statistics Canada, 2015b). Based on the 2011 Canadian Census, same-sex couples represent 0.8% of all couples in Canada, and more

couples of opposite sex have children than couples of same-sex, that is 47.2% and 9.4% respectively (Statistic Canada, 2011). In our sample of Canadian parents, 87.29% identified as heterosexual, leaving a remaining 12.71% of parents who identified as either lesbian, gay, or bisexual, which is also comparable to the Census data reported among same-sex couples with children (9.4%; Statistic Canada, 2011). Finally, a smaller number of parents from this sample completed postsecondary education (49.15%) than what would be expected from Census data (74.7% women aged 30-34 years with postsecondary education ; Statistics Canada, 2015a). Nonetheless, this significant difference between our sample and the Canadian population may be explained by our comparison based on a sub-group of Canadian women aged from 30 to 34 years old. We could not find data on the general population, thus a precise portrait could not be drawn.

### **Data Analyses**

Analyses for maternal and paternal roles were performed in two separate databases using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences – Version 21.0 (SPSS 21.0). Given the small amount of missing data (0,13% and 0.19%, for maternal and paternal roles, respectively), a single imputation was conducted by using the expectation maximization algorithm (EM) in SPSS. Statistical assumptions were verified prior to running analyses. If assumptions were not met, corrections were made accordingly (see below for assumptions and necessary transformations for the different analyses).

**Study Objective 1: Describe and compare the stereotypical content related to divorced, step, single, same-sex and adoptive mothers and fathers, in comparison with the stereotypical content related to married mothers and fathers.** The goal was to assess if differences between parental roles existed so to fulfill this first objective, one sample *t* tests were conducted to compare means for each parental role to respectively the mean of married mothers or fathers. The tradition in the field is to compare any maternal and paternal roles to married

mothers and fathers respectively as general comparison groups because there is evidence that married parents serve as the standard by which others are compared (e.g., Ganong et al., 1990; Ganong & Coleman, 1995, Troilo, 2013). Furthermore, Ganong and Coleman (1995) state that married parents should generally be the comparison group since marital status is an achieved rather than an ascribed status, and comparing two achieved statuses (e.g., divorced mother vs. married mother) is a more defensible method of assessing stereotypes than is comparing achieved status to an ascribed one (e.g., stepmother vs. women-in-general). A probability level of .01 was used to establish statistical significance. The rationales behind the establishment of such a level find its source in the nature of this thesis and past literature. On the one hand, this research is exploratory because it is the first to investigate such a large array of parental roles, of both sexes, in Canada. The main goal is to draw a complete portrait of the stereotypes associated with six parental roles, which has not been done prior to this thesis. Thus, since the field of research is not mature enough, our concern was less about Type I error, but rather to reduce the possibility of Type II error. In other words, we wanted to make sure we were more inclusive as this study will be used as a point of reference for more targeted future research, and avoid missing out on any possible interesting trails for future studies to investigate further. On the other hand, Ganong and Coleman (1995) used a similar threshold in their study which has set a precedent in the field. We conducted a similar number of *t* tests as Ganong and Coleman (1995) (more than 700 *t* tests). By applying a statistical correction, the probability level would be such an extreme value that we would not be able to accomplish our goal of finding all potentially differences.

**Study Objective 2: Determine whether participants' age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, educational attainment, as well as parental and relationship statuses are significantly associated with the ratings on the stereotypic content.** To fulfill the second objective, the descriptors from the rating format item estimation (86 and 97 descriptors, for

mother and fathers respectively) were categorized initially by myself into five categories: positive, negative, neutral, parenting and family, and lifestyle (Appendices H and I, for mothers and fathers respectively). These categories are derived from the empirical literature, and were refined by experts on family stereotypes (e.g., Mowder, Harvey, Moy, & Pedro, 1995; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008). Thus, the categories correspond to the ones used by important authors in the field that guided all along the conceptualization of this thesis (e.g., Ganong & Coleman, 2008; Troilo, 2013). Positive descriptors (42 and 40 descriptors, for mothers and fathers respectively) refer to positive personal attributes, traits denoting good character, or descriptors with a favourable connotation (e.g., generous, kind, loyal, trustworthy). Negative descriptors (13 and 11 descriptors, for mothers and fathers respectively) are the opposite; they refer to negative personal attributes, traits denoting bad character, or descriptors with a pejorative connotation (e.g., dishonest, lonely, uncommitted, unreliable, etc.). Neutral descriptors (seven and nine descriptors, for mothers and fathers respectively) are attributes that are not strongly marked, so neither with positive nor negative connotation (e.g., common, traditional, etc.). The lifestyle descriptors (eight and nine descriptors, for mothers and fathers respectively) relate to work, the financial situation, or more generally a way of living (e.g., breadwinner, provider, stable, successful, poor, etc.). Finally, the parenting/family descriptors (16 and 23 descriptors, for mothers and fathers respectively) relate to the care dispensed to children, couple's life or relationships, the role of the parent in the children's life, and family life (e.g., cheaters, caregivers, distant, self-sacrificing, protective, etc.). Some descriptors within the same category are synonyms, and therefore possibly correlated. However, having two or more similar descriptors only communicate the proeminence of a specific aspect of the category. Previous authors in the field (e.g., Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Troilo and Coleman, 2008; Troilo, 2013) did not report this as a limitation.

In order to classify the descriptors within the five categories, the main author of this thesis based herself on the work of the above mentioned authors (e.g., Mowder, Harvey, Moy, & Pedro, 1995; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008), and her own judgement if a descriptor was not found in past literature. Afterwards, a second classification of the descriptors within the five categories was performed using the same procedure by a research assistant in the Stepfamily Research Lab at the University of Ottawa (ON, Canada). In the rare cases where the descriptors were not assigned to the same category (four cases out of 86 and nine cases out of 97 for mothers and fathers respectively), a discussion took place between the two researchers until an agreement was reached, meaning that a qualitative consensus was formed. If needed and possible (i.e. same descriptors), the two researchers consulted the categorization done by other authors in the field (e.g., Ganong and Coleman, 1995; Troilo and Coleman, 2008; Troilo, 2013). In this particular case, no Kappa score was calculated, because any source of disagreement was sorted out through discussion, as previously done in this field of research (e.g., Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Troilo and Coleman, 2008; Troilo, 2013). When the categorization was finalized, both researchers noticed that five descriptors associated with fathers, that is positive, negative, neutral, parenting and family men, and it's a lifestyle, were obvious redundancies of the categories themselves or of other descriptors within the categories. For instance, the descriptors "positive" and "negative" were very similar to the descriptors "positively seen" and "negatively seen", but less descriptive at the same time. Further, the descriptor "parenting and family men" was highly similar to the category "parenting/family descriptors" as well as to the descriptor "family men" within the category. Thus, the researchers decided to eliminate these five descriptors, leaving 92 remaining descriptors associated with fathers. Averages were then computed; for each participant, five averages were calculated by adding up descriptors' individual rating scores and dividing by the number of descriptors in the category.

To assess if the set of independent variables (age, gender, ethnicity, educational attainment, sexual orientation, and relationship and parental statuses) predicts the dependent variables (five categories), 30 multiple linear regressions were conducted, for mothers (six parental roles) and fathers (six parental roles), for a total of 60 complete models. Afterwards, we calculated 30 additional reduced models, for mothers and fathers, for a total of 60 models, only based on the predictors that made a significant contribution within the complete models. Reduced models simplify our understanding because they can explain the same amount of variance only with the significant variables. This way of doing is frequently employed in structural equations. We debated conducting a MANOVA instead of regressions. However, since we are assessing what each independent variables added to the prediction of the dependent variables, a MANOVA with seven independent variables would have been overly complex to interpret. MANOVAs are a better option when the number of categorical predictors is limited to a maximum of four (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2012).

*F*-tests were used to assess whether the set of independent variables collectively predicts the dependent variables. *R*-squared—the multiple correlation coefficient of determination—was reported and used to determine how much variance in the dependent variables can be accounted for by the set of independent variables. *t* tests was used to determine the significance of each predictor and beta coefficients were used to determine the magnitude of prediction for each independent variable (Statistics Solutions, 2013). The assumptions of multiple regression were also verified. Based on Green (1991), the rule to perform a regression with average samples' sizes is eight times the number of predictors plus 50 (i.e.  $(8 * 7) + 50 = 106$ ). Thus the samples' sizes in this thesis are sufficient to perform this type of analysis (338 and 296 participants, for mothers and fathers respectively), despite the repetition of the same analysis. Linearity, homoscedasticity and multicollinearity were also assessed (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2012). The

examination of the scatter plots revealed the need to proceed with transformations in order to fulfill the linearity assumption (Table 7). Following the application of those transformations on the problematic variables, the dependent variables now respect the linearity assumption.

Since this is a first attempt at observing such a specific set of predictors, a probability level of .05 was used to establish statistical significance. Once more, it is important to understand that this work is meant to be exploratory, so the main concern is to reduce the possibility of Type II error, and find *all* potentially meaningful differences that could guide more targeted future research. We are not interested in simply investigating the “best” predictors, but to include all those that may be of interest. We approach this analysis and the presentation of findings as drawing a portrait that is as comprehensive as possible, with the understanding that future studies may choose to focus on less categories of parents (and only one gender at a time) to clarify the particular stereotypic content and its associated predictors at play in more specific parental roles- which, in turn would be associated with using a higher threshold for statistical significance depending on the nature and specific objectives of this future inquiry.

## **Results**

### **Study Objective 1**

The primary purpose of this thesis is to describe and compare the stereotypic content of various maternal and paternal roles, compared to the stereotypic content of married mothers and fathers, within a Canadian sample. A probability level of 0.01 was used to establish statistical significance. Effect sizes were calculated for each analysis to assess whether statistically significant results represented meaningful effects. Effect sizes of .10 are considered very small, .30 small, .50 medium, .80 large, 1.20 very large, and 2.00 huge (Cohen, 1992). T values as well as effect sizes are available in appendices for further details (Tables 5 to 6).

As mentioned earlier, because there is evidence that married parents serve as the main standard by which other parental roles are compared (e.g., Ganong et al., 1990; Ganong & Coleman, 1995), married mothers and fathers served as the general population comparison groups. First, we generated a tally to get a broad idea of how many descriptors divorced, single, step, lesbian/gay, as well as adoptive mothers and fathers significantly differed from those attributed to married mothers and fathers. In this context, the expression "significantly differed" means that a parental role scored more positively or negatively on a specific descriptor ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Another way to explain the expression "significantly differed" is that a parental role significantly scored above or below the mean established by married mothers or fathers on a specific descriptor ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Therefore, out of 86 descriptors, divorced mothers significantly scored more positively or negatively than married mothers on 73 descriptors ( $p \leq 0.01$ ), single mothers on 67 descriptors ( $p \leq 0.01$ ), stepmothers on 78 descriptors ( $p \leq 0.01$ ), lesbian mothers on 65 descriptors ( $p \leq 0.01$ ), and adoptive mothers on 49 descriptors ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Furthermore, out of 92 descriptors, divorced fathers significantly scored more positively or negatively than married fathers on 90 descriptors ( $p \leq 0.01$ ), single fathers on 57 descriptors ( $p \leq 0.01$ ), stepfathers on 81 descriptors ( $p \leq 0.01$ ), gay fathers on 61 descriptors ( $p \leq 0.01$ ), and adoptive on 48 descriptors ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). A detailed description of these significant findings follows.

### **Maternal stereotypes.**

***Divorced mothers.*** Compared to married mothers, divorced mothers were stereotyped more negatively and effect sizes were large or very large (e.g., more confusing, more unhappy, more sad, more negatively seen, more distressed, and more troubled). Indeed, out of 13 descriptors in the negative personal attributes category, divorced mothers were significantly stereotyped more negatively than married mothers on all descriptors, except for two descriptors (tired and stressed). Further, divorced mothers were perceived as possessing less positive

attributes than married mothers (e.g., less respected, less open, less persistent, less complete, less committed, less loyal, less faithful, less careful, less selfless, and less considerate). Out of 42 positive descriptors, divorced mothers were never rated more positively than married mothers, except in one case where they were perceived as more independent than married mothers. On the lifestyle dimension, divorced mothers were also significantly stereotyped as struggling more in life, being more poor, less successful, less stable, and less hardworking than married mothers. Moreover, in comparison with married mothers, divorced mothers were seen as less family oriented. Indeed, they were stereotyped more strongly as abandoning their family, being homewreckers, and being more excluded, as well as being less responsible, less good caregivers, less maternal, less good role models, and not fulfilling as much their life's goal, for example by being proper housewives. Generally speaking, divorced mothers were significantly stereotyped as less common, less normal, less traditional, more unconventional, and their relationship status raised more questions than married mothers.

***Single mothers.*** Like divorced mothers, when compared to married mothers, single mothers were stereotyped more negatively, and effect sizes were medium (e.g., more confusing, more unhappy, more pitied, more abnormal, more sad, more negatively seen, more lonely, and more distressed). Out of 13 negative personal descriptors, single mothers were significantly stereotyped more negatively than married mothers on all descriptors, except for the descriptor tired. Further, similarly to divorced mothers, single mothers were perceived as possessing less positive personal attributes than married mothers (e.g., less respected, less complete, less committed, less sympathetic, less loyal, less compassionate, and less proper). In fact, out of 42 positive personal descriptors, single mothers were rated more positively than married mothers on only two descriptors, that is brave and independent. Compared to married mothers, single mothers were also significantly rated as less rich, struggling more in life, being more overworked,

less successful, and less stable. Just as divorced mothers, single mothers were seen as less family oriented than married mothers. In comparison with married mothers, they were stereotyped more strongly as abandoning their family, being less responsible, less good housewives, less good caregivers, less good role models, more excluded, and not fulfilling as much their life's goal. They were also perceived as being more often teenagers than married mothers. Generally speaking, single mothers were stereotyped as less common, less normal, and less traditional than married mothers.

*Stepmothers.* Out of 13 descriptors in the negative personal attributes category, stepmothers were stereotyped more negatively than married mothers on seven descriptors, and effect sizes were generally medium (e.g., more negatively seen, more troubled, more awkward, and more cold). Stepmothers were however seen as less tired, and less stressed than married mothers. Out of 42 descriptors in the positive personal items category, stepmothers were rated less positively than married mothers on 41 descriptors (e.g., less respected, less trustworthy, less loving, less big hearted, and less compassionate). Concerning their lifestyle, stepmothers were rated as less hardworking, less successful, less stable, but also as more rich, struggling less in life, and being less overworked than married mothers. Similarly to divorced and single mothers, stepmothers were perceived as less family oriented than married mothers. Indeed, in comparison with married mothers, they were seen more as homewreckers and intruders rather than gifts to the child. Moreover, stepmothers were stereotyped as less responsible, less good caregivers, less maternal, more excluded, and not fulfilling as much their life's goal as married mothers. Lastly, stepmothers were stereotyped as less common, more different, less normal, less traditional, and more unconventional than married mothers.

*Lesbian mothers.* Pertaining to the content of stereotypes associated with lesbian mothers, effect sizes were generally small. Out of 13 descriptors in the negative personal items

category, they significantly scored above the mean on more than half of the negative personal traits when compared with married mothers (e.g., more confusing, more abnormal, more negatively seen, and more awkward). Lesbian mothers did not significantly differ from married mothers on three descriptors, that is unhappy, sad, and lonely, but were rated significantly below the mean on two descriptors, that is tired and stressed. Consistently with these previous findings, out of 42 descriptors in the positive personal category, lesbian mothers were rated below the mean on 25 positive personal traits when compared with married mothers (e.g., less wholesome, less kind hearted, less selfless, and less dedicated). Further, in comparison with married mothers, no significant difference was found on 11 positive personal traits, and they were rated above the mean on six descriptors (e.g., more open, more brave, and more independent). Lesbian mothers were also perceived as richer than married mothers, but also as less hardworking, less overworked, less stable, and less successful. Concerning parenting and family, lesbian mothers were rated more negatively than married mothers, particularly as less good housewives, less good caregivers, less good role models, less responsible, and less maternal. Nonetheless, lesbian mothers were stereotyped as fulfilling more their life's goal than married mothers, and, despite the generally negative content associated with this parental type, lesbian mothers were not significantly rated as different from heterosexual mothers in comparison with married mothers. Lastly, lesbian mothers were stereotyped as less common and more unconventional than married mothers.

*Adoptive Mothers.* Adoptive mothers were stereotyped more positively than married mothers on a few negative personal traits. Out of 13 descriptors in the negative personal traits category, they significantly scored as less unhappy, less sad, less tired, less distressed, and less stressed than married mothers, but overall effect sizes were generally small. They were only significantly rated above the mean on two descriptors (pitied and abnormal) in comparison with

married mothers. Similarly to these findings, adoptive mothers were not perceived as different from married mothers on half of the positive personal traits. However, they were rated more positively than married mothers on 19 positive personal traits (e.g., more open, more supported, and more generous), but effect sizes were very small to small. Concerning the descriptors within the lifestyle category, adoptive mothers significantly scored as richer and more often infertile than married mothers, and as struggling less in life and being less overworked than married mothers. With regards to the descriptors in the parenting and family category, adoptive mothers were rated as less good caregivers and less maternal than married mothers, but effect sizes were very small. They were nonetheless rated as fulfilling more their life's goal, and being better role models than married mothers. Adoptive mothers were perceived as less common, less traditional, more different, more questioned, and more unconventional than married mothers.

#### **Paternal stereotypes.**

*Divorced fathers.* The content of divorced fathers' stereotypes was mostly negative when compared to married fathers. Indeed, they significantly rated above the mean on all negative personal descriptors, and below the mean on all positive personal descriptor. Thus, divorced fathers were depicted for instance as more unreliable, more dishonest, more betraying, less responsible, less committed, and less involved than married fathers. Moreover, divorced fathers also rated significantly below the mean on all lifestyle items, except three of them. Out of nine descriptors within the category, they were perceived less as stable, hardworking, successful, providers, and working men than married fathers. Divorced fathers were therefore seen as struggling more in life. Concerning the parenting and family items, they rated significantly below the mean on 14 descriptors out of 23 (e.g., seen less as father figures and role models, less protective, less good examples, and less good caregivers), and above the mean on seven descriptors (e.g., more absent, more distant, and more often cheaters). Effect sizes were quite

large. Lastly, divorced fathers were largely seen as being less stereotypical dads, and also being more often victims of prejudgments, and scrutinized more by society.

**Single fathers.** Despite the fact that single fathers scored significantly above the mean on nine of the 11 descriptors in the negative personal items category, they were not stereotyped as negatively as divorced fathers who rated significantly above the mean on all negative personal descriptors and below the mean on all positive personal descriptors when compared to married fathers. Single fathers were perceived for instance as more atypical, more awkward, more negatively seen, and more unreliable than married fathers. Additionally, in comparison with married fathers, out of 40 positive personal descriptors, single fathers were rated below the mean on 18 items (e.g., less respected, dependable, and happy). Ratings on descriptors within the lifestyle category revealed that single fathers were seen less as providers, working men, stable, and successful than married fathers, as well as struggling more and looking more often for love than married fathers. However, single fathers were not rated differently than married fathers on the breadwinner descriptor. Relative to parenting and family, single fathers were stereotyped more negatively than married fathers, but effect sizes were generally small. They rated below the mean on seven descriptors out of 23 (e.g., less good role models, less good examples, less family men, and less caring), and above the mean on six descriptors (e.g., seen more as maternal and motherly and replacements than married fathers). However, no significant difference was found between married and single fathers on 10 descriptors (e.g., father figures, caregivers, and self-sacrificing). Lastly, single fathers were seen as less traditional, following less the fatherly standard, and also being more often victims of prejudgments.

**Stepfathers.** The content of stereotypes relative to being a stepfather was generally negative in comparison to the one associated to married fathers. Within the negative personal attributes category, stepfathers scored above the mean on nine descriptors out of 11. Similarly,

stepfathers significantly scored below the mean on 37 of 40 positive personal attributes.

Moreover, stepfathers were seen less as stable, hardworking, successful, providers, and working men than married fathers. Concerning parenting and family, stepfathers were generally negatively stereotyped in comparison with married fathers. For instance, they scored as less protective, less caring, less family men, less self-sacrificing, less good examples, more absent, more removed, more often parental replacements, and less willing to maintain a relationship with their children than married fathers. Finally, stepfathers were seen as following less the fatherly standard, and being more unconventional than married fathers. A surprising finding is that stepfathers were largely rated as more common than married fathers.

***Gay Fathers.*** Findings show that the content of stereotypes associated with gay fathers is somewhat mixed when they are compared to married fathers. Indeed, while they were very largely negatively seen, no significant difference was found between gay and married fathers on four descriptors, that is uncommitted, unreliable, dishonest, and betrayin. Gay fathers significantly scored below the mean on 19 of 40 positive descriptors, and they were largely stereotyped as less respected, and less manly than married fathers. However, no significant difference was found on 18 positive descriptors, revealing some sort of similarity with married fathers on some descriptors, such as decent, trustworthy, big hearted, devoted, and affectionate. Despite the mixed content of the previous results, gay fathers were negatively stereotyped on the lifestyle dimension, but effect sizes were generally small. Indeed, they were seen as struggling more than married fathers, as well as being less stable, less hardworking, less successful, and less good providers. In the parenting and family area, compared with married fathers, gay fathers were largely perceived as outsiders, not being the child's father, and they scored as more maternal and motherly than married fathers. Finally, gay fathers were largely seen as being less

stereotypical dads, less traditional, following less the fatherly standard, being more often victims of prejudgments, and being more scrutinized by society.

*Adoptive Fathers.* The content of stereotypes associated to adoptive fathers was overwhelmingly positive, even in comparison with married fathers. Even though out of 11 descriptors within the negative personal attributes category, adoptive fathers significantly scored with small effect sizes above the mean on the items atypical, abnormal, and lonely, no significant difference was found between them and married fathers on the eight other items. Moreover, out of 40 descriptors in the positive personal attributes category, adoptive fathers were rated above the mean on 16 descriptors, but effect sizes were very small and small (e.g., seen more as big hearted and heroes than married fathers). They only scored below the mean on five descriptors within the the positive personal attributes category, and effect sizes were again very small. On the lifestyle dimension, no significant difference was found between adoptive and married fathers on six out of the nine descriptors, but they were viewed as more often infertile in a very large manner. Concerning the parenting and family aspect, adoptive fathers were generally positively perceived in comparison with married fathers. In fact, out of 23 descriptors within the category, they scored above the mean on nine items, depicting them as more maternal and motherly, more caregiving, and seen more as saviors if the biological father is not around. Nonetheless, they were largely also seen more as replacements, or simply not the child's father in comparison with married fathers. Adoptive fathers further significantly scored below the mean on six items within the parenting and family category, making them appear for instance as less absent, less distant, and less cheaters than married fathers, but effect sizes were very small and small. Finally, no significant difference was found on the other eight parenting and family items, reiterating that adoptive fathers are perceived similarly to married fathers in terms of being father figures, family men, good examples, and caring.

## Study Objective 2

The second aim of this thesis is to conduct multiple linear regression models between the independent variables (age, gender, ethnicity, educational attainment, sexual orientation, and relationship and parental statuses) and the dependent variables (positive, negative, neutral, parenting and family, and lifestyle stereotypic categories). The data were screened for violation of assumptions prior to analysis using SPSS (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). A probability level of 0.05 was used to establish statistical significance since this is a first attempt at observing such a specific set of predictors.

Ratios of cases to independent variables were adequate, and no multicollinearity was found between predictor variables (as examined with tolerance and VIF index) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). Results of evaluation of assumptions led to the transformation of some of the dependent variables to reduce skewness, reduce the number of outliers, and improve the normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity of residuals (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). Following the application of Winsorizing on the univariate outliers that were transformed and brought back to 3.29 *SD* from the mean, the dependent variables now respect the assumptions (see Table 7) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). However, the predictor variable related to participant age was positively skewed. Thus, a logarithmic transformation was applied but without success. Therefore, an approach employed by Templeton (2011) to normalize any distribution was used. This approach associates a rank to each value, and when a value comes up more than once, the rank is divided (Templeton, 2011). Following this transformation, the skewness for the variable age went from 18.64 and 16.04 to 0.80 and 2.73, for mothers and fathers respectively. No cases had missing data, and examination of the scatter plots confirmed the presence of linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity. The following section will only present the reduced models in order to focus on the predictors that significantly contributed. Such reduced models highlight the

specific predictors that are of interest given their stronger relationship with the dependent variable. Nonetheless, it is important to know that, for each parental role, complete models were first calculated.

**Maternal stereotypes.**

*Married mothers.*

In order to simplify the complete models, reduced multiple linear regression models were calculated for each stereotypic category, except for the negative stereotypic category since no predictor made a significant contribution in the original model. First, concerning the positive stereotypic category, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(3, 334) = 9.51, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.08 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.07$ ), which indicated that 8% of the variability was predicted by participants' gender (male (0) or female (1)), parental status (not a parent (0) or parent (1)) and relationship status (in a relationship (0) or not in a relationship (1)). Specifically, participants who were women more strongly endorsed the positive descriptors. Furthermore, participants who were not in a relationship less strongly endorsed the positive descriptors, as did participants who were parents. Second, concerning the lifestyle stereotypic category, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(2, 335) = 7.05, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.04 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.035$ ), which indicated that only 4% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' gender and ethnicity (Caucasian (0) or other (1)). Specifically, participants who were women showed a stronger endorsement of lifestyle descriptors, as did participants who were not Caucasian. For the parenting and family stereotypic category, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(2, 335) = 13.08, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.07 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.067$ ), which indicated that 7% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' ethnicity and parental status. More precisely, participants who were not Caucasian more strongly endorsed the parenting and family descriptors, and participants who were parents less strongly endorsed the parenting and family

descriptors. Finally, the predictor relationship status made a significant contribution within the complete neutral stereotypic category model, which is determined by the squared semi-partial correlation coefficient ( $sr^2 = 0.01, p \leq 0.05$ ). The squared semi-partial correlation coefficient ( $sr^2$ ) represents the unique amount of variance that the predictor brings to the model (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). However, the reduced model associated with the neutral category showed a non-significant regression equation ( $F(1, 336) = 0.00, p > 0.05$ ), meaning that the amount of information the predictor relationship status contributed that is not shared by any other predictor in the model was ultimately not significant (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012).

***Divorced mothers.*** Following the complete models' results, four reduced models were computed. In fact, pertaining to the parenting and family stereotypic content, a non-significant regression equation was found within the complete model ( $F(7, 329) = 1.03, p > 0.05$ ), and no predictor was making a significant contribution, so no reduced model was generated. On one part, concerning the positive stereotypic category, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(1, 336) = 11.23, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.03 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.029$ ), indicating that 3% of the variability was predicted by participants' gender. Specifically, participants who were women more strongly endorsed the positive descriptors. On the other part, concerning the negative stereotypic category, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(3, 333) = 8.63, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.07 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.064$ ), which means that 7% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' age, sexual orientation (heterosexual (0) or not heterosexual (1)), and parental status. Specifically, participants who were older endorsed less strongly the negative descriptors. Further, participants who were not heterosexual also endorsed less strongly the negative descriptors, as did participants who were not parents. However, the predictor parental status was no longer significant in the reduced model ( $p > 0.05$ ), meaning that the amount of

information the predictor parental status contributed that is not shared by any other predictor in the model was ultimately not significant (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). Moreover, regarding the lifestyle stereotypic category, another significant regression equation was found ( $F(1, 336) = 12.69, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.04 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.034$ ), which reveals that 4% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' gender. Specifically, participants who were women more strongly endorsed the lifestyle descriptors. Lastly, a significant regression equation was found for the neutral stereotypic category ( $F(2, 334) = 6.54, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.04 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.032$ ), which indicates that 4% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' age (younger (0) and older (1)) and relationship status. Specifically, older participants endorsed less strongly the neutral descriptors, as did participants who were not in a relationship.

***Single mothers.*** In regards to the positive stereotypic category associated to being a single mothers, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(1, 336) = 6.96, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.02 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.017$ ), which indicates that 2% of the variability in the positive stereotypic category was predicted by participants' gender. Specifically, participants who were women endorsed more strongly the positive descriptors. Another significant regression equation was found on the negative stereotypic category ( $F(3, 333) = 6.42, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.06 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.046$ ), meaning that 6% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' age, relationship status, and parental status. Specifically, participants who were older endorsed less strongly the negative descriptors, as did participants who were not in a relationship, and participants who were not parents. However, the predictor age was no longer significant in the reduced model ( $p > 0.05$ ), meaning that the amount of information the predictor age contributed that is not shared by any other predictor in the model did not reach statistical significance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). The lifestyle stereotypic category also presented a significant

regression equation ( $F(2, 334) = 9.37, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.05 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.047$ ), revealing that 5% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' gender and age. Specifically, participants who were older endorsed less strongly the lifestyle descriptors, as did participants who were men. In addition, a significant regression equation was found on the parenting and family stereotypic category ( $F(1, 335) = 11.36, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.033 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.030$ ), thus revealing that a bit more than 3% of the variability was predicted by participants' age. Specifically, participants who were older endorsed less strongly the parenting and family descriptors. Finally, a significant regression equation was found for the neutral stereotypic category ( $F(3, 333) = 8.14, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.07 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.06$ ), which shows that participants' age, parental status and relationship status explained 7% of the variability in the category. Specifically, participants who were older endorsed less strongly the neutral descriptors, as did participants who were not in a relationship, and participants who were parents. However, the predictor age was no longer significant in the reduced model ( $p > 0.05$ ), meaning that the amount of information the predictor contributed that is not shared by any other predictor in the model did not reach statistical significance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012).

***Stepmothers.*** In the case of stepmothers, four out of five complete models were not significant and did not explain enough variance. Nonetheless, some of the predictors within a few complete models made a significant contribution. For instance, even if a non-significant regression equation was found for the neutral category ( $F(7, 329) = 1.88, p > 0.05$ ), two predictors made a significant contribution (age  $sr^2 = 0.02$  and relationship status  $sr^2 = 0.01$ ), so a reduced model was calculated. A significant regression equation was found ( $F(2, 334) = 5.02, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.03 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.023$ ), which means that a small 3% of the variability in the neutral stereotypic category was predicted by participants' age and relationship status. More

specifically, participants who were older endorsed less strongly the neutral descriptors, as did participants who were not in a relationship. Moreover, a non-significant regression equation was also found on the category positive ( $F(7, 329) = 1.13, p > 0.05$ ), but one predictor made a significant contribution (parental status  $sr^2 = 0.01, p \leq 0.05$ ), so a reduced model was calculated. Again, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(1, 336) = 5.47, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.02 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.013$ ), revealing that 2% of the variability in the positive stereotypic category was predicted by participants' parental status. More particularly, participants who were parents endorsed more strongly the positive descriptors. A similar case arised with the lifestyle stereotypic category, where the complete model was not significant ( $F(7, 329) = 0.89, p > 0.05$ ), but the predictor age made a significant contribution (age  $sr^2 = 0.01, p \leq 0.05$ ), thus a reduced model was generated. However, the reduced model showed a non-significant regression equation ( $F(1, 335) = 2.999, p > 0.05$ ), meaning that the amount of information the predictor age contributed that is not shared by any other predictor in the model did not reach statistical significance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). Despite these four non-significant complete models, the reduced model for the parenting and family stereotypic category presented a significant regression equation ( $F(1, 335) = 8.83, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.03 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.023$ ), revealing that 3% of the variability within the category was predicted by participants' age. Specifically, participants who were older endorsed less strongly the parenting and family descriptors.

***Lesbian mothers.*** On the one hand, complete regression models were calculated for lesbian mothers, and non-significant regression equations were found for the categories neutral ( $F(7, 329) = 1.58, p > 0.05$ ), as well as parenting and family ( $F(7, 329) = 1.40, p > 0.05$ ). Within those complete models, no predictor was making a significant contribution so no reduced model was generated. Furthermore, the complete regression model for the lifestyle stereotypic category

was also non-significant, but the predictor age made a significant contribution ( $sr^2 = 0.01$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), so a reduced model was calculated. Within the reduced model, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(1, 335) = 4.92$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.014 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.012$ ), which means that only 1% of the variability in the lifestyle stereotypic category was predicted by participants' age. Specifically, participants who were older endorsed less strongly the lifestyle descriptors. On the other hand, two complete regression models were significant so reduced models could easily be generated. The positive stereotypic category relative to being a lesbian mothers illustrated a significant regression equation ( $F(3, 334) = 8.74$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.07 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.064$ ), meaning that 7% of the variability in the positive stereotypic category was predicted by participants' gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. More specifically, participants who were women endorsed more strongly the positive descriptors, as did participants who were not heterosexual, and Caucasian (. Another significant regression equation was found on the negative stereotypic category ( $F(2, 335) = 9.10$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.05 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.046$ ), meaning that 5% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' parental status and sexual orientation. More precisely, participants who were not heterosexual endorsed less strongly the negative descriptors, as did the participants who were parents.

***Adoptive mothers.*** In regards to the positive stereotypic category associated to being an adoptive mothers, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(1, 336) = 14.06$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.04 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.037$ ), which indicates that 4% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' gender. More particularly, participants who were women endorsed more strongly the positive descriptors. Another significant regression equation was found on the negative stereotypic category ( $F(1, 335) = 9.29$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.03 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.024$ ), meaning that 3% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' age.

Specifically, participants who were older endorsed less strongly the negative descriptors. The

lifestyle stereotypic category also presented a significant regression equation ( $F(3, 333) = 6.54, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.06 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.047$ ), revealing that 6% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' gender, age, and relationship status. More specifically, participants who were older endorsed less strongly the lifestyle descriptors, as did participants who were not in a relationship. On the contrary, participants who were women endorsed more strongly the lifestyle descriptors. In addition, a significant regression equation came up in the parenting and family stereotypic category ( $F(2, 335) = 14.65, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.08 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.075$ ), thus revealing that 8% of the variability was predicted by participants' parental and relationship statuses. More precisely, participants who were not in a relationship endorsed less strongly the parenting and family descriptors, as did participants who were parents. Finally, a significant regression equation was found for the neutral stereotypic category ( $F(2, 335) = 11.30, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.06 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.058$ ), which shows that participants' parental and relationship statuses explained 6% of the variability in the category. More particularly, participants who were not in a relationship endorsed less strongly the neutral descriptors, as did participants who were parents.

### **Stereotypes of fathers.**

*Married fathers.* On the one part, concerning the positive stereotypic category, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(1, 294) = 5.93, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.02 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.016$ ), which indicates that a small 2% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' relationship status. More precisely, participants who were not in a relationship endorsed less strongly the positive descriptors. Another significant regression equation was found on the negative stereotypic category ( $F(2, 293) = 5.23, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.03 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.028$ ), meaning that 3% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' ethnicity and sexual orientation. More particularly, participants who were not Caucasian

endorsed more strongly the negative descriptors, as well as participants who were not heterosexual. Nonetheless, the predictor ethnicity was no longer significant in the reduced model, meaning that the amount of information the predictor contributed that is not shared by any other predictor in the model did not reach statistical significance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). A significant regression equation was also found on the neutral stereotypic category ( $F(2, 293) = 7.02, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.05 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.039$ ), which shows that participants' parental and relationship statuses explained 5% of the variability in the category. More specifically, participants who were not in a relationship endorsed less strongly the neutral descriptors, as did participants who were parents. On the other part, the complete regression model for the parenting and family stereotypic category illustrated a non-significant regression equation ( $F(7, 288) = 1.24, p > 0.05$ ). Within the complete model, no predictor was making a significant contribution, so no reduced model was generated. Similarly, within the complete regression model for the lifestyle stereotypic category, a non-significant regression equation was found ( $F(7, 288) = 1.35, p > 0.05$ ). Yet, one predictor within the complete model made a significant contribution, that is the relationship status ( $sr^2 = 0.02, p \leq 0.05$ ), so a reduced model was calculated. A significant regression equation was found ( $F(1, 294) = 5.40, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.02 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.015$ ), which means that 2% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' relationship status. More precisely, participants who were not in a relationship endorsed less strongly the lifestyle descriptors.

***Divorced fathers.*** A significant regression equation related to the positive stereotypic category was found ( $F(2, 293) = 6.20, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.04 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.034$ ), revealing that 4% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' gender and ethnicity. More particularly, participants who were women endorsed more strongly the positive descriptors,

as did participants who were Caucasian. Nonetheless, the predictor gender was no longer significant in the reduced model, meaning that the amount of information the predictor contributed that is not shared by any other predictor in the model did not reach statistical significance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). The complete regression model for the parenting and family stereotypic category associated to being a divorced father revealed a non-significant regression equation ( $F(7, 288) = 1.49, p > 0.05$ ). Within the complete model, no predictor was making a significant contribution, so no reduced model was generated for the parenting and family category. Moreover, a non-significant regression equation was found on the negative stereotypic category ( $F(1, 294) = 1.35, p > 0.05$ ). In addition, the complete regression models for the lifestyle and neutral stereotypic categories also showed non-significant regression equations ( $p > 0.05$ ). Despite the non-significance of those two complete models, some predictors made a significant contribution, that is the relationship status within the lifestyle category ( $sr^2 = 0.01, p > 0.05$ ), and ethnicity within the neutral category ( $sr^2 = 0.01, p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, reduced models were still calculated. A significant regression equation was found on the lifestyle stereotypic category ( $F(1, 294) = 4.69, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.02 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.012$ ), which means that 2% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' relationship status. More specifically, participants who were not in a relationship endorsed less strongly the lifestyle descriptors. Further, a significant regression equation was also found on the neutral stereotypic category ( $F(1, 294) = 6.66, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.02 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.019$ ), indicating that 2% of the variability in the neutral stereotypic category was predicted by participants' ethnicity. More precisely, participants who were not Caucasian endorsed less strongly the neutral descriptors.

***Single fathers.*** In regards to the positive stereotypic category associated to being a single father, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(3, 292) = 9.23, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of

0.09 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.077$ ), which indicates that 9% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' gender, ethnicity, and parental status. More particularly, participants who were women endorsed more strongly the positive descriptors. Moreover, participants who were not Caucasian endorsed less strongly the positive descriptors, as did participants who were parents. Another significant regression equation was found on the negative stereotypic category ( $F(1, 294) = 16.29, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.05 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.049$ ), meaning that 5% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' parental status. More specifically, participants who were parents endorsed less strongly the negative descriptors. The lifestyle stereotypic category also presented a significant regression equation ( $F(1, 294) = 17.01, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.06 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.051$ ), revealing that 6% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' parental status. More precisely, participants who were parents endorsed less strongly the lifestyle descriptors. The complete regression models for the parenting and family as well as the neutral stereotypic categories indicated non-significant regression equations ( $p > 0.05$ ). Yet, the predictor parental status made a significant contribution in both models ( $sr^2$  in the parenting and family model = 0.016,  $p \leq 0.05$ ;  $sr^2$  in the neutral model = 0.015,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), so reduced models were calculated. A significant regression equation was found for the parenting and family category ( $F(1, 294) = 6.86, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.02 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.019$ ), which means that 2% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' parental status. Specifically, participants who were parents endorsed less strongly the parenting and family descriptors. Similarly, a significant regression equation was found for the neutral category ( $F(1, 294) = 6.01, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.02 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.017$ ), which means that 2% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' parental status. Specifically, participants who were parents endorsed less strongly the neutral descriptors.

**Stepfathers.** In the case of stepfathers, four out of five complete models were not significant and did not explain enough variance. In fact, within the regression model for the positive stereotypic category, a non-significant regression equation was found ( $F(7, 288) = 1.06, p > 0.05$ ). The same situation came up within the regression model for the lifestyle stereotypic category where a non-significant regression equation was also found ( $F(7, 288) = 1.44, p > 0.05$ ). Lastly, non-significant regression equations were found within the regression models for the parenting and family stereotypic category ( $F(7, 288) = 1.22, p > 0.05$ ), as well as the neutral stereotypic category ( $F(7, 288) = 1.83, p > 0.05$ ). None of these models were significant, so no reduced model was generated ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). The only significant complete model in the case of stepfathers was for the negative stereotypic category ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Thus, when a reduced model was calculated, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(1, 294) = 3.92, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.01 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.01$ ), which indicates that only 1% of the variability in the negative stereotypic category was predicted by participants' sexual orientation. More particularly, participants who were not heterosexual endorsed more strongly the negative descriptors.

**Gay fathers.** In regards to the positive stereotypic category associated to being a gay father, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(3, 292) = 25.07, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.21 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.197$ ), which indicates that 21% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' gender, ethnicity, and parental status. More specifically, participants who were women endorsed more strongly the positive descriptors, as did participants who were Caucasian, and not parents. Another significant regression equation was found on the negative stereotypic category ( $F(2, 293) = 8.49, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.06 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.048$ ), meaning that 6% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' gender and parental status. More particularly, participants who were women endorsed less strongly the negative descriptors, as did

participants who were parents. The lifestyle stereotypic category also presented a significant regression equation ( $F(4, 291) = 11.73, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.14 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.127$ ), revealing that 14% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' gender, ethnicity, as well as parental and relationship statuses. Thus, participants who were women endorsed more strongly the lifestyle descriptors. Furthermore, participants who were not Caucasian endorsed less strongly the lifestyle descriptors, as did the participants who were not in a relationship and participants who were parents. In addition, a significant regression equation came up in the parenting and family stereotypic category ( $F(3, 292) = 17.82, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.16 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.146$ ), thus revealing that 16% of the variability was predicted by participants' gender, ethnicity, and parental status. Specifically, participants who were women endorsed more strongly the parenting and family descriptors. Moreover, participants who were not Caucasian endorsed less strongly the parenting and family descriptors, as did the participants who were parents. Finally, a significant regression equation was found on the neutral stereotypic category ( $F(3, 292) = 13.90, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.13 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.116$ ), which shows that participants' gender, ethnicity, and parental status explained 13% of the variability in the category. Specifically, participants who were women endorsed more strongly the neutral descriptors. On the contrary, participants who were not Caucasian endorsed less strongly the neutral descriptors, as did the participants who were parents.

***Adoptive fathers.*** Concerning the positive stereotypic category associated to being an adoptive father, a significant regression equation was found ( $F(1, 294) = 7.27, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.02 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.021$ ), which indicates that only 2% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' gender. More precisely, participants who were women endorsed more strongly the positive descriptors. Moreover, a significant regression equation was found on the negative stereotypic category ( $F(2, 293) = 7.77, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.05 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.044$ ),

meaning that 5% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' gender and parental status. Therefore, participants who were women endorsed less strongly the negative descriptors, as did participants who were parents. Nonetheless, the predictor gender was no longer significant in the reduced model, meaning that the amount of information the predictor contributed that is not shared by any other predictor in the model did not reach statistical significance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). The parenting and family stereotypic category also presented a significant regression equation ( $F(1, 294) = 7.04, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.02 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.020$ ), revealing that 2% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' parental status. More particularly, participants who were parents endorsed less strongly the parenting and family descriptors. The complete regression models for the neutral as well as the lifestyle stereotypic categories indicated non-significant regression equations ( $p > 0.05$ ). Nonetheless, the predictor parental status made a significant contribution in the neutral stereotypic category ( $sr^2 = 0.024, p \leq 0.05$ ), as did the predictor gender in the lifestyle stereotypic category ( $sr^2 = 0.021, p \leq 0.05$ ). Thus, reduced models were calculated. A significant regression equation was found for the neutral category ( $F(1, 294) = 12.08, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.04 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.036$ ), which means that 4% of the variability in the category was predicted by participants' parental status. More precisely, participants who were parents endorsed less strongly the neutral descriptors. Similarly, a significant regression equation was found for the lifestyle category ( $F(1, 294) = 6.89, p \leq 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.02 (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.020$ ), which means that 2% of the variability in the stereotypic category was predicted by participants' gender. Specifically, participants who were women endorsed more strongly the lifestyle descriptors.

### **Summary of Main Findings**

It is important to briefly synthesize and extract the main trends. Concerning the first objective, it was found that married mothers are by far the maternal role that is most positively stereotyped in comparison with divorced, single, step, lesbian, and adoptive mothers ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). At the other end of the spectrum, divorced mothers are the most strongly negatively stereotyped maternal role when compared to married mothers, and that on all five categories, followed by single and stepmothers, who respectively scored below the mean on 30 and 41 positive items out of 42 ( $p \leq 0.01$ ), respectively. While lesbian mothers were generally negatively stereotyped in comparison with married mothers, they were more positively stereotyped than divorced, single and stepmothers, but less positively stereotyped than adoptive mothers ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Indeed, adoptive mothers were stereotyped very similarly to married mothers ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). They even scored more positively than married mothers on a few negative personal traits, and rated more positively on 19 positive personal traits than married mothers ( $p \leq 0.01$ ).

Concerning fathers, as was the case for married mothers, married fathers were by far the paternal role that is most positively stereotyped in comparison with divorced, single, step, gay, and adoptive fathers ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Also, as divorced mothers were the most negatively stereotyped maternal role, divorced fathers were clearly the most negatively stereotyped paternal role in comparison with married fathers ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). In fact, they scored above the mean on all the items within the negative category, and below the mean on all the items within the positive category when compared to married fathers ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Moreover, single, step, and gay fathers were less negatively stereotyped than divorced fathers in comparison with married fathers, but they still scored above the mean on more than half of the negative items, and below the mean on more or almost more than half of the positive items ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Finally, adoptive fathers were not seen as negatively than the other paternal roles when compared to married fathers, but they were still

perceived less positively ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Thus, as it was the case for adoptive mothers, adoptive fathers were stereotyped very similarly to married fathers.

In sum, it would appear that married parents are highly regarded regardless of parent gender, and that divorced parents are strongly negatively regarded again for both genders. Single, step, and lesbian/gay parents remain generally negatively stereotyped, despite some more positive views that have emerged here and there. Finally, adoptive parents are stereotyped in a manner that is very similar to married parents, and are even seen more positively on some aspects.

Concerning the second objective, it appears that 66% of mothers' reduced models and 53% of fathers' reduced models were significant which demonstrates that our probability level of .05 was not too strict, nor too liberal. A countdown of the number of times the different predictors made a significant contribution within the reduced models was generated. In reduced models for both mothers and fathers, the gender (17 times in total) and parental status (22 times in total) all reached statistical significance in predicting stereotypic category. However, while age was the most common significant predictor within mothers' reduced models (9 times), it never appeared as a significant predictor within fathers' reduced models. Furthermore, ethnicity was a significant predictor in seven fathers' reduced models, but only reached statistical significance in three of the mothers' reduced models. The number of times relationship status (eight and five times, for mothers and fathers, respectively) and sexual orientation (three and two times, for mothers and fathers, respectively) came up as statistically significant is relatively similar within both mothers and fathers' models, as was educational attainment which never reached statistical significance in any of the reduced models.

## **Discussion**

Over the past decade, Bozalek (2007) as well as Lamb and Lewis (2010) reiterated the need for more research on the attributes related to mothers and fathers in various modern family constellations. As such, one of the main objectives of this thesis was to describe the stereotypical content related to divorced, single, step, same-sex, and adoptive parents in comparison with the stereotypical content related to married parents, in a Canadian setting, through a three-step procedure (open response, adjective checklist, and rating scale). Further, because the formation of stereotypes does not occur in isolation (Schneider, 2004), a second main objective was to identify if specific participants' sociodemographic variables are significantly associated with the ratings on the stereotypic content of married, divorced, step, single, same-sex and adoptive parents.

### **Study Objective 1: Describe and Compare the Stereotypic Content**

The first research question relative to the first objective was: What is the stereotypical content associated to divorced, single, step, lesbian/gay, and adoptive mothers/fathers when compared to married mothers/fathers? Stereotypes pertaining to the maternal and paternal roles were organized into five umbrella categories, which are: positive and negative personal traits, lifestyle, parenting and family, and neutral traits. Some of the most common descriptors that came up for mothers were: persistent, brave, committed, loving, wholesome, loyal, and generous (positive personal traits), unhappy, lonely, distressed, and cold (negative personal traits), rich, struggling, hardworking, and stable (lifestyle), housewives, maternal, role models, and caring (parenting and family), as well as unconventional, uncommon, and traditional (neutral descriptors).

As previously found by other authors in the field (e.g., Bermudez et al., 2014; Durand, 2011; Elliott et al., 2015; Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Qiu et al., 2013; Valiquette-Tessier et al.,

2018; Xu & Yeung, 2013), mothers in this study were, among other things, associated to being devoted caregivers, role models, and homemakers, and never stereotyped as financial providers, despite some being described as potentially participating in the labour market (e.g., hardworking) and being financially prosperous or not (e.g., poor and rich). Indeed, based on our knowledge of the literature since 2000, the African American mothers taking part in Dow (2015) and Sealey-Ruiz's (2013) studies were the only ones being first and foremost stereotyped in financial terms. They were seen as poor, following the Welfare Queen stereotype, or financially independent, based on the Strong Black Woman stereotype (Dow, 2015; Sealey-Ruiz, 2013). Therefore, as stated by Arendell (2000), it would seem that good motherhood is still mostly defined according to the intensive mothering ideology. Similarly to findings from previous studies (e.g., Arditti & Lopéz, 2005; Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Rincon & Trung Lam, 2011; Wycisk & Kleka, 2014), participants in the present thesis often viewed mothers who did not conform to this rigid script less positively than biological heterosexual first-time married mothers. In other words, mothers not following the assumptions about what motherhood should look like often generated more mixed or negative stereotypes from participants in this study. This bears witness to the tenacity of the intensive mothering ideology that was internalized by some participants, notwithstanding that the ideology is coded White, middle-class (Hays, 1996; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018), and upholds a version of privatized mothering that is not consistent with the constraints placed on mothers with various marital and socioeconomic statuses, ethnic identities, family structures, educational levels, ages, sexualities, nationalities, and immigration statuses (e.g., Chaney, 2009; Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018).

Furthermore, some of the most common descriptors that came up for fathers were: trustworthy, strong, compassionate, and proud (positive personal traits), unreliable, uncommitted,

dishonest, and betraying (negative personal traits), providers, breadwinners, and successful (lifestyle), father figures, strict, absent, protective, cheaters, self sacrificing, and caring (parenting and family), as well as stereotypical dad, victims of prejudgements, and scrutinized by society (neutral descriptors). As previously found (e.g., Behnke et al., 2008; Chaney, 2009; Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2015; Este & Tachble, 2009; Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013; Kwon & Roy, 2007; Lasser et al., 2011; Qiu et al., 2013; Ratele et al., 2012; Roer-Strier et al., 2005; Strier, 2014; Strier & Roer-Strier, 2005; Taylor & Behnke, 2005; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008; Utrata, 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2009; Xu & Yeung, 2013), participants in this study linked fathers to the main financial provider stereotype. Nonetheless, even if economic provision seems an intrinsic part of fatherhood, participants provided descriptors relative to protecting children, offering moral guidance, devoting attention, and showing love, which are also stereotypic aspects highlighted by other authors when describing fatherhood (e.g., Behnke et al., 2008; Chaney, 2009; Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2015; Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013; Kwon & Roy, 2007; Qiu et al., 2013; Ratele et al., 2012; Strier, 2014; Taylor & Behnke, 2005; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2009; Xu & Yeung, 2013). This finding is consistent with past authors' views suggesting that a transformation may be taking place because more contemporary perspectives of fatherhood are emerging, and they reflect the trend of a new fatherhood (e.g., Behnke et al., 2008; Chaney, 2009; Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2015; Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013; Kwon & Roy, 2007; Qiu et al., 2013; Ratele et al., 2012; Strier, 2014; Taylor & Behnke, 2005; Wilkinson et al., 2009; Xu & Yeung, 2013). Thus, in agreement with previous studies focused on new fatherhood (e.g., Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, & Lamb, 2000; Este & Tachble, 2009; Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013; Kwon & Roy, 2007; LaRossa, 1997; Roer-Strier et al., 2005; Stearns, 1991), the novel type of father identified in this thesis nurtures, provides financially, supports, guides, and coparents.

In a chronosystemic perspective, contrary to Pleck's (1987) work pointing out historical changes in perceptions of fathers' roles, from exclusively being a moral teacher to a breadwinner, gender role model, and nurturer, the actual views of fatherhood reflect a combination of diverse characteristics. In general, studies published over the past 15 to 20 years challenged or at least started to challenge the stereotype only depicting fathers as breadwinners and validated dimensions of involved fathering in the construction of a more nuanced fatherhood (e.g., Behnke et al., 2008; Chaney, 2009; Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2015; Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013; Kwon & Roy, 2007; Qiu et al., 2013; Ratele et al., 2012; Strier, 2014; Taylor & Behnke, 2005; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2009; Xu & Yeung, 2013). Results from this dissertation are consistent with these previous ones, and therefore leads us to side with Coles' (2001) call for re-envisioning fatherhood and moving beyond the deficit-based model that emerged from studies on fatherhood conducted during the late 1970s and early 1980s (Hawkins & Dollahite 1997).

Findings from this thesis show that stereotypes of motherhood and fatherhood in a Canadian context are still linked to one particular macrosystemic ideological system- that is the traditional gender role ideology (Parke et al., 2004). This ideology sets cultural prescriptions defining the main roles of women and men, coupled with the belief that the legitimate family consists of two heterosexual parents that are united in a first-marriage to have biological children (e.g., Arditto & Lopéz, 2005; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). The traditional gender role ideology envisions men as economic providers and women as homemakers who raise the children and exemplify four key virtues: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity (e.g., Landry, 2000; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018; Welter, 1996). The ideology was forged in the homes of White middle-class families during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and was depicted as

an ideal against which to evaluate families and work decisions (e.g., Coontz, 1992; Landry, 2000). With time, the influence of such an ideology spread worldwide (Arditti & Lopéz, 2005). While it has evolved to a degree throughout the more recent years, it continues to mould today's stereotypes associated with parenthood (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). For example, the dialectics of machismo (the cult of virility) and marianismo (the cult of feminine spiritual superiority) are linked with the traditional gender role ideology as they shaped the idea that females and males have different status and roles, consequently defining rigid boundaries within which men and women operate (Arditti & Lopéz, 2005). Nonetheless, a movement toward more egalitarian gender roles is also noticed in the present thesis. For instance, even if fathers were primarily identified as financial providers, they were also seen as caregivers through housework participation and childcare activities. As reported by different authors (e.g., Casique, 1999; Esteinou, 2001; Rojas, 2000; Wainerman, 2000), such a change is gaining a slow widespread acceptance in countries all around the world (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018).

The second research question relative to the first objective is: Does the stereotypical content vary in accordance with the parental role's relationship and parental statuses, and sexual orientation? T-tests were performed to compare the content of the stereotypes associated to divorced, single, step, same-sex, and adoptive parents to married parents. On the one hand, as hypothesized, when considering all the categories (negative, positive, lifestyle, parenting and family, and neutral), findings confirmed that divorced mothers are generally associated to the most negative stereotypic content of all maternal roles in comparison with married mothers. Effect sizes were generally medium, but very large and large on some descriptors such as negatively seen ( $d = 1.31$ ), lonely ( $d = 1.23$ ), and pitied ( $d = 1.09$ ). In a recall experiment conducted by Schultz & Leigh (2004), participants (who were family therapy trainees) received

one of two vignettes: the only difference between vignettes was that the main character was either a married mother or a divorced mother. Trainees with the divorced mother vignette recollected a greater number of negative characteristics than the participants who received the married mother vignette. Similarly, in this dissertation, divorced mothers were viewed as possessing more negative personal characteristics (all except the descriptors “tired” and “stressed”) and less positive personal characteristics than married mothers (except for the positive descriptor “independent”, on which they scored above the mean, and the positive descriptors “brave” and “strong”, on which no significant difference was found). However, in Schultz and Leigh’s (2004) study, there was no difference in the number of recalled positive characteristics when comparing divorced and married mothers. In addition, divorced mothers in this thesis were stereotyped as struggling more in life and as being less family oriented than married mothers (e.g., less successful, less stable, more poor, abandoning more their family, less good caregivers, and not fulfilling as much their life’s goal), which also differs from Schultz and Leigh (2004) results’ who reported no difference in the number of recalled parenting ability between divorced and married mothers.

Yet, the overall negative stereotypic content relative to divorced mothers that emerged from this thesis is coherent with Arditti and Lopéz’s (2005) findings that focused on divorced Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Latina mothers. Content was drawn from a sample of 95 Dominican, Puerto Rican, and Latina women living in the United States. Thirty percent of the participants were divorced or separated themselves and half had children. The majority of participants perceived divorced mothers as failures. A variety of descriptors were used by the participants to qualify them: cowards, frivolous, weak for not persevering or enduring in the marriage, whores, easy-prey for free sex, promiscuous, irresponsible, selfish, not trustworthy,

lacked courage, incapable of maintaining a family, alone and without protection, disrespectful of God's rules, and without moral values. Based on participants' own discourse, women, especially married women, tended to perpetuate negative images of divorced mothers as it related to endangering the stability of marriage. In other words, divorced mothers were stereotyped by women themselves as likely to lure other husbands away from their marriages because they had already departed from some traditional prescription which otherwise would keep their sexuality in check (Arditti & Lopéz, 2005; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018).

Similarly, as hypothesized, when considering all the categories (negative, positive, lifestyle, parenting and family, and neutral), findings also confirmed that divorced fathers are generally associated to the most negative stereotypic content of all paternal roles in comparison with married fathers. The effect sizes were generally large, especially on some items such as more lonely ( $d = 1.20$ ), less committed ( $d = -1.00$ ), less respected ( $d = -1.08$ ), less good examples ( $d = -1.02$ ), and less traditional ( $d = -1.02$ ). They scored above the mean on all the negative personal descriptors, below the mean on all the positive personal descriptors, were seen as struggling more in life, and being inferior to married fathers on the parenting and family aspect (e.g., less good father figures, caregivers, and more absent and cheaters). Those findings are consistent with Troilo and Coleman's (2008) previous work on never-married, married, divorced (residential and non-residential), single, step, gay, and adoptive fathers. The authors highlighted that the content of divorced nonresidential fathers were among the most negatively stereotyped father types (e.g., arrogant, hated, immature, outsider, uncommitted, uninvolved, and wrong) when compared to married fathers. On the contrary, divorced residential fathers' stereotypes were generally positive (e.g., hardworking, providers, caring, family oriented, good parent, mature, and protector), although less positive than for fathers-in-general, married fathers, and adoptive fathers (Troilo &

Coleman, 2008). Findings pertaining to Russian nonresident divorced fathers living in Russia in Utrata' study (2008) were similar to the ones pertaining to North American divorced nonresident fathers in Troilo and Coleman' study (2008), making it evident that nonresidential fathers were among the most negatively stereotyped father type. Since Troilo and Coleman (2008) found that divorced residential fathers were generally stereotyped positively, even if slightly less positively than fathers-in-general, married, and adoptive fathers, they emphasized the nonresidential status as a possible reason for the negative stereotypes. Meanwhile, Utrata (2008) referred to the loosening of the ties binding men to families which leads biological fathers to delegate fatherhood to the men living with the ex-wife.

In comparison to married mothers, single mothers were also negatively stereotyped, but not as much as divorced mothers. Even if some descriptors had very large and large effect sizes (e.g., more pitied ( $d = 1.21$ ), more negatively seen ( $d = 1.28$ ), more lonely ( $d = 1.16$ ), and abandoning their family ( $d = 1.33$ )), generally speaking, effect sizes were medium. In fact, single mothers were generally seen as possessing more negative personal characteristics (except for the descriptor "tired") and less positive personal characteristics than married mothers. However, single mothers were rated more positively on two descriptors: "brave" and "independent". Interpersonally, single mothers were believed to be struggling more in life, and even though they were not rated as different from married mothers on the descriptors "maternal" and "different", they were seen as less family oriented, less caring, and more often teenagers. In DeJean, McGeorge, and Carlson's (2012) study, participants were presented vignettes about single mothers and similar negative stereotypes came up. More specifically, they were compared to single fathers and described as less intelligent, less desirable, less secure, less fortunate, less satisfied with life, less moral, less reputable, less of a good parent, and less economically

advantaged. In short, the stereotypes associated with single mothers in this thesis are consistent with the stereotypes associated with single mothers in DeJean and colleagues' study (2012) depicting them as needing to be more self-sufficient, tending to struggle with life, and having to live without some of life's necessities.

Single fathers were also negatively stereotyped, but not as much as divorced fathers, and effect sizes were generally small. They scored above the mean on almost all the negative personal descriptors, and below the mean on almost half of the positive personal descriptors. Despite that single fathers were not rated as differing from married fathers on the descriptor "breadwinners", they scored below the mean on the descriptor "providers", and were seen as struggling more in life. Such a finding might simply be explained by the interpretation that participants ascribed to the descriptors. Sometimes, even if descriptors are synonyms, they might have been understood differently. Single fathers were also stereotyped in Troilo and Coleman (2008) as poor breadwinners in comparison with married fathers. This perception was also supported by a qualitative study conducted in Canada and the United States by Miall & March (2005), which explored stereotyped attitudes toward single birth fathers putting their child up for adoption. Negative stereotyped attitudes in this study were linked to a child growing up in a single father family, rather than a two-parent family. This was explained by the financial challenges associated with single fatherhood, that is the perceived single father's inability to provide adequately for his family. In fact, the majority of participants perceived that single fathers who put their child up for adoption were responsible, caring, and unselfish, because they were offering a chance for their child to be raised in a family that could better provide for his/her needs (Miall & March, 2005). In comparison with married fathers, single fathers in this thesis were perceived more as maternal and motherly, replacements (from the mother we presume in

this instance), another father figure, outsiders, and not the child's father. Perhaps single fatherhood was contextualized by participants as a transitory family dynamic. Thus, single fathers might have been seen as more likely to form a stepfamily for instance.

Furthermore, compared to married mothers, stepmotherhood was associated with less positive personal characteristics, and to more undesirable negative attributes, despite being perceived as less tired and less stressed. On the lifestyle dimension, stepmothers were stereotyped as being less hardworking, less successful, and less stable, but as struggling less in life than married mothers. They were also seen less as family oriented, and more as homewreckers and intruders, although no significant difference was found on the descriptor "housewives". Throughout the analysis, effect sizes were generally medium. Stereotypes associated to stepmothers have been understudied since 2000 (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Only one qualitative study conducted by Christian (2005) revealed negative stereotypes associated with stepmothers. Christian (2005) found that stepmothers continue to face the myth of the wicked, evil, greedy, martyr, and selfish stepmother. This study is consistent with results from previously published studies (e.g., Dainton, 1993; Fine 1986; Ganong, Coleman, & Kennedy, 1990) as well as folklore, children's fairy tales, and media images depicting stepmothers as evil, cruel, and wicked (Claxton-Oldfield, 2000).

Stepfathers were also negatively stereotyped in comparison with married fathers, even slightly more so than single fathers, but not as much as divorced fathers, and effect sizes were situated between somewhat small and medium. This is coherent with Claxton-Oldfield and colleagues' (2005) work highlighting that the content of stepfathers' stereotypes remains predominantly negative when compared with biological fathers (e.g., exploiting, obnoxious, patronizing, unloving, intolerant, manipulative, careless, controlling, and strange). Indeed,

stepfathers in this dissertation scored above the mean on almost all the negative personal attributes, and below the mean on almost all the positive personal attributes. On the interpersonal dimensions, stepfathers were viewed as less successful and less family oriented (e.g., less caring, more absent, more often a parental replacement, less stable, and less hardworking) than married fathers. Overall, even if stepfathers were seen as less stereotypical fathers, they were rated as more common than married fathers. This finding might reflect the belief that divorce is on the rise and remarriage more common nowadays. The results above are similar to the ones reported by the Canadians Claxton-Oldfield, Garber, and Gillcrist (2006), as well as the Australians Planitz and Feeney (2009), and the Americans Troilo and Coleman (2008). They found that when compared with biological fathers, stepfathers were stereotyped as less affectionate, less controlling, and less successful (Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2006), as well as less caring and less satisfied (Planitz & Feeney, 2009). Furthermore, stepfathers were stereotyped less positively than fathers-in-general on parenting traits (e.g., family oriented, lenient, and role model) and more negatively on personal characteristics (e.g., arrogant, confused, immature, and wrong) (Troilo & Coleman, 2008). They especially scored high on two items, “hated” and “insensitive”, in comparison with fathers-in-general. It is important to emphasize that biological mothers/fathers and mothers/fathers-in-general are often automatically equated to first-time married heterosexual biological mothers/fathers by participants (Troilo, 2013).

Lesbian mothers were not stereotyped more positively than married mothers, but were less negatively stereotyped than divorced, single, and stepmothers in comparison with married mothers. Indeed, while they were viewed as possessing more negative personal traits and less positive personal traits than married mothers, participants rated them above the mean on six positive personal descriptors out of 42, including “more open”, “fine”, “brave”, and

“independent”. Further, lesbian mothers were perceived as less hardworking, less stable, and less successful than married mothers, and despite the generally negative parenting and family content associated to them, lesbian mothers were rated as fulfilling more their life’s goal, and as not being different from heterosexual mothers in comparison with married mothers. These findings confirm the hypothesis that single, step, and lesbian mothers are generally associated to more negative stereotypic content and less positive stereotypic content when compared with married mothers, even if less negative than the one associated to divorced mothers. However, it is important to mention that lesbian mothers were not as negatively stereotyped as single and stepmothers, and the ratings on the content reveal much more nuances. Furthermore, effect sizes were generally small, except on a few descriptors where they were very large (e.g., more excluded ( $d = 1.15$ ), less common ( $d = -1.03$ ), less traditional ( $d = -1.15$ ), and more negatively seen ( $d = 1.44$ ). These findings are not consistent with one specific study which presented a very positive outlook toward lesbian mothers. Indeed, the Australian researchers Camilleri and Ryan (2006) demonstrated extremely clear-cut liberal stereotypes toward same-sex parenting, so liberal that lesbian mothers were stereotyped more positively than heterosexual parents (more emotionally committed, loving, stable, supportive, and part of a good social support system). Notwithstanding, another previous study that focused on lesbian mothers (Rincon & Trung Lam, 2011) obtained findings that more closely resembled the ones reported in this thesis. Rincon and Trung Lam (2011) conducted a study with 15 biological Latina mothers living in the United States but born in Mexico, Argentina, and Panama. The study addressed their perceptions toward Latina lesbian mothers. Participants’ responses were divided into two categories: Latina lesbian mothers as normal and as not normal. On the one hand, participants who viewed these mothers as normal thought they were average people doing the same thing that heterosexual parents do.

These participants did not judge lesbian mothers as immoral. They accepted lesbian motherhood and embraced it as long as mothers were nurturing, loving, and protective of their children. They saw them as mothers first and did not label them otherwise. On the other hand, participants who stereotyped these lesbian mothers as not normal believed children should be raised by a mother and a father, not by two mothers, because this lack of a male parent will confuse children, especially regarding their own sexual preference. These participants emphasized that lesbian mothers can be good parents, but they did not think a father can be substituted. They saw fathers are the head of the family, the ones who provide, guide, and educate. In other words, for them, men and women are different and a woman cannot take the role of a man (Rincon & Trung Lam, 2011).

Further, findings associated to gay fathers were somewhat a mix of positive and negative stereotypical content which is consistent with research published on this topic since 2000 (e.g., Camilleri & Ryan, 2006; Troilo & Coleman, 2008; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). While gay fathers in this thesis scored below the mean on half of the positive personal descriptors, they also scored above the mean of the descriptors “welcoming”, “passionate”, and “open-minded”. Additionally, participants did not see gay fathers as different from married fathers on the negative personal descriptors “uncommitted”, “unreliable”, “dishonest”, and “betraying”. Gay fathers were generally described as struggling more in life and being less family oriented than married fathers, despite being perceived as more maternal and equally caring. These are similar to the results in Troilo and Coleman’s study (2008) negatively depicting gay fathers on the parenting dimension as well as on personal qualities when compared to fathers-in-general. As it was the case for mothers, these findings confirm the hypothesis that single, step, and gay fathers are generally associated to negative stereotypic content when compared with married fathers, even if

less negatively stereotyped than divorced fathers. Again, it is nonetheless important to mention that gay fathers were not as negatively stereotyped as single and stepfathers, and the ratings on their stereotypical content reveal more nuances. Effect sizes, as it was the case for mothers, were generally small.

Findings also seem to confirm the hypothesis that married mothers are consistently associated to much more positive stereotypic content and less negative stereotypic content than divorced, single, step, and lesbian mothers, since these other maternal roles are generally associated to less positive stereotypic content, in comparison with married mothers. Stereotypes associated to married mothers almost always carry a more positive connotation. Indeed, divorced, single, step, and lesbian mothers rarely scored below the mean on the negative personal descriptors when compared to married mothers (except in some cases with the descriptors “tired” and “stressed”), and above the mean on the positive personal descriptors (except in some cases with the descriptor “independent”). Perhaps, being a married mother comes with the stereotype of having less freedom, and less time for oneself because of the all-consuming household and parenting tasks. For that matter, it is possible that married mothers were sometimes seen as more tired, more stressed, and less independent. Valiquette-Tessier and her colleagues’ (2015) systematic review of the literature revealed that parents of every type are still compared to biological married parents, and biological married parents, especially mothers, are consistently referred to as the standard against which other parental roles are compared.

Findings also confirm the hypothesis that married fathers are associated to much more positive stereotypic content and less negative stereotypic content than divorced, single, step, and gay fathers, since these other paternal roles are generally associated to less positive stereotypic content, in comparison with married fathers. The overwhelmingly positive stereotypic content of

married fathers was also reported by Troilo and Coleman (2008) (e.g., caring, dedicated, involved, protector, thoughtful, determined, friendly, fun, and kind). Moreover, Troilo (2013) underlined that men-in-general were less positively stereotyped when compared to biological fathers who were characterized by more positive parenting stereotypes (e.g., attentive, caring, giving, nurturing, role models, and selfless for biological married fathers versus only loving for men-in-general) and personal stereotypes (e.g., friendly, fun happy, and smart for biological married fathers versus attractive and nice for men-in-general). Biological fathers in that study were seen by participants as first-time married heterosexual biological fathers.

Finally, findings relative to adoptive mothers confirmed the study hypothesis they would be associated with similarly positive stereotypic content consistent with the perception of married mothers. More striking, adoptive mothers were sometimes stereotyped more positively than married mothers on particular descriptors, although this was still more the exception than the rule. For example, adoptive mothers scored as less unhappy, less sad, less tired, less distressed, less stressed, and they were rated more positively than married mothers on 19 out of 42 positive personal traits (e.g., brave, generous, open, and supported). Participants saw adoptive mothers as struggling less in life than married mothers (e.g., richer, more stable, and less overworked), but also as being more often infertile and inferior to married mothers on the caring aspect, notwithstanding that they were rated as fulfilling more their life's goal and being better role models. Generally, when a significant difference came up, effect sizes went from very small to small, except for one descriptor which the effect size was very large (more often infertile ( $d = 1.64$ )). Since 2000, adoptive parents have been the most understudied parental roles (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). To our knowledge, stereotypes associated with adoptive mothers were the subject of no original research since 2000. One author examined

the cultural attitudes toward adoption, but did not explore the specific stereotypic content related to being an adoptive mother or father (Wegar, 2000). Rather, he found that adoptive family members experienced social stigmatization shaped around infertility.

The content of stereotypes associated with adoptive fathers was also generally positive, and in some instances even more positive than the content associated with married fathers. Thus, the findings confirm our hypothesis that married and adoptive fathers will be associated with similarly positive stereotypic content. In fact, while adoptive fathers scored above the mean on the negative personal items “atypical”, “abnormal”, and “lonely”, they also scored above the mean on 16 out of 40 personal positive items (e.g., loyal, big hearted, affectionate, and heroes). On the lifestyle dimension, participants viewed them as very similar to married fathers, with the exception of seeing them less as working men, and more infertile. Further, adoptive fathers were quite often perceived as similar to married fathers in terms of parenting and family aspects. They were even stereotyped as more maternal and motherly, more caregiving, less absent and less cheaters than married fathers, but also more as replacements and not the child’s father. Generally, effect sizes went from very small to small, except for two particular descriptors where the effect were very large (more often infertile ( $d = 1.36$ ) and not the real father ( $d = 1.54$ )). Since 2000, to our knowledge, the only study that included a focus on adoptive fathers revealed that stereotypes associated with adoptive fathers were overwhelmingly positive, and resembled the ones associated with married fathers on the breadwinning, parenting, and personal traits dimensions (Troilo & Coleman, 2008). In fact, adoptive parents are the only parents not fitting into the traditional model of the nuclear family that have been generally positively stereotyped across studies. For example, Jerome and Sweeney (2014) analyzed 104 children’s books on adoption and found that adoptive parents were generally portrayed as saviors. This prevailing

stereotype perpetuates perceptions of adoption as an act of social justice and adoptive parents saving children from families that are inadequate (Doty Hollingsworth, 2003). Consistent with the existing literature on adoptive families (e.g., Bordo, 2002; Edwards & Williams, 2000; Leon, 2002), Jerome and Sweeney' (2014) found that birth parents who put their children up for adoption were stereotyped as unable to care, irresponsible, selfless, and poor.

Even if it was impossible to perform t-tests to compare parental roles across gender (different descriptors for mothers and fathers), it is possible to highlight many similarities in our findings. Indeed, both married mothers and fathers were the most positively stereotyped groups of all parental roles. Nonetheless, both adoptive mothers and fathers were overwhelmingly positively stereotyped, even more so than married mothers and fathers in some instances. On the contrary, both divorced mothers and fathers were the least positively stereotyped groups of all parental roles. While mothers are still ideologically seen as the pillar of the family, fathers are still perceived as workers and providers rather than nurturers (e.g., Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). Therefore, fathers are ascribed breadwinning duties and ensure economic stability for their family, and women are described on the basis of their caretaking abilities (e.g., Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). A mother who breaks with this fundamental aspect, for example by terminating her marriage (divorce) or by leaving her children in the care of the father, is inevitably stereotyped more negatively than a first-time married biological mother (e.g., Miall & March, 2005; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). Same logic goes for a father that terminates his marriage and does not provide economically for his family (e.g., Miall & March, 2005; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). Similarly, lesbian mothers and gay fathers were not perceived as positively as married parents, but not as negatively as divorced, single, and stepparents. Their stereotypes rather revealed

mixed content. Some political, economic, and social changes (e.g., the legalization of same-sex marriage and same-sex adoption in a growing number of countries) have led to the increased visibility of gay men and lesbian women (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). Thus, the opportunities for individuals to have friends, relatives, and/or co-workers who are openly part of the LGBT community have increased (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). Following the ecosystemic theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), we could assume that the growing exposure to this population may have had a positive impact on stereotyped attitudes toward same-sex parents (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). However, based on the findings from this thesis, negative stereotypes are still abundant. Despite Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) stating that beliefs, cultural values, and ideological systems shape stereotypes and attitudes, the new values and beliefs that emerge from transitions often clash with the more traditional values and beliefs. As a culture is first exposed to such transformations, the initial result is frequently outright rejection. Yet, over time, the new ideas compete with traditions and eventually, there is a hybridization of values and beliefs (Qiu et al., 2013; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Further, single and step mothers and fathers were both generally associated to negative stereotypes in comparison with married mothers and fathers, but they were not stereotyped as negatively as divorced parents. Divorce and remarriage have become frequent enough nowadays and more and more people encounter step and single families in their daily life. Such interactions may help to normalize the existence of single and stepparents and play a role in attenuating negative stereotypes toward them (Troilo & Coleman, 2008; Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2005; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). Yet, macrosystemic forces (e.g., negative portrayals in the media (movies, TV shows, books, etc.)), may still be influential in participants generally providing more negative than positive labels for these parental roles (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). For instance, in one study participants

reported depictions of stepfathers based on what they heard or read about them in the media, whether they believed them to be true or not (Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2005) and these were consistently negative in nature.

### **Study Objective 2: Determine Whether Certain Participants' Sociodemographic Variables Are Significantly Associated with the Ratings on the Stereotypic Content**

The main research question relative to our second objective is: are certain participants' sociodemographic variables, specifically age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, educational attainment, as well as parental and relationship statuses significantly associated with the ratings on the stereotypic content associated with married, divorced, step, single, same-sex and adoptive parents in a Canadian context? Comparing this thesis' findings with the existing literature is a challenging endeavor as no author predicted the stereotypical content associated to a variety of parental roles by looking at such a large set of sociodemographic variables within a single study. Given that only a few authors have looked at some of the predictors of interest, mostly individually or combining a small number of them, a restricted number of studies are discussed in this section.

First, age was the most consistently significant predictor within mothers' reduced models, but it never appeared as a significant predictor within fathers' reduced models. When significance was reached, it was found that participants who were older endorsed less strongly mothers' stereotypical content, including the negative personal traits. There is evidence that attitudes toward unmarried parenthood are likely to become more positive as attitudes grow more liberal over time, and one indicator of this process is age (Axinn & Thornton, 2000). Indeed, other authors have found that older individuals tend to hold more traditional attitudes about marriage and family than their younger counterparts (e.g., Goldscheider & Kaufman, 2006;

Pagnini & Rindfuss 1993; Thornton, 2010; Trent & South, 1992). Thus, younger people with more positive attitudes will gradually replace older people with potentially more restrictive attitudes via cohort succession (GoldScheider & Kaufman, 2006). Results from this thesis however show that older individuals tend not to adopt as many of the parental stereotypes, including the negative ones, maybe due to their life experiences, making them less naive and accepting of all sorts of stereotypes. In contrast, younger individuals have less experience and may be more suggestible or accepting of different stereotypes, including the more negative ones. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that younger participants will overall endorse a more positive stereotypic content in regards to less traditional parenthood (i.e., single, divorced, step, and same-sex) than older participants was not confirmed. It is important to mention that the terms older and younger are used in this thesis to refer to individuals whose age range from 17 to 69 years.

Furthermore, it was hypothesized that women would tend to endorse more positive stereotypic content across parental roles. Nonetheless, it is impossible to confirm this hypothesis with certainty since, for each participant, five averages were calculated by adding up descriptors' individual rating scores and dividing by the number of descriptors in each category. Some descriptors within the lifestyle, neutral, and parenting and family categories have a negative connotation and it remains impossible to determine if women more or less strongly endorsed a specific descriptor. When gender reached statistical significance as a predictor, women more strongly endorsed the positive, lifestyle, and parenting and family stereotypical content associated to single, gay, and adoptive fathers, and less strongly endorsed the negative stereotypical content associated to gay fathers. Similarly, women also more strongly endorsed the positive and lifestyle stereotypical content associated to married, divorced, single, lesbian, and adoptive mothers. Thus, women endorsed more the positive stereotypic traits, and less strongly endorsed

the negative stereotypic traits, which confirms to a certain extent the gender hypothesis. However, another possible interpretation is that women overall more strongly endorsed the stereotypical content (which could be positive and negative), except the one belonging to the negative personal traits category specifically. These results are still consistent with the ones presented in studies from the past decade or so. For instance, Costa and colleagues (2015) evaluated whether gender would be associated with different attitudes toward same-sex parents among Portuguese participants. Findings showed that male participants were significantly less accepting of gay and lesbian parents than female participants were (Costa et al., 2015). Further, Costa and colleagues (2014) explored 292 Portuguese university students' attitudes toward same-sex parents. While the majority of students were against gay and lesbian parents, men were generally more negative toward gay and lesbian parents and believed that same-sex parenting was unnatural and a sin. In contrast, women agreed significantly more with the statement that there are gay and lesbian individuals with the emotional availability to be parents (Costa et al., 2014). Frias-Navarro and colleagues (2014) also looked at 208 Spanish and 283 Chilean students' beliefs about same-sex parents. Compared to women, the men in the Spanish and Chilean samples expressed more open and aggressive rejection of same-sex parents as well as more subtle form of heterosexism (Frias-Navarro et al., 2014). Thus, as it was found in this dissertation, past studies support the gender difference indicating that women are less likely than men to emphasize traditional family values, and only positively value married parents (e.g., Amato, 1988; GoldScheider & Kaufman, 2006; Thornton, 2010; Thornton & Freedman, 1982).

Findings relative to ethnicity confirmed to some extent the hypothesis that Caucasian participants will endorse a more positive stereotypic content in regard to less traditional parenthood (i.e., divorced, single, step, and same-sex parents). Again, it is impossible to confirm

this hypothesis with absolute certainty because of the averages that were calculated. Thus, some descriptors within the lifestyle, neutral, and parenting and family categories have a negative connotation and it remains impossible to determine if Caucasian participants more or less strongly endorsed a specific descriptor. It is the category itself that is more or less strongly endorsed. That being said, results showed that Caucasian participants endorsed more strongly divorced and gay fathers' positive stereotypical content, and non-Caucasian participants endorsed less strongly divorced, single, and gay fathers' positive, lifestyle, parenting and family, and neutral stereotypical content. Moreover, while Caucasian participants endorsed more strongly lesbian mothers' positive descriptors, non-Caucasian participants endorsed more strongly married mothers' lifestyle and parenting and family stereotypical content. To our knowledge, no study in the field of family stereotypes predicted parental roles' stereotypical content based on ethnicity, or a Caucasian and non-Caucasian dichotomy, or any other ethnic dichotomy for that matter (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). Nonetheless, Valiquette-Tessier and her colleagues' work (2018) underlined that non-Caucasians generally adopt more traditional and conservative stereotypes about marriage and parenthood. Past authors (e.g., Arditti & Lopéz; 2005; Behnke et al., 2008; Qiu et al., 2013) also warn that such results might not only be the reflection of ethnicity but rather mirror cultural social values, ideologies, and traditions.

Stereotyping maternal and paternal roles can again be investigated through the ecosystemic theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), more specifically through the concepts of collectivism and individualism (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Collectivist cultures, such as Ecuador, Indonesia, Korea, and Japan, prioritize group goals before individual pursuits, and focus on family, community, as well as the importance of obedience and cohesion to one's social group

(Qiu et al., 2013). An example was reported by Chaney (2009) and Lasser and colleagues (2011) when Black and Kenyan fathers were stereotyped as financial providers for their immediate family and at the same time for their larger community. In contrast, American fathers in Troilo and Coleman's (2008) study were exclusively stereotyped as providers for their immediate family. This is consistent with individualistic cultures, including in the United States, Canada, and Australia, who emphasize personal goals, accomplishments, and desires over those of the family or social group (Qiu et al., 2013). House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta (2004) studied 62 cultures around the world and underlined a number of differing values and beliefs. They found that those from Latin American cultures (e.g., Ecuador) expressed higher levels of collectivism, lower levels of gender egalitarianism, and lower scores on performance and future orientations. Individuals from the Middle East (e.g., Turkey) also presented higher levels of collectivism and lower levels of gender egalitarianism and future orientation. However, participants from Asian cultures (e.g., China) reported high levels of collectivism and performance orientations. To the contrary, participants from Anglosaxon cultures (e.g., United States and Canada) had lower scores on collectivism and higher scores on performance orientations (House et al., 2004).

Similarly, immigration can also impact the stereotypes of different parental roles. For example, Behnke and colleagues (2008) discussed how Mexican fathers residing in California and Utah noticed that their immigration influenced their conceptualization of themselves as disciplinarians. They worried about new influences such as the predominance of television in their children's lives, increased autonomy, and greater access to parties, sex, drugs, and alcohol in the United States. These factors led them to be harsher disciplinarians to ensure that their children stayed out of trouble (Behnke et al., 2008).

Thus, the differing endorsement of stereotypes might be justified by societal expectations and cultural values, traditions, or ideologies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For instance, the Puerto Rican divorced mothers in Arditti and Lopéz's study (2005) were mainly perceived negatively. These negative conceptions appeared particularly rooted in religious doctrine (i.e. divorced mothers are defying the position of the church), and the value of *hembrismo* describing the role of women in Latin cultures. Arditti and Lopéz (2005) specified that the idea of *Capacidad de Aguante* (Capability to Endure) is at the core of *hembrismo* ideology, which postulates that enduring difficult situations (e.g., abuse) is an unavoidable part of marriage, but women must endure to avoid divorce, thus failure. Another example comes from Utrata's study (2008) where Russian fathers justified the absent or disengaged father by Russia's entrenched cult of maternity within Russian culture which promotes motherhood rather than parenthood. Highly developed discourses about what mothers should be and do were widespread, but the notion of what a father is or should be was almost nonexistent. Therefore, the author concludes that the narrow standards of fatherhood limited to breadwinning still resonate with many Russian men, almost completely excluding them from the caregiver stereotype (Utrata, 2008).

Concerning sexual orientation, findings confirmed the hypothesis expecting that non-heterosexual participants would endorse a more positive stereotypic content in regards to less traditional parenthood (i.e., single, divorced, step, same-sex) than heterosexual participants for mothers, but only partially for fathers. In fact, when sexual orientation reached statistical significance, non-heterosexual participants endorsed less strongly the negative stereotypical content as well as endorsed more strongly the positive stereotypical content associated to divorced and lesbian mothers, and they endorsed more strongly the negative stereotypical content associated to married fathers. Such results are consistent with Choi and colleagues' (2005)

findings. They looked at school psychologists' attitudes regarding same-sex parents and found that their attitudes were generally positive, but more specifically that fewer years of employment, practicing in the West of the United States, instead of the Midwest and South, being lesbian, gay, bisexual and female were related to more tolerant and positive attitudes toward same-sex parenting (Choi et al., 2005). At the same time, non-heterosexual participants in this thesis also endorsed more strongly the negative stereotypical content associated to stepfathers. It is possible that other characteristics that were not investigated in the context of this dissertation may have inflated or mediated the relationship between non-heterosexual orientation and the more strongly endorsed negative stereotypical content associated with stepfathers, for instance participants' personal beliefs about marriage and remarriage.

In regards to relationship status, findings can be interpreted as partially confirming the hypothesis that participants who are not in a relationship would endorse a more positive stereotypic content across less traditional parental roles. Specifically, participants who were not in a relationship less strongly endorsed married mothers and married fathers' positive descriptors, as well as single mothers' negative descriptors. However, outside of these specific examples, it was found that participants who were not in a relationship generally endorsed less strongly the stereotypical content associated to mothers and fathers, including the positive, negative, lifestyle, parenting and family, and neutral stereotypic content, regardless of whether the parental role was more or less traditional.

In addition, the hypothesis relative to parental status was also partly confirmed. It was expected that participants who did not have children endorsed a more positive stereotypic content across less traditional parental roles. Outside of a few scenarios where it was the case, it was rather found that participants who were parents generally endorsed less strongly the stereotypical

content, across all five categories, including the negative personal traits, associated to fathers and mothers. Perhaps, being a parent means more life experience and more nuanced views of parenthood, which would explain the lower endorsement of stereotypes, regardless of whether the parental role was more or less traditional.

It remains essential to further explore how parental and relationship statuses predict the stereotypic content of mothers and fathers, not only given the increasing diversity of today's family configurations, but also since having experienced a nontraditional family structure in childhood has been shown to reduce disapproval of unconventional family forms (e.g., GoldScheider & Kaufman, 2006; Thornton & Camburn, 1989). For instance, it was found that participants whose parents divorced value marriage less, feel more positive about remaining single, and approve of nonmarital childbearing more often than those from intact families (e.g., Amato, 1988; Booth, Brinkerhoff, & White, 1984; GoldScheider & Kaufman, 2006; Trent & Scott, 1992). Moreover, adults who are married parents are found to be more supportive of this lifestyle and more disapproving of unmarried parenthood and divorce (e.g., Pagnini & Rindfuss, 1993; Thornton, 2010). In contrast, adults who are separated, divorced or single are shown to hold less positive attitudes toward marriage (e.g., Thornton, 2010; Thornton & Freedman, 1982) and are more approving of unmarried parenthood (e.g., Trent & Scott, 1992). Finally, parents tend to have more traditional attitudes concerning marriage and family than those without children (e.g., GoldScheider & Kaufman, 2006; Morgan & Waite, 1987). Unfortunately, comparing the results from this thesis to the past literature is a laborious task because of our classification of the stereotypical content within five categories. To our knowledge, the authors that have explored how relationship and parental statuses predict the stereotypical content of parental roles did not classify the stereotypes within categories similar to ours (Valiquette-Tessier

et al., 2018; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). While the positive and negative categories include either positive or negative personal traits, the lifestyle and parenting and family categories include more nuanced traits. Consequently, we could not draw clear comparisons with the past literature, and only partially confirm our hypotheses. We can however clearly conclude that not being in a relationship, and being a parent are generally associated with a less strong endorsement of the stereotypical content on all five categories.

Finally, educational attainment never reached statistical significance, so it remains impossible to confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis positing that more educated participants would endorse a more positive stereotypic content in regards to less traditional parenthood (i.e., single, divorced, step, and same-sex). Our interest in this predictor comes from results brought up by previous studies. For instance, Arditti and Lopéz (2005) found that the more educated their participants were, the more progressive their attitudes were, but their sample was positively skewed with a considerable number of highly educated participants. Costa and colleagues (2014) summed up a number of factors justifying people's negative attitudes toward same-sex parents, and they found among others that lower education was a strong predictor of negative attitudes toward gay and lesbian parents. Choi and colleagues (2005) also stated that higher education attainment was linked with greater emphasis on diversity, and more favorably stereotyped attitudes concerning same-sex parenting. Lastly, Goldscheider and Kaufman (2006) found that higher education was linked with openness to a wider range of family types and with greater gender equality. A vast majority of participants in this dissertation had an undergrad diploma or were completing undergrad studies (89.3% for mothers and 89.5 % for fathers). The lack of variance in the distribution of this variable may have reduced its potential correlation with stereotypic content.

To sum up, socio-demographic predictors contributed less than 10% of the ratings on the stereotypical content associated to the different parental roles. Gay fathers were the only ones for whom the strength of the prediction was notably higher (as high as 21%). Except for ethnicity, this set of variables investigated mainly belonged to the microsystem. Thus, it is possible that the variables predicting a large part of the stereotypic content associated to mothers and fathers come from other levels within ecosystemic model, such as in the macrosystem (e.g., religion, social media, etc.). In other words, despite the fact that stereotypes ascribed to motherhood and fatherhood are influenced by a variety of micro and mesosystemic forces (e.g., Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013; Xu & Yeung, 2013; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018), more attention should be devoted to macrosystemic forces. As previously mentioned, socio-politico-economic, cultural, and temporal forces act as vehicles for consistency or change in societies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Lau & Ng, 2014). Indeed, major social, economic, and political changes can lead to a variety of outcomes for mothers, fathers, and families (e.g., new perceptions about economic matters and materialism, increased consumption aspirations, modified behaviors in terms of marriage, fertility, and family life, and growing ambivalence around cultural expectations for parenthood) that can impact stereotypes associated with motherhood and fatherhood (e.g., Coontz, 2008; Kwon & Roy, 2007; Qiu et al., 2013; Thornton, 2010). In other words, macrosystemic forces, such as collectivism and individualism, traditional gender role ideology, immigration, religious affiliation, cultural values, and the country's legal system, might all be relevant to better understand and predict stereotypes associated with parenthood (e.g., Hofferth, 2003; King, Harris, & Heard, 2004).

Interpreting our results with Bronfenbrenner's theory was not an easy task since most of the variables we looked at belong to the microsystem, except ethnicity. These variables generally

explained, for most part, less than 10% of the variance. Therefore, it was challenging to establish links with the selected theory. Nonetheless, we still believe that Brofenbrenner's theory is appropriate to study stereotypes associated with parental roles. However, macrosystemic variables should be the focus of interest in future studies, and this is not surprising considering that stereotypes usually feed off of ideologies, culture, religion, political attitudes, etc. (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018).

Other than macrosystemic forces, it is important to explore the construct of parenthood in a timely manner, that is under Brofenbrenner's chronosystemic lense (1979). Considering the three most complete overviews of the literature in the field of stereotypes and parenthood, that is Valiquette-Tessier and colleagues's literature review (2018); Valiquette-Tessier and colleagues' systematic review (2015), and Ganong and colleagues' meta-analysis (1990), previous findings are not particularly different from the ones in this thesis, even though thirty years or so separate Ganong and colleagues' meta-analysis from the present study. Past and current findings show that married parents are generally evaluated more positively than parents living in other family constellations (divorced, single, widowed, and remarried parents in Ganong et al. (1990); divorced, single, step, and same-sex parents in Valiquette-Tessier et al. (2015); and divorced mothers and same-sex parents Valiquette-Tessier et al. (2018); and divorced, single, step, and same-sex parents in this thesis), except for adoptive parents who are also favourably stereotyped in this thesis as well as in Valiquette-Tessiers and colleagues' past reviews (2015; 2018). Divorced parents were and continue to be the most negatively stereotyped parental role. When it comes to single, step, and same-sex parents, findings from this thesis, as well as the ones from Valiquette-Tessier and colleagues' reviews (2015; 2018), and Ganong and colleagues (1990) reveal less positive content than married parents. Nonetheless, in contrast with Ganong and

colleagues' meta-analysis (1990), where married parents were seen as the highest standard of comparison, some evidence of growing acceptance toward less traditional parental roles have been found in these more three recent studies. For instance, liberal stereotyped attitudes toward same-sex parents emerged from this thesis as well as from Valiquette-Tessier and colleagues' work (2015; 2018).

Even though stereotypes are relatively stable time-wise, there is evidence that they can change over time (Schneider, 2004). For example, stereotypes toward lesbians and gays have become more positive during the 2000s (e.g., Costa et al., 2015; Costa et al., 2014; Frias-Navarro et al., 2015; Frias-Navarro et al., 2014). Another example concerns the domain of racial and ethnic stereotypes, and the evidence of change from the 1950s into the 2000s (Madon, 1997). However, it is challenging to determine how, why, and the extent to which stereotypes have changed in the larger society, because a considerable part of the research in the area has taken place in well-controlled situations (e.g., laboratory or classroom settings), which may not readily generalize to the real world (Schneider, 2004). Following World War II, social scientists began to discuss contact among members of different groups as an important tool for changing stereotypes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). This referred to what researchers call the contact hypothesis, and for which Gordon Allport (1954) is credited. There are three basic principles underlying this approach (Allport, 1954; Rothbart, 1981). First, the contact hypothesis assumes that stereotypes are false because of limited experiences. Second, the hypothesis advances that experiences with individuals from stereotyped groups provide evidence that disconfirms the stereotypes. Third, it states that people will recognize the fraudulence of their own stereotypes when exposed to disconfirming evidence, and thus will be willing and able to change them (Allport, 1954). Of course, these assumptions are quite naïve—it is too simple to think that

people can change their beliefs about others if they only try since stereotypes are embedded in a matrix of other beliefs that preclude easy change (Schneider, 2004). Nonetheless, the contact hypothesis has been researched many times (e.g., Amir, 1969; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000), and recent conclusions emerging from a meta-analysis of 515 studies provided strong evidence to support the positive effects of intergroup contacts (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The authors found that face-to-face contact between group members reduced prejudice and stereotyping, and the more contact groups had, the less prejudice group members reported (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Schneider's (2004) research in the field made him conclude that the cognitive mechanisms behind change in stereotypes are not fully understood. As psychotherapists, teachers, social workers, parents, etc. know, it is often difficult to provoke change in people's fundamental attitudes, values, and ways of thinking, since all of these have deep roots in culture, beliefs, and personality dynamics (e.g., Arditti & Lopéz, 2005; Schneider, 2004; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Other than the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), there are other less common explanations to understand how change in stereotype operates over time. On one hand, the conversion model (Rothbart, 1981) claims that change in stereotypes takes place when incoming data cause the whole belief structure to change, like in the case of religious conversion. Yet, such drastic changes are quite rare in the area of stereotypes, and even in the religious realm. Therefore, Rothbart (1981) proposed a second model: the bookkeeping model. According to this model, the perceiver keeps in mind a mental scorecard of the number of behaviors that are consistent or inconsistent with his or her stereotype. It is when the disconfirming evidences overpower the confirming information that the stereotype changes (Rothbart, 1981). A third model elaborated by Weber and Crocker (1983) is called the subtyping model. In contrast to the prior models, this one is really a model of how change is resisted. As

incongruent information comes in, individuals who do not fit the stereotype are placed in a distinct or atypical category, which delays stereotype change (Weber & Crocker, 1983). The main shortcoming with all three of these models is that they do not specify exactly what can or cannot change (Schneider, 2004). Is it the category-feature relationship, the affect, the perceived homogeneity or the behavioral consequences? For instance, reducing perceptions of group homogeneity is an important aspect of change in stereotypes (Brewer & Miller, 1988; Hewstone & Hamberger, 2000). But perceptions of heterogeneity require diversity of contact, and unfortunately most of us are limited in how many different types of people we have meaningful contact with. Also, limitations of contacts might encourage subtyping, which is not helping with diminishing stereotypes. It rather reinforces them (Brewer & Miller, 1988; Hewstone & Hamberger, 2000). As previously synthesized, stereotypes associated with various parental roles have not drastically changed over the past 30 years. Therefore, it is not sufficient to be occasionally exposed to different family constellations. It is rather important to assist people in understanding group differences through education, so they develop, over time, new theories of different groups (Schneider, 2004).

Indeed, among the most powerful ways to develop new and stable attitudes, and in turn express fewer inaccurate stereotypes and prejudice, is education (e.g., Bobo & Kluegel, 1997; Coenders & Scheepers, 1998; Herek & Capitano, 1996; Lottes & Kuriloff, 1994; Schneider, 2004). Many reports documenting the impact of education on stereotypes' change revealed the effectiveness of planned educational interventions (e.g., Aboud & Levy, 2000; Oskamp & Jones, 2000; Rudman, Ashmore, & Gary, 2001; Slone, Tarrasch, & Hallis, 2000). A problem with these kinds of studies is that they examined short-term change, typically measuring stereotypes right after the educational intervention (Blair, 2002). Programs can produce short-term change that

does not always persist because stereotypes are likely to be reinforced by family, peers, social pressures, etc. To optimize the beneficial impact of educational strategies, these can be paired with other techniques, such as intentionally controlling the application of stereotypic thinking (Blair, 2002). Devine and Monteith (1999) as well as Blair (2002) suggested that some people are highly motivated to avoid stereotypic and prejudicial thinking, and when they catch themselves doing so, they try to self-regulate the activation process. Of course, this form of control is not easily achieved, and requires self-insight, attention, and motivation (Blair, 2002). Another possibility that requires less effort and time is called individuation or the personalization approach (Nelson, 2006). This strategy encourages getting to know as much as possible about individuals so that someone can discover the many exceptions to their stereotypes (Nelson, 2006; Schneider, 2004). Overall, the message here is not that change in stereotypes is doomed to fail, but rather that it takes time to happen and intention to change, which is why, even 30 years following Ganong and colleagues' meta-analysis (1990), the stereotypic content associated with different parental roles remains generally stable.

### **Unique Contribution of this Thesis**

Even if stereotypes take considerable time to change, throughout the years, economic development and sociocultural changes have had different impacts on families, and more specifically on stereotypes associated with maternal and paternal roles (Qiu et al., 2013). Indeed, these transitions influenced behaviors and actions conducted by individuals. In the case of parenthood, as men and women act out their role of father or mother, their behaviors either remain constant or change depending on the economic and sociocultural contexts (Kwon & Roy, 2007). Over time, playing out the role of parent leads to the construction of a father or mother role identity. Consequently, this gives a meaning to what it is to be a parent and shapes

stereotypes associated with such roles (Kwon & Roy, 2007; Qiu et al., 2013; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015).

Although there is considerable empirical support for the existence of cultural and social stereotypes about different types of parents (e.g., Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008), the scientific literature has been fueled by a lack of clear conclusions about the content of those stereotypes (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). This is why the present thesis aimed to analyse the stereotypical content associated with parenthood in a variety of families, in an attempt to advance our knowledge of stereotypes, and to inform the debates surrounding the topic. Thus, past literature was examined and this study was elaborated in order to address the recurrent conceptual, methodological, and contextual limitations of the field. The dissertation's contributions were as follow:

- (1) Since the last meta-analysis on the topic (Ganong et al., 1990) was conducted more than 25 years ago, results from the current study updated our knowledge and understanding of stereotypes associated with a variety of parental roles. Indeed, this study confirmed the presence of stereotypes associated with married, divorced, single, step, same-sex, and adoptive parents, but it also allowed for detailed descriptions and comparisons to be made. For example, we were able to confirm that today's married mothers and fathers still remain the most positively stereotyped groups of all parental roles (among the ones investigated), and that both divorced mothers and fathers are the least positively stereotyped groups of all parental roles.
- (2) Further, this dissertation addressed the lack of Canadian research relative to stereotypes on different parental roles. Most of the past research occurred outside Canada, more particularly in the United States, or was conducted in other countries by American

researchers (e.g., Arditti & Lopéz, 2005; DeJean et al., 2012; Dow, 2015; Durand, 2011; Elliott et al., 2015; Fingerhut & Peplau, 2006; Herbstrith et al., 2013; Lasser et al., 2011; Miall & March, 2005; Qiu et al., 2013; Rincon & Trung Lam, 2011; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2009). In contrast, this thesis was based in a Canadian setting, conducted by Canadian researchers, and provided a Canadian perspective in the area of family stereotypes.

- (3) Much of the research corpus in the field faces important conceptual limitations. First, there is a lack of fluidity among past studies because research objectives were generally not linked with specific research questions and hypotheses (e.g., Este & Tachble, 2009; Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013; Kwon & Roy, 2007; Ratele et al., 2012; Rincon & Trung Lam, 2011; Roer-Strier et al., 2005). The absence of such links makes the studies less clear, vaguely grounded, and the reader is not sure what to expect or where the authors are heading with their line of inquiry (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Moreover, researchers in the field rarely used and explicitly detailed a theoretical framework (e.g., Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Troilo & Coleman, 2008; Troilo, 2013). A clear framework helps researchers understand the complex interplay of influencing agents in shaping stereotypes relative to parents (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). This dissertation addressed the above conceptual limitations by stating clear objectives linked to research questions and hypothesis, and contextualizing the findings within a specific theoretical framework.
- (4) To date, much research on stereotypes relative to parental roles focused solely on investigating a few parental roles at the time, often limiting themselves to one gender (e.g., Behnke et al., 2008; Chaney, 2009; Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2015; Este & Tachble, 2009; Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013; Sealey-Ruiz, 2013; Wycisk & Kleka, 2014).

Additionally, in the last decade or so, some parental roles (e.g., adoptive parents and stepmothers) have received little to no representation in studies on parental stereotypes (e.g., only study on stereotypes associated with stepmothers: Christian, 2005; only three studies on adoptive parents: Jerome & Sweeney, 2014; Suter et al., 2011; Troilo & Coleman, 2008). Lastly, most studies do not include a variety of populations in their sampling and mainly work with college students or professionals such as school psychologists, which limits generalization (e.g., Camilleri & Ryan, 2006; Eby et al., 2004; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008). This dissertation addressed these methodological limitations by extending the scope of interest and looking at more parental roles, including both genders, and working with two different sampling populations, that is students that did not have children and parents.

- (5) Finally, there was consideration of an exhaustive array of sociodemographic variables to determine which ones, if any, were associated with the ratings on the stereotypic content, an objective that has not been accomplished since 2000 (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). While several socio-demographic variables were statistically significant, the variance explained suggested that they may not be the best predictors of the stereotypic content. This conclusion will be useful to guide future researchers working in the field.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

With any study comes certain limitations and this thesis is no exception. First, with its convenience samples, the generalizability of the current dissertation's findings to the Canadian population is unknown. That being said, a comparison of the sample of parents to Statistics Canada data (2015a; 2015b; 2011) reveals similarities in sociodemographic variables between

study participants and individuals living in Canada, except for the level of education which is higher within the Canadian population. As previously explained, our comparison is based on a sub-group of Canadian women aged from 30 to 34 years old because no other data was made available. Therefore, it is possible that the educational attainment is higher among this particular group.

Second, the three steps procedure methodology (Katz & Braly, 1933) is a technique that is reactive, in the sense that it depends on the nature of comparison groups or the context in which a specific group is considered (Schneider, 2004). Even though the instructions during data collection clearly stated to think about what our society in general believes to be true, and to not think of who you know personally, participants could have thought of any comparison group to generate the stereotypical content, for instance one of their acquaintances. As a result, the stereotypic content can easily be influenced in a positive or negative direction. Another problem with the semantic differential technique (Katz & Braly, 1933) is that participants may be reluctant to report their stereotypes for self-presentational concerns and, consequently, answer questions in a socially desirable way (Schneider, 2004). Research has demonstrated that Internet administrated studies engage participants in less socially desirable responding than traditional paper-and-pencil studies (Gosling et al., 2004). Notwithstanding, stereotypes share some common grounds with prejudices, which can make people unwilling to confess certain beliefs they have, in spite of the use of the Internet (Schneider, 2004). Furthermore, the three steps procedure methodology (Katz & Braly, 1933), especially for the Phases II and III (adjective checklists and ratings), forces respondents to report traits or features. Indeed, they are given a list of stereotypes about several groups and they are asked to check or rate the ones they are aware of or endorse, even though they know some of the stereotypes are exaggerated or false. Such a

process of stereotypic attribution might imply some sort of meta-consciousness that would be interesting to further explore.

Third, during Phase I (open-ended format item generation) of data collection, participants were asked to generate stereotypical content associated with six maternal and paternal roles through the following question: “What do you think our society in general believes to be true, whether or not it is true in your opinion of “insert parental roles ”? While the question is consistent with Ashmore and Del Boca's (1981) definition of stereotypes, a clear operational definition of stereotypes was not provided. Therefore, participants were required to some extent to answer based on their own interpretation of the concept. To our knowledge, this did not necessary create problems with the quality of findings, but it however remains an operational limitation of the present study. Moreover, another important limitation pertaining to Phase I of data collection is that the set of initial stereotypes that was generated and used for the other stages mainly comes from Caucasian heterosexual girls in their twenties, who did not have children, and who study psychology. It is unclear whether other stereotypes would have been generated with another group, but it is essential to keep in mind that this first phase influenced all the subsequent ones. That being said, our sample of young women is in fact an appropriate one since it is generally this segment of the population that is most likely to interact with families in the context of social services. Thus, their perspective is uniquely relevant. Furthermore, the fourth sample of Canadian parents was mainly constituted of Caucasian heterosexual mothers in a romantic relationship. Again, results on the ratings might have been different if the sample was composed otherwise.

Fourth, limitations relative to the interpretation of descriptors can also be raised. Indeed, on one part, the way descriptors were categorized within the five main categories (positive,

negative, neutral, lifestyle, and parenting and family) to facilitate the analyses is subject to criticism. Depending on the interpretation ascribed to descriptors, some could argue that the categorization may have been done otherwise. For example, the descriptor “responsible” can be classified in the categories positive personal traits and parenting and family, as can the descriptor “cheater” be classified under negative personal traits or parenting and family. Nonetheless, this process is not arbitrary, but rather based on previous authors’ categorizations (e.g., Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Troilo & Coleman, 2008; Troilo, 2013) and an agreement reached between the main researcher and another expert in the field. On the other part, beyond the categorization done by researchers, the meaning participants gave to the descriptors resulted in sometimes contradictory findings. For instance, no significant difference could be found between married and adoptive mothers on the items “happy” and “rich”. Yet, a significant difference could be found between married and adoptive mothers on the items “unhappy” and “poor”. Thus, it seems that different wording (e.g., antonyms and synonyms) can lead to different interpretations, which can be perceived as a lack of consistency.

Fifth, findings from this thesis must be interpreted with caution with regard to the information that was collected. Some sociodemographic factors have been found to affect stereotypes held toward parenthood (e.g., Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015), but they were not all investigated within this study. Therefore, some details concerning participants and the investigated parental roles are missing and may have been interesting to look at, such as (a) the province in which each participant is living, (b) participants’ annual income, (c) if applicable, their immigration status (first, second generation, or beyond), (d) participants’ religious affiliation, if any, (e) participants’ specific ethnicity to avoid a Caucasian versus not Caucasian dichotomy, (f) participants’ attitudes (progressive vs

conservative), and (g) other discriminant factors, such as stay-at-home or working parent and same-sex married parents vs same-sex not married parents. In other words, despite the importance attached to the sociodemographic factors included in this study, other factors were overlooked, especially factors belonging to Brofenbrenner's macrosystem, which may ultimately be better predictors or their confluence with other variables may predict more strongly the stereotypical content.

Sixth, the probability levels used in this thesis were chosen in order to reduce the Type II error. Some could however argue that the Type I error was considerably inflated due to the number of statistical analysis, and we may have found significant results that were only the produce of chance. While our goal was to highlight all significant differences, this does not mean that all results are ultimately meaningful. Future studies in the field should further investigate which of the relationships and characteristics we have identified within each category of parental role remain statistically robust when investigated more specifically.

In fact, the above-mentioned methodological, operational, and conceptual limitations should be addressed in future research. It has been well-illustrated that the nuclear family pattern was never the dominant pattern of family life in many countries and existed in tandem with other family forms in a variety of cultures (e.g., Bozalek, 2007; Crehan, 1997; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Future studies should explore the positive experiences of families of all types (i.e., single, step, divorced, adoptive, non-custodial, etc.) in order to consider a wider range of meanings related to parenting and constructions of parenthood (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). To do so, it is essential to adopt a historical and context-enriched critical perspective in an attempt to better understand contemporary parenthood (e.g., Clowes, 2006; Mkhize, 2006; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018).

Second, future research should aim to recruit large and culturally representative samples with mixed-method methodologies, not just to investigate the stereotypical content, but more specifically to look at the relations between macrosystemic attributes (i.e., religious affiliation, ethnicity, immigration status, acculturation, attitudes, etc.) and stereotypes. This would also allow for comparisons between targeted groups to take place, for instance the content of stereotypes associated to working mothers and stay-at-home mothers, or to assess how progressive attitudes vs conservative attitudes predict the stereotypical content of parents. Studies in the field often either employed the three steps method consisting of generating descriptors (adjectives) to compare parental roles and hierarchically classify them (e.g., Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2007; Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2006; Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2005; DeJean et al., 2012; Fingerhut & Peplau, 2006; Herbstrith et al., 2013; Miall & March, 2005; Suter et al., 2011; Troilo, 2013; Troilo & Coleman, 2008) or only qualitative methods to describe the stereotypical content (e.g., Behnke et al., 2008; Bermudez et al., 2014; Chaney, 2009; Dow, 2015; Elliott et al., 2015; Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2015; Este & Tachble, 2009; Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013; Jerome & Sweeney, 2014; Kwon & Roy, 2007; Ratele et al., 2012; Rincon & Trung Lam, 2011; Roer-Strier et al., 2005; Sealey-Ruiz, 2013; Strier, 2014; Strier & Roer-Strier, 2005; Taylor & Behnke, 2005; Utrata, 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2009). However, combining quantitative and qualitative methods is essential so the reader is not bereft of any contextualization, and can better grasp the stereotypes associated with specific parental roles (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). The use of implicit and indirect measures, such as reaction time measures (e.g., association measures, lexical decision measures, the implicit association test, etc.), when combined with qualitative methods, is especially worth considering since they eliminate some of the reactivity and self-presentation issues, and allow us to access implicit and nonconscious associations (Schneider, 2004).

Also, future researchers should establish some sort of taxonomy or establish a clear terminology to classify and distinguish concepts that are too often confounded and overlapping in the field of stereotypes (e.g., stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, etc.). This taxonomy could provide a clearer definition of the stereotype's concept to limit participants' personal interpretation.

Finally, more research is needed to discover the extent to which stereotypes have meaning in people's daily lives and parents' experiences, more specifically the impact of family structure stereotypes. Researchers should look at the impacts of positive as well as negative stereotypes in parents' way of parenting. For instance, the positive stereotype that mothers are naturally adequate to parent can possibly have as detrimental effects on mothers who do not feel this way, as divorced mothers who are seen as abandoning their primary role and function (Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Stereotypes are often seen as bad and untrue, but they help streamline the information and categorize people. Some might be excessive generalizations, while others are based on personal experiences and culture influences. One way or another, researchers should care about stereotypes because the human mind has the ability to transform them overtime and they have important implications for the manner in which people define themselves and the world around them, and how they interact with one another.

This dissertation is only one step towards building knowledge related to stereotypes and parenthood. In other words, there exists a need for replication, in particular with studies that (a) utilize other methodologies than the three-steps procedure (Katz & Braly, 1933) or combine it with another technique, preferably qualitative in nature (b) examine larger samples that are more culturally diverse, and (c) explore a variety of predictors, especially ones that belong to the macrosystem.

### **Scholarly and Practical Implications**

Based on findings from the current dissertation, there are several scholarly and practical implications that can guide future studies and endeavors in the field, as well as help to orient policy makers, and practitioners. Parenthood outside the norm of White upper middle-class families with two heterosexual parents in a first-marriage and biological children is often framed in many studies within a deficit discourse (e.g., Boyce, Essex, Alkon, Hill Goldsmith, Kraemer, & Kupfer, 2006; Bronte-Tinkew, Moore, Capps, & Zaff, 2006; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). For instance, it was advanced that when the father is absent in the home, children tend to exhibit lower mental, emotional, and behavioral well-being, and increased likelihood of negative outcomes (Choi & Jackson, 2011; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Unfortunately, some of these studies have been used by policy makers, practitioners, professionals, researchers, and the public to perpetuate notions of an idealized White heteronormative nuclear family (Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Osmond & Thorne, 1993; Ratele et al., 2012; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Consequently, alternative ways of doing family are often devalued, just because they do not fit this normative framework (Ratele et al., 2012; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018).

Being aware of the stereotypical content associated with different parental roles and better understanding links with sociodemographic variables have important implications for various actors:

- (1) Scholarly implications: over the past decades, family constellations have seen many transformations partly due to the increasing diversity of households and growing immigration rates (Ganong & Coleman, 1995). Nonetheless, stereotypes about parental roles have received little scholarly attention in recent years, even though North America is

characterized by an extant range of family diversity (e.g., Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). Social scientists and academicians are not immune to common cultural beliefs and myths about parenthood (e.g., myth of motherhood) defining how family members should act and interact (Ganong & Coleman, 1995). Instead of recognizing the problems inherent to some cultural belief systems (e.g., mothers are held as primarily responsible for the growth of their children), many social scientists have often passively accepted them (Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Osmond & Thorne, 1993; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). As a result, their research was often focused on some topics or conceptualized with specific lenses at the expense of others (Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018). Findings from this thesis may not yet decrease the stigma and negative attitudes to create a more accepting climate about various parental roles, but rather bring to the attention of researchers that much of our discourse about families does not center on family stereotypes and deconstructing them (Eby et al., 2004). Many universities require students take diversity-related classes, but when diversity is addressed, it often focuses on race and gender (Eby et al., 2004). Our findings suggest that university-aged men and women could definitely benefit from a discussion on diversity in family structures in order to raise awareness of stereotyped thinking about divorced, single, step, and same-sex parents (Eby et al., 2004).

- (2) Public policy implications: being aware of stereotypes about mothers and fathers is also an important part of the process of planning social policies (Ganong & Coleman, 1995). Indeed, being familiar with stereotypes about different parental roles allows policy makers to develop policies for mothers, fathers, children, and families that are socially acceptable, workable within specific contexts, and that recognize those that may be

marginalized by the dominant discourse (Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2018; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015). Findings from our study help to inform policy makers about the current stereotypic content associated with various parental roles, and thus contribute to more inclusive family policies that take into consideration potential harmful consequences of strategies that are mostly aimed at maintaining the status quo of the dominant discourse on families. For example, by knowing that single mothers are more likely seen as struggling, poor, and unable to succeed in life, policy makers may develop supportive rather than punitive programs and policies (Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2015).

- (3) Interpersonal implications: as initially postulated by Snyder and Swann (1978), stereotypes influence the behaviors of the stereotyped group, as well as the behaviors of those who interact with them. For instance, if divorced mothers are perceived as having loose morals and being desperate to find a man, they may be viewed and treated as easy targets for sex by men and potential adversaries by women (Ganong et al., 1990). Further, Ganong and colleagues (1990) stated that stereotypes can lead to group members limiting their behaviors. To better illustrate their statement, the authors provided the example that if mothers are naturally seen as nurturing and supportive, then some women may be inhibited from seeking training for parenting skills they are expected to already possess. The authors believe an increased awareness of the stereotypical content associated to parents can defuse such behaviors resulting from limits that stereotypes can place on one's conduct (Ganong et al., 1990).
- (4) Clinical and social interventions implications: several findings from this study have implications for the practice of psychology, counselling, social work, or other related

fields. Findings from this dissertation may be integrated within the formalized training of practicing professionals, so they are sensitized about commonly held myths and prejudices related to contemporary parenthood (Choi et al., 2005). By becoming knowledgeable about the stereotypes associated with parental roles, professionals can make a conscious effort to break down their misconceptions and acknowledge their own affects and preconceptions (Choi et al., 2005). Furthermore, it is essential to address the mental health needs of married, divorced, single, step, same-sex, and adoptive parents living in today's families. Our study represents a step toward raising awareness regarding potential issues of stigma, marginalization, and prejudicial images that can lead to negative mental health outcomes, such as social isolation, negative self-concept, and mental distress in adults playing a parental role (Arditti & Lopéz, 2005). Finally, this thesis can be helpful in elaborating ecologically sensitive interventions for more marginalized parental roles. For instance, effective community education, which offers alternative images of divorce, or the provision of easily accessed services for single parents are particularly important (Arditti & Lopéz, 2005).

In conclusion, the stereotypical content emerging from this thesis supports the existence of a motherhood and fatherhood myth that fosters somewhat extreme views of women and men (Ganong & Coleman, 1995). Indeed, the social tendency is to label different types of mothers and fathers as good or bad (or at least less good). Motherhood and fatherhood within a traditional nuclear family remain stereotyped more positively than parenthood within other contexts, except adoptive parents who are rather positively perceived (e.g., Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Troilo & Coleman, 2008; Troilo, 2013). It is clear that the participants sampled in this study still view motherhood and fatherhood within marriage as a superior source of fulfillment for women and

men. Deconstructing such beliefs is not something that can happen overnight. Nonetheless, this thesis is one step toward building awareness regarding parental stereotypes, which may eventually contribute to more accurate views of the modern Canadian family.

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## Appendix A

## List of Canadian Organizations Contacted for Participants' Recruitment

Organizations' Names	Cities and Provinces
Abigail's Learning Centre	Belleville, Ontario
BC Association of Family Resource Program	Vancouver, British Columbia
Belleville and Quinte West Community Health Centre	Belleville, Ontario
Carrefour action municipale et famille	Greenfield Park, Quebec
Centre de l'enfance coopérative brin d'herbe	Ottawa, Ontario
Children's Mental Health Services- Hastings and Prince Edward Counties	Belleville, Ontario
Community Development Council of Quinte	Madoc, Ontario
Community Living Belleville and Area	Belleville, Ontario
Community Living Prince Edward	Picton, Ontario
Family & Community Support Services Association of Alberta	Edmonton, Alberta
Fédération québécoise des organismes communautaires Famille	St-Lambert, Quebec
Gateway Community Health Centre	Tweed, Ontario
Golden Prairie Parent Link Centre	Three Hills, Alberta
Grande Prairie Family Education Society	Grande Prairie, Alberta
Hastings and Prince Edward Children and Youth Services Network	Belleville, Ontario
Hastings and Prince Edward Counties Health Unit	Belleville, Ontario
Hastings Children's Aid Society	Belleville, Ontario
KARA Family Resource Centre	Edmonton, Alberta
Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Promotion Network/Best Start	Toronto, Ontario
Middlesex-London Health Unit	London, Ontario
Newfoundland & Labrador Provincial Association of Family Resource Centres	Goulds, St John's Newfoundland
New Path Child and Family Services	Barrie, Ontario
Parenting Education Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Parents' Lifeline of Eastern Ontario	Ottawa, Ontario
PEI Association of Family Resource Programs	Summerside, Prince Edward Island
The Atlantic Alliance of Family Resource Centres and New Brunswick Association of Family Resource Centres	Woodstock, New Brunswick
The HUB Child & Family Centre	Picton, Ontario
Trenton Military Family Resource Centre	Trenton, Ontario

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## Appendix B

## English Invitation for Parents' Recruitment



## Invitation to Parents

Researchers from the University of Ottawa wish to invite you to participate in a survey!

The purpose of this research is to better understand the ways Canadian parents perceive parental roles in today's society. We aim to find participants from across Canada in a variety of family configurations. We hope to hear from biological, adoptive and step-parents who may be single (including divorced, widowed, never married) or partnered (including cohabiting, married and remarried parents in same-sex or opposite-sex partnerships). Participation would require only your time to complete one or two surveys online. Each survey takes approximately 45 minutes to complete. The study is not related to the organization and will not affect the services you receive.

These studies have been approved by the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board, and are accomplished under the supervision of Dr. Julie Gosselin, C.Psych., Assistant Professor, School of Psychology, University of Ottawa.

These two surveys can be completed by both mothers and fathers and are focused on perceptions associated with different parental roles:

Moms: <http://fluidsurveys.com/surveys/stepfamilyresearchlab/csp-stereotypes-moms-study-2/>

Dads: <http://fluidsurveys.com/surveys/stepfamilyresearchlab/csp-stereotypes-dads-study-2/>

We thank you so much for your time !

Sophie-Claire Valiquette-Tessier  
The Stepfamily Research Lab, School of Psychology, University of Ottawa

## Appendix C

## French Invitation for Parents' Recruitment



## Invitation aux parents

Nous vous invitons à participer à un sondage.

L'objectif de ce sondage consiste à identifier les perceptions des Canadiens quant à différents rôles parentaux dans notre société actuelle. Nous espérons recruter des participants au niveau national et vivant dans une variété de constellations familiales. Nous souhaitons entendre les témoignages et opinions de parents biologiques, adoptifs et de beaux-parents pouvant être monoparentaux (incluant ceux divorcés, veufs ou jamais mariés) ou vivant avec un partenaire (incluant les conjoints de fait, ceux mariés ou remariés, en relation avec un partenaire de sexe différent ou de même sexe). Votre participation requiert la complétion d'un ou deux sondages accessibles en ligne. Chacun des sondages nécessitent environ 45 minutes de votre temps. Ils sont seulement disponibles en anglais. L'étude est indépendante de l'organisme et n'affectera aucunement les services que vous recevez.

Ces études ont été approuvées par le Comité d'éthique et de la recherche de l'Université d'Ottawa et sont réalisées sous la direction du D<sup>re</sup> Julie Gosselin, C. Psych., Professeure Assistant, École de Psychologie, Université d'Ottawa.

Les deux sondages suivants peuvent être complétés à la fois par les mères et les pères et sont focalisées sur les perceptions associées à différents rôles parentaux.

Mères : <http://fluidsurveys.com/surveys/stepfamilyresearchlab/csp-stereotypes-moms-study-2/>

Pères : <http://fluidsurveys.com/surveys/stepfamilyresearchlab/csp-stereotypes-dads-study-2/>

Nous vous remercions pour votre précieux temps!

Sophie-Claire Valiquette-Tessier, Laboratoire de recherche sur la famille recomposée, École de psychologie, Université d'Ottawa

## Appendix D

## English Consent Form



Consent form: Study on stereotypes associated with parental roles

Julie Gosselin, Ph.D., School of psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa

Sophie-Claire V.-Tessier, School of psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa

**Invitation to Participate:**

I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Dr. Julie Gosselin and coordinated by Sophie-Claire Valiquette-Tessier.

**Purpose of the Study:**

The purpose of the study is to examine the stereotypes associated with parenthood in different modern contexts, more precisely biological, adoptive and step-parent relationships including hetero and homosexual married, single, divorced, and remarried parents. I must comprehend English in order to participate in this study.

**Participation:**

My participation will consist essentially of completing an online survey and providing sociodemographic information.

**Risks:**

Answering this questionnaire should not elicit higher levels of stress or emotional distress.

**Benefits:**

My participation in this study will provide me with an opportunity to participate in a research process and to ask questions to researchers regarding this study and research in general. My participation will also provide me with the opportunity to share my perceptions, which will enable researcher to better their understanding of this phenomenon.

**Confidentiality and anonymity:**

I have received assurance from the researcher that the information (sociodemographic information) I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for this study and that my confidentiality will be protected. Anonymity will be

protected in the following manner: my name will not appear on any document related to my participation.

**Conservation of data:**

The data collected (the questionnaire I will have filled out) will be kept in a secure manner. Data will be kept, under key, in Dr. Gosselin's research laboratory for a period of five years following the end of the data collection. Only Dr. Gosselin and the project coordinator Sophie-Claire Valiquette-Tessier will have access to the data.

**Compensation:**

If I am participating in this study through the ISPR I will receive credits for my class.

**Voluntary Participation:**

I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw at any time without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw from the study, the data will be destroyed.

**Acceptance:**

I agree to participate in this research study conducted by Dr. Julie Gosselin and coordinated by Sophie-Claire Valiquette-Tessier of the School of Psychology at the University of Ottawa

**If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher.**

Sophie-Claire Valiquette-Tessier, Stepfamily Research Lab, University of Ottawa. If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa. I may print a copy of this consent form for further consultation

By clicking NEXT, I hereby agree with the information provided here and give my consent to participate in this study.

Print a copy of this consent form for your own files.

## Appendix E

## French Consent Form



Formulaire de consentement : Étude sur les stéréotypes associés aux rôles parentaux

Julie Gosselin, Ph.D., École de psychologie, Faculté des Sciences sociales, Université d'Ottawa

Sophie-Claire V.-Tessier, École de psychologie, Faculté des Sciences sociales, Université d'Ottawa

**Invitation à participer :**

Je suis invité(e) à participer à l'étude mentionnée ci-haut et menée par D<sup>re</sup> Julie Gosselin et coordonnée par Sophie-Claire Valiquette-Tessier.

**But de l'étude :**

Cette étude vise à examiner les stéréotypes associés à différents rôles parentaux, plus précisément aux parents mariés, divorcés, monoparentaux, adoptifs, de même sexe ainsi qu'aux beaux-parents. Cette étude est uniquement en anglais, donc je dois avoir une bonne compréhension de la langue.

**Participation :**

Ma participation consiste essentiellement à remplir un sondage en ligne ainsi qu'à fournir des informations sociodémographiques.

**Risques :**

Compléter le sondage ne devrait pas générer niveaux de stress plus élevés, ni de la détresse émotionnelle.

**Avantages :**

Ma participation à cette étude me donne l'occasion de participer au processus de recherche et de poser des questions aux chercheurs concernant l'étude ainsi que la recherche en général. Ma participation consiste également en une opportunité de partager mes perceptions, ce qui améliorera notre compréhension du phénomène.

**Confidentialité et anonymat :**

Je reçois l'assurance des chercheurs que l'information (données sociodémographiques) que je vais partager restera strictement confidentielle. Je comprends aussi que le contenu sera uniquement utilisé pour cette étude et que ma confidentialité sera protégée. L'anonymat sera protégé de la

manière suivante : nom nom n'apparaîtra pas sur les documents reliés à ma participation et les informations recueillies seront déidentifiées

**Conservation des données :**

Les données collectées seront conservées de manière sécuritaire, soit sous clé dans le laboratoire de recherche de Dre Julie Gosselin à l'Université d'Ottawa pour une période de cinq ans suivant la fin de la collecte de données. Seulement Dre Gosselin et Sophie-Claire Valiquette-Tessier auront accès aux données.

**Compensation:**

Si je participe à cette étude via le SIPR, je recevrai des crédits applicables à mon cours.

**Participation volontaire:**

Je ne suis contraint à aucune obligation à participer. Si je choisis de participer, je peux me retirer de l'étude sans conséquence négative. Si je décide de me retirer de l'étude, mes données seront détruites.

**Acceptation:**

J'accepte de participer à cette recherche menée par Dr. Julie Gosselin et coordonnée par Sophie-Claire Valiquette-Tessier de l'École de psychologie de l'Université d'Ottawa.

**Si j'ai des questions concernant l'étude, je peux communiquer avec le chercheur.**

Sophie-Claire Valiquette-Tessier, Laboratoire de recherche sur la famille recomposée, Université d'Ottawa. Si j'ai des questions relatives à l'éthique, je peux communiquer avec le Bureau de la recherche et de l'éthique, Université d'Ottawa.

En cliquant sur SUIVANT, je consens avec l'information fournie ci-haut et accepte de participer à cette étude.

Imprimez une copie de ce formulaire pour vos dossiers personnels.

## Appendix F

## Sociodemographic Questionnaire

1. Please indicate your age (not date, number only).
2. Please indicate your gender.
  - a) Female
  - b) Male
  - c) Rather not respond
3. Please indicate your primary ethnic background.
  - a) Asian
  - b) Black or African
  - c) First Nations or Aboriginal
  - d) Latino or Hispanic
  - e) Middle-Eastern
  - f) Other, please specify
  - g) White or Caucasian
4. Please indicate your highest level of educational attainment.
  - a) High school or college studies
  - b) Bachelor or undergraduate studies
  - c) Masters or PhD studies
  - d) Other, please specify
5. Please indicate your relationship status.
  - a) Single
  - b) In a romantic relationship
  - c) Cohabiting
  - d) Married
  - e) Divorced or separated
  - f) Other, please specify
6. Please indicate your sexual orientation.
  - a) Heterosexual
  - b) Homosexual
  - c) Bisexual

d) Rather not respond

7. Are you a parent or a stepparent?

a) Yes, If any, how many children do you have?

b) No

## Appendix G

## List of Mothers' Descriptors by Categories

Categories	Descriptors
Lifestyle descriptors	Hardworking Infertile Overworked Poor Rich Stable Struggling Successful
Negative descriptors	Abnormal Awkward Cold Confusing Distressed Lonely Negatively seen Pitied Sad Stressed Tired Troubled Unhappy
Neutral descriptors	Common Different Normal Questioned Traditional

	Uncommon
	Unconventional
Parenting and family descriptors	Abandoned
	Caregivers
	Caring
	Controlling
	Excluded
	Fulfilled their life's goal
	Gifts to the child that they receive
	Homewreckers
	Housewives
	Intruders
	Maternal
	Not a replacement for the biological mothers
	Not different from heterosexual mother
	Responsible
	Role models
	Teenagers
Positive descriptors	Acceptable
	Accepted
	Big hearted
	Brave
	Careful
	Committed
	Compassionate
	Complete
	Considerate
	Dedicated

Excellent human being  
Faithful  
Fine  
Generous  
Good  
Happy  
Heroes  
Ideal  
Independent  
Kind hearted  
Loving  
Loyal  
More open  
Passionate  
Persistent  
Positively seen  
Proper  
Proud  
Respectable  
Respected  
Selfless  
Special  
Strong  
Supported  
Sympathetic  
Trustworthy  
Understanding  
Valued  
Wanting safety  
Welcoming  
Well put together  
Wholesome

---

## Appendix H

## List of Fathers' Descriptors by Categories

Categories	Descriptors
Lifestyle	Breadwinner Hardworking Infertile Looking for love Providers Stable Struggling Successful Working man
Negative descriptors	Abnormal Atypical Awkward Betraying Controversial Dishonest Lonely Negatively seen Odd Uncommitted Unreliable
Neutral descriptors	Common Normal Scrutinized by society Standard Stereotypical dad Traditional

	Trying
	Unconventional
	Victimes of prejudgments
Parenting and family descriptors	Absent
	Another father figure
	Caregivers
	Caring
	Cheaters
	Controlling
	Distant
	Easy going
	Family man
	Father figure
	Good example
	Maternal and motherly
	Men who step up to the plate
	Not the child's fathers
	Outsider
	Protective
	Removed
	Replacement
	Role model
	Savior if biological father is not around
	Self sacrificing
	Strict
	Willing to maintain a relationship with their children
Positive descriptors	Acceptable
	Affectionate
	Alright

Big hearted  
Brave  
Committed  
Compassionate  
Courageous  
Decent  
Dependable  
Determined  
Devoted  
Friendly  
Fun  
Generous  
Good  
Great  
Happy  
Heroe  
Important  
Involved  
Kind  
Loving  
Loyal  
Manly  
Nice  
Open-minded  
Passionate  
Positively seen  
Proud  
Respected  
Responsible  
Special  
Strong  
Supportive

Sweet man  
Tough  
Trustworthy  
Welcoming  
Well seen

---

Table 1

*Phase I Sociodemographic Characteristics*

Characteristics	Mothers		Fathers	
	n= 48	%	n= 57	%
Gender				
Male	8	16.67	9	15.79
Female	40	83.33	48	84.21
Ethnicity				
Other	21	43.75	21	36.84
White or Caucasian	27	56.25	36	63.16
Educational level				
Bachelor or undergrad studies	48	100	57	100
High school or college studies	0	0	0	0
Masters or PhD studies	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0
Relationship status				
In a relationship (married, currently in a romantic relationship or living with a partner)	18	37.50	23	40.35
Not in a relationship (single,	30	62.50	34	59.65

separated or divorced)				
Sexual orientation				
Heterosexual	45	93.75	53	92.98
Not heterosexual (bisexual or homosexual)	3	6.25	4	7.02
Parental status				
Not a parent	47	97.92	56	98.25
Parent	1	2.08	1	1.75
Age		$\bar{x}$		SD
		19.60		4.28

---

Table 2

*Phase II Sociodemographic Characteristics*

Characteristics	Mothers		Fathers	
	n= 195	%	n= 195	%
Gender				
Male	32	16.41	35	17.95
Female	163	83.59	160	82.05
Ethnicity				
Other	46	23.59	49	25.13
White or Caucasian	149	76.41	146	74.87
Educational level				
Bachelor or undergrad studies	195	0	195	0
High school or college studies	0	0	0	0
Masters or PhD studies	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0
Relationship status				
In a relationship (married, currently in a romantic relationship or living with a partner)	67	34.36	68	34.87
Not in a relationship (single,	128	65.64	127	65.13

separated or divorced)				
Sexual orientation				
Heterosexual	183	93.85	182	93.33
Not heterosexual (bisexual or homosexual)	12	6.15	13	6.67
Parental status				
Not a parent	193	98.98	194	99.49
Parent	2	1.02	1	0.51
Age		$\bar{x}$		SD
		20.17		2.43

---

Table 3

*Phase III Sociodemographic Characteristics*

Characteristics	Mothers		Fathers	
	n= 282	%	n= 234	%
Gender				
Male	60	21.28	56	23.93
Female	222	78.72	178	76.07
Ethnicity				
Other	85	30.14	74	31.62
White or Caucasian	197	69.86	160	68.38
Educational level				
Bachelor or undergrad studies	282	100	234	100
High school or college studies	0	0	0	0
Masters or PhD studies	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0
Relationship status				
In a relationship (married, currently in a romantic relationship or living with a partner)	97	34.40	76	32.48
Not in a relationship (single,	185	65.60	158	67.52

separated or divorced)				
Sexual orientation				
Heterosexual	250	88.65	205	87.61
Not heterosexual (bisexual or homosexual)	32	11.35	29	12.39
Parental status				
Not a parent	282	100	234	100
Parent	0	0	0	0
Age		$\bar{x}$		SD
		18.72		3.53

---

Table 4

*Phase IV Sociodemographic Characteristics*

Characteristics	Mothers		Fathers	
	n= 56	%	n= 62	%
Gender				
Male	9	16.07	16	25.81
Female	47	83.93	46	74.19
Ethnicity				
Other	6	10.71	37	59.68
White or Caucasian	50	89.29	25	40.32
Educational level				
Bachelor or undergrad studies	24	42.86	34	54.84
High school or college studies	16	28.57	22	35.48
Masters or PhD studies	16	28.57	4	6.45
Other	0	0	2	3.23
Relationship status				
In a relationship (married, currently in a romantic relationship or living with a partner)	51	91.07	50	80.65
Not in a relationship (single,	5	8.93	12	19.35

separated or divorced)				
Sexual orientation				
Heterosexual	50	89.29	53	85.48
Not heterosexual (bisexual or homosexual)	6	10.71	9	14.52
Parental status				
Not a parent	0	0	0	0
Parent	56	100	62	100
Other sociodemographic characteristics		Mothers	Fathers	
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
Age	41.50	11.14	35.58	10.07
Number of children	1.75	1.04	2.07	1.35

Table 5

*T values and effect sizes for each descriptor per maternal role*

Umbrella categories	Parental roles	Descriptors	T values	d
Lifestyle	Divorced mothers	Rich	1.15	0.06
		Struggling	7.58	0.41
		Overworked	-0.65	-0.04
		Poor	10.83	0.59 <sup>2</sup>
		Infertile	3.42	0.19
		Hardworking	-7.03	-0.38
		Successful	-6.96	-0.38
		Stable	-13.81	-0.75*
	Single mothers	Rich	-10.43	-0.57*
		Struggling	14.52	0.80**
		Overworked	7.22	0.39
		Poor	19.08	1.04*
		Infertile	-0.999	-0.05
		Hardworking	-0.42	-0.02
		Successful	-11.45	-0.62*
		Stable	-15.20	-0.83**
	Stepmothers	Rich	3.29	0.18
		Struggling	-6.57	-0.36
		Overworked	-14.88	-0.81**
		Poor	-0.31	-0.02
		Infertile	5.40	0.29
		Hardworking	-16.53	-0.90**
		Successful	-6.65	-0.36
		Stable	-10.85	-0.59*
	Lesbian mothers	Rich	4.71	0.26
		Struggling	-1.38	-0.08
		Overworked	-9.57	-0.52*
		Poor	2.35	0.13
Infertile		6.78	0.37	
Hardworking		-7.33	-0.40	
Successful		-2.79	-0.15	
Stable		-4.41	-0.24	
Adoptive mothers	Rich	14.90	0.81**	

<sup>2</sup> \*Effect sizes of .50 are considered medium;\*\* effect sizes of .80 are considered large;  
 \*\*\*effect sizes of 1.20 are considered very large.

		Struggling	-7.66	-0.42
		Overworked	-10.78	-0.59*
		Poor	-4.09	-0.22
		Infertile	30.12	1.64***
		Hardworking	-3.76	-0.20
		Successful	2.39	0.13
		Stable	6.66	0.36
Negative	Divorced mothers	Confusing	7.56	0.41
		Unhappy	16.25	0.88**
		Pitied	20.04	1.09**
		Abnormal	5.17	0.28
		Sad	15.01	0.82**
		Negatively seen	24.00	1.31***
		Tired	-2.11	-0.11
		Lonely	22.66	1.23***
		Distressed	11.01	0.60*
		Troubled	14.34	0.78*
	Stressed	2.10	0.11	
	Awkward	6.03	0.33	
	Cold	0.00	0.00	
	Single mothers	Confusing	8.89	0.48
		Unhappy	13.43	0.73*
		Pitied	22.32	1.21***
		Abnormal	7.01	0.38
		Sad	13.94	0.76*
		Neg_seen	23.46	1.28***
		Tired	2.00	0.11
Lonely		21.41	1.16**	
Distressed		11.77	0.64*	
Troubled		15.13	0.82**	
Stressed	6.01	0.33		
Awkward	5.89	0.32		
Cold	0.60	0.03		
Stepmothers	Confusing	11.16	0.61*	
	Unhappy	1.28	0.07	
	Pitied	6.48	0.35	
	Abnormal	7.45	0.41	
	Sad	-0.24	-0.01	
	Neg_seen	25.21	1.37***	
	Tired	-16.51	-0.90**	
	Lonely	-0.21	-0.01	
	Distressed	2.07	0.11	
Troubled	3.41	0.19		

		Stressed	-12.29	-0.67*
		Awkward	10.18	0.55*
		Cold	6.03	0.33
	Lesbian mothers	Confusing	6.73	0.37
		Unhappy	-0.35	-0.02
		Pitied	5.49	0.30
		Abnormal	9.83	0.53*
		Sad	-0.08	-0.00
		Neg_seen	26.54	1.44***
		Tired	-14.57	-0.79*
		Lonely	0.42	0.02
		Distressed	3.84	0.21
		Troubled	3.21	0.17
		Stressed	-9.53	-0.52*
		Awkward	9.45	0.51*
		Cold	-2.49	-0.14
	Adoptive mothers	Confusing	0.97	0.05
		Unhappy	-3.123	-0.17
		Pitied	3.31	0.18
		Abnormal	5.53	0.30
		Sad	-3.40	-0.18
		Neg_seen	2.34	0.13
		Tired	-9.33	-0.51*
		Lonely	-1.99	-0.11
		Distressed	-3.19	-0.17
		Troubled	-0.88	-0.05
		Stressed	-9.98	-0.54*
		Awkward	3.96	0.22
		Cold	-4.83	-0.26
Neutral	Divorced mothers	Common	-8.86	-0.48
		Different	0.76	0.04
		Questioned	11.92	0.65*
		Normal	-4.34	-0.24
		Unconventional	10.27	0.56*
		Uncommon	-0.51	-0.03
		Traditional	-15.29	-0.83**
	Single mothers	Common	-5.10	-0.28
		Different	1.94	0.11
		Questioned	14.67	0.80**
		Normal	-5.44	-0.30
		Unconventional	12.58	0.68*
		Uncommon	4.34	0.24

		Traditional	-14.25	-0.78*
	Stepmothers	Common	-7.21	-0.39
		Different	2.91	0.16
		Questioned	11.11	0.60*
		Normal	-10.68	-0.58*
		Unconventional	7.94	0.43
		Uncommon	2.74	0.15
		Traditional	-16.55	-0.90**
	Lesbian mothers	Common	-19.00	-1.03**
		Different	8.29	0.45
		Questioned	17.67	0.96**
		Normal	-10.47	-0.57*
		Unconventio	17.28	0.94**
		Uncommon	13.56	0.74*
		Traditional	-21.13	-1.15**
	Adoptive mothers	Common	-6.47	-0.35
		Different	4.73	0.26
		Questioned	2.57	0.14
		Normal	0.33	0.02
		Unconventional	6.86	0.37
		Uncommon	6.17	0.34
		Traditional	-4.59	-0.25
Positive	Divorced mothers	want_safety	-5.07	-0.28
		Ideal	-11.45	-0.62*
		Acceptable	-9.88	-0.54*
		Excellent_human	-5.48	-0.30
		Respected	-11.86	-0.65*
		More open	-6.30	-0.34
		Persistent	-6.64	-0.36
		Fine	-5.05	-0.27
		Brave	-1.066	-0.06
		Complete	-17.89	-0.97**
		Respectable	-8.68	-0.47
		Committed	-14.47	-0.79*
		Good	-7.07	-0.38
		Happy	-13.65	-0.74*
		Welcoming	-8.72	-0.47
		Trustworthy	-8.04	-0.44
		Special	-2.47	-0.13
		Valued	-12.49	-0.68*
		Loving	-8.56	-0.47
		Understanding	-7.16	-0.39

	Big hearted	-7.73	-0.42
	Well put	-7.25	-0.39
	Wholesome	-11.13	-0.61*
	Strong	-1.39	-0.08
	Passionate	-4.43	-0.24
	Kind-hearted	-8.99	-0.49
	Supported	-15.42	-0.84**
	Positively seen	-23.68	-1.29***
	Sympathetic	-9.66	-0.53*
	Loyal	-16.58	-0.90**
	Generous	-6.45	-0.35
	Accepted	-12.36	-0.67*
	Independent	15.55	0.85**
	Compassionate	-8.67	-0.47
	Faithful	-15.32	-0.83**
	Careful	-4.99	-0.27
	Proud	-10.05	-0.55*
	Heroes	-6.99	-0.38
	Selfless	-7.01	-0.38
	Considerate	-9.10	-0.50*
	Dedicated	-10.73	-0.58*
	Proper	-8.25	-0.45
Single mothers	want_safety	-1.05	-0.06
	Ideal	-9.13	-0.50*
	Acceptable	-6.88	-0.37
	Excellent_human	-0.92	-0.05
	Respected	-10.34	-0.56*
	More open	-1.97	-0.11
	Persistent	-1.88	-0.10
	Fine	-1.88	-0.10
	Brave	6.81	0.37
	Complete	-10.38	-0.56*
	Respectable	-5.32	-0.29
	Committed	-7.99	-0.43
	Good	-5.44	-0.30
	Happy	-7.99	-0.43
	Welcoming	-2.42	-0.13
	Trustworthy	-4.85	-0.26
	Special	-0.77	-0.04
	Valued	-8.97	-0.49
	Loving	-6.40	-0.35
	Understanding	-4.39	-0.24
	Big hearted	0.19	0.01
	Well_put	-5.04	-0.27
	Wholesome_	-5.78	-0.31

	Strong	3.18	0.17
	Passionate	-2.84	-0.15
	Kind-hearted	-2.54	-0.14
	Supported	-15.49	-0.84**
	Positively seen	-21.33	-1.16**
	Sympathetic	-6.37	-0.35
	Loyal	-5.99	-0.33
	Generous	-4.95	-0.27
	Accepted	-14.19	-0.77*
	Independent	17.21	0.94**
	Compassionate	-5.06	-0.28
	Faithful	-7.07	-0.38
	Careful	-4.37	-0.24
	Proud	-2.88	-0.16
	Heroes	-3.27	-0.18
	Selfless	-0.65	-0.04
	Considerate	-3.40	-0.18
	Dedicated	0.50	0.03
	Proper	-3.02	-0.16
Stepmothers	Want safety	-9.91	-0.54*
	Ideal	-11.36	-0.62*
	Acceptable	-11.03	-0.60*
	Excellent human	-8.59	-0.47
	Respected	-17.90	-0.97**
	More_open	-8.78	-0.48
	Persistent	-5.57	-0.30
	Fine	-3.31	-0.18
	Brave	-5.26	-0.29
	Complete	-10.68	-0.58*
	Respectable	-13.93	-0.76*
	Committed	-15.27	-0.83**
	Good	-13.04	-0.71*
	Happy	-5.92	-0.32
	Welcoming	-10.64	-0.58*
	Trustworthy	-13.68	-0.74*
	Special	-7.72	-0.42
	Valued	-17.03	-0.93**
	Loving	-15.90	-0.86**
	Understanding_st	-10.80	-0.59*
	Big_heart	-11.34	-0.62*
	Well_put	-3.03	-0.16
	Wholesome	-10.61	-0.58*
	Strong	-10.54	-0.57*
	Passionate	-8.22	-0.45
	Kind-heart	-11.47	-0.62*

	Supported	-12.00	-0.65*
	Positiv_seen	-22.77	-1.24***
	Sympathetic	-14.34	-0.78*
	Loyal	-17.02	-0.93**
	Generous	-10.61	-0.58*
	Accepted	-17.09	-0.93**
	Independent	-1.748	-0.10
	Compassionate_st	-12.30	-0.67*
	Faithful	-11.61	-0.63*
	Careful	-10.59	-0.58*
	Proud	-15.31	-0.83**
	Heroes	-16.81	-0.91**
	Selfless	-10.54	-0.57*
	Considerate	-12.06	-0.66*
	Dedicated	-15.16	-0.82**
	Proper	-7.82	-0.43
Lesbian mothers	want_safety	-6.72	-0.37
	Ideal	-7.29	-0.40
	Acceptable	-7.25	-0.39
	Excellent_hum	0.36	0.02
	Respected	-16.44	-0.89**
	More_open	9.93	0.54*
	Persistent	0.080	0.00
	Fine	5.91	0.32
	Brave	6.28	0.34
	Complete	-2.38	-0.13
	Respectable	-5.30	-0.29
	Committed	-4.60	-0.25
	Good	-3.74	-0.20
	Happy	-0.67	-0.04
	Welcoming	0.77	0.04
	Trustworthy	-2.36	-0.13
	Special	3.59	0.20
	Valued	-11.82	-0.64*
	Loving	-6.040	-0.33
	Understanding	-1.75	-0.10
	Big_heart	-2.11	-0.11
	Well_put	0.85	0.05
	Wholesome	-3.17	-0.17
	Strong	-2.45	-0.13
	Passionate	2.58	0.140
	Kind-heart	-3.10	-0.17
	Supported	-7.34	-0.40
	Positiv_seen	-22.91	-1.25***
	Sympathetic	-5.12	-0.28

	Loyal	-6.66	-0.36
	Generous	-1.60	-0.09
	Accepted	-18.71	-1.02**
	Independent	8.83	0.48
	Compassionate	-4.03	-0.22
	Faithful	-3.41	-0.19
	Careful	-3.00	-0.16
	Proud	-2.76	-0.15
	Heroes	-3.97	-0.22
	Selfless	-3.43	-0.19
	Considerate	-4.15	-0.23
	Dedicated	-2.74	-0.15
	Proper	-4.00	-0.22
Adoptive mothers	want_safety	-5.09	-0.28
	Ideal	2.42	0.131
	Acceptable	-2.33	-0.13
	Excellent_hum	5.28	0.29
	Respected	2.09	0.11
	More_open	2.55	0.14
	Persistent	6.41	0.35
	Fine	8.44	0.46
	Brave	6.54	0.36
	Complete	3.13	0.17
	Respectable	0.99	0.05
	Committed	-0.89	-0.05
	Good	2.54	0.14
	Happy	4.51	0.25
	Welcoming	7.55	0.41
	Trustworthy	0.82	0.04
	Special	1.31	0.07
	Valued	2.89	0.16
	Loving	-1.69	-0.09
	Understanding	0.199	0.01
	Big_heart	1.08	0.06
	Well_put	7.96	0.43
	Wholesome	1.11	0.06
	Strong	2.00	0.11
	Passionate	5.74	0.31
	Kind-heart	2.20	0.12
	Supported	4.12	0.22
	Positiv_seen	0.72	0.04
	Sympathetic	-0.92	-0.05
	Loyal	-4.19	-0.23
	Generous	5.14	0.28
	Accepted	2.92	0.16

		Independent	9.86	0.54*		
		Compassionate	-0.57	-0.03		
		Faithful	3.04	0.17		
		Careful	6.34	0.35		
		Proud	-1.05	-0.06		
		Heroes	0.95	0.05		
		Selfless	1.43	0.08		
		Considerate	2.09	0.11		
		Dedicated	4.57	0.25		
		Proper	1.58	0.09		
Parenting and family	Divorced mothers	Controlling	-0.03	-0.00		
		Not_replace	1.12	0.06		
		Abandoned	16.62	0.90**		
		Housewives	-13.66	-0.74*		
		Gifts	-4.47	-0.24		
		Responsible	-7.16	-0.39		
		Homewrecker	6.55	0.36		
		Fulfill_goal	-6.95	-0.38		
		Caregivers	-11.32	-0.62*		
		Maternal	-6.17	-0.34		
		Intruders	2.29	0.12		
		Not_different	-0.87	-0.05		
		Role_models	-9.68	-0.53*		
		Caring	-10.82	-0.59*		
		Excluded	10.38	0.56*		
		Teenagers	1.77	0.10		
		Single mothers	Single mothers	Controlling	-3.19	-0.17
				Not_replace	-0.17	-0.01
Abandoned	24.50			1.33***		
Housewives	-12.27			-0.67*		
Gifts	-4.15			-0.23		
Responsible	-5.627			-0.31		
Homewrecker	2.09			0.11		
Fulfill_goal	-9.93			-0.54*		
Caregivers	-4.72			-0.26		
Maternal	-0.58			-0.03		
Intruders	-1.21			-0.07		
Not_different	1.19			0.06		
Role_models	-4.39			-0.24		
Caring	-9.24			-0.50*		
Excluded	13.69			0.74*		
Teenagers	18.02	0.98**				
Stepmothers	Stepmothers	Controlling	-1.94	-0.11		

	Not_replace	-0.99	-0.05
	Abandoned	3.73	0.20
	Housewives	-1.62	-0.09
	Gifts	-14.59	-0.79*
	Responsible	-14.04	-0.76*
	Homewrecker	12.34	0.67*
	Fulfill_goal	-3.26	-0.18
	Caregivers	-16.77	-0.91**
	Maternal	-17.56	-0.96**
	Intruders	12.68	0.69*
	Not_different_st	-2.724	-0.15
	Role_models	-12.59	-0.68*
	Caring	-16.61	-0.90**
	Excluded	10.92	0.59*
	Teenagers	-5.12	-0.28
Lesbian mothers	Controlling	-8.62	-0.47
	Not_replace	-0.99	-0.05
	Abandoned	2.75	0.15
	Housewives	-7.54	-0.41
	Gifts	-2.90	-0.16
	Responsible	-4.38	-0.24
	Homewrecker	0.30	0.02
	Fulfill_goal	7.27	0.40
	Caregivers	-7.27	-0.40
	Maternal	-3.99	-0.22
	Intruders	1.12	0.06
	Not_different	-0.96	-0.05
	Role_models	-6.01	-0.33
	Caring	-7.68	-0.42
	Excluded	21.14	1.15**
	Teenagers	-0.85	-0.05
Adoptive mothers	Controlling	-4.11	-0.22
	Not_replace	-1.22	-0.07
	Abandoned	-0.18	-0.01
	Housewives	2.03	0.11
	Gifts	2.03	0.11
	Responsible	0.23	0.01
	Homewrecker	0.21	0.01
	Fulfill_goal	10.50	0.57*
	Caregivers	-2.92	-0.16
	Maternal	-4.09	-0.22
	Intruders	-0.25	-0.01
	Not_different	2.03	0.11
	Role_models	3.	0.17

Caring	-6.04	-0.33
Excluded	0.80	0.043
Teenagers	-5.50	-0.30

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\*  $p \leq .01$

Table 6

*T values and effect sizes for each descriptor per paternal role*

Umbrella categories	Parental roles	Descriptors	T Value	d
Positive	Divorced fathers	Responsible	-15.65	-0.91** <sup>3</sup>
		Friendly	-10.71	-0.62*
		Important	-11.46	-0.67*
		Welcoming	-6.32	-0.37
		Sweet_men	-8.21	-0.48
		Loving	-11.43	-0.66*
		Decent	-8.58	-0.50*
		Loyal	-15.55	-0.90**
		Happy	-12.93	-0.75*
		Trustworthy	-12.66	-0.74*
		Committed	-17.23	-1.00**
		Supportive	-11.11	-0.65*
		Strong	-11.06	-0.64*
		Acceptable	-12.33	-0.72*
		Big_heart	-10.68	-0.62*
		Passionate	-5.72	-0.33
		Compassionate	-8.91	-0.52*
		Good	-10.86	-0.63*
		Tough	-5.35	-0.31
		Involved	-13.96	-0.81**
		Special	-8.76	-0.51*
		Dependable	-15.80	-0.92**
		Devoted	-15.47	-0.90**
		Fun	-7.96	-0.46
		Affectionate	-8.54	-0.50*
		Respected	-18.53	-1.08**
		Proud	-13.98	-0.81**
		Great	-10.38	-0.60*
		Kind	-10.54	-0.61*
		Manly	-8.28	-0.48
		Openminded	-5.10	-0.30
		Determined	-13.15	-0.76*
		Positively_seen	-22.30	-1.30***
Generous	-12.41	-0.72*		
Courageous	-9.96	-0.58*		
Well_seen	-19.98	-1.16**		
Brave	-11.71	-0.68*		

<sup>3</sup> \*Effect sizes of .50 are considered medium;\*\* effect sizes of .80 are considered large;  
\*\*\*effect sizes of 1.20 are considered very large.

	Alright	-3.11	-0.18
	Heroes	-12.17	-0.71*
	Nice	-12.72	-0.74*
Single fathers	Responsible	-2.27	-0.13
	Friendly	-6.66	-0.38
	Important	-5.83	-0.34
	Welcoming	-2.46	-0.14
	Sweet_men	1.70	0.10
	Loving	-3.11	-0.18
	Decent	-2.83	-0.16
	Loyal	-3.16	-0.18
	Happy	-6.62	-0.38
	Trustworthy	-1.31	-0.08
	Committed	-1.17	-0.07
	Supportive	-0.43	-0.03
	Strong	-3.16	-0.18
	Acceptable	-4.51	-0.26
	Big_heart	-2.26	-0.13
	Passionate	4.51	0.26
	Compassionate	3.53	0.21
	Good	-3.28	-0.19
	Tough	0.33	0.02
	Involved	-0.78	-0.05
	Special	0.39	0.02
	Dependable	-4.78	-0.28
	Devoted	-2.02	-0.12
	Fun	-3.98	-0.23
	Affectionate	-1.49	-0.09
	Respected	-5.94	-0.35
	Proud	-8.27	-0.48
	Great	-2.29	-0.13
	Kind	-2.01	-0.12
	Manly	-4.28	-0.25
	Openminded	1.28	0.07
	Determined	-2.53	-0.15
	Positively_seen	-10.32	-0.60*
	Generous	-2.17	-0.13
	Courageous	0.30	0.02
	Well_seen	-4.98	-0.29
	Brave	-1.53	-0.09
	Alright	2.31	0.13
	Heroes	-0.00	-0.00
	Nice	-2.29	-0.13
Stepfathers	Responsible	-6.83	-0.40
	Friendly	-9.36	-0.54*
	Important	-12.03	-0.70*

	Welcoming	-3.81	-0.22
	Sweet_men	-4.49	-0.26
	Loving	-10.74	-0.62*
	Decent	-7.32	-0.42
	Loyal	-7.14	-0.42
	Happy	-6.28	-0.36
	Trustworthy	-8.55	-0.50*
	Committed	-5.74	-0.33
	Supportive	-6.62	-0.38
	Strong	-9.53	-0.55*
	Acceptable	-10.03	-0.58*
	Big_heart	-6.50	-0.38
	Passionate	-1.94	-0.11
	Compassionate	-4.09	-0.24
	Good	-8.71	-0.51*
	Tough	-3.58	-0.21
	Involved	-8.38	-0.49
	Special	-5.23	-0.30
	Dependable	-8.49	-0.49
	Devoted	-7.53	-0.44
	Fun	-8.70	-0.51*
	Affectionate	-7.21	-0.42
	Respected	-12.00	-0.70*
	Proud	-10.94	-0.64*
	Great	-6.57	-0.38
	Kind	-6.24	-0.36
	Manly	-6.85	-0.40
	Openminded	-0.80	-0.05
	Determined	-8.42	-0.49
	Positively_seen	-14.64	-0.85**
	Generous	-6.65	-0.37
	Courageous	-9.43	-0.55*
	Well_seen	-12.28	-0.71*
	Brave	-6.83	-0.40
	Alright	-0.74	-0.04
	Heroes	-8.44	-0.49
	Nice	-5.78	-0.34
Gay fathers	Responsible	-3.14	-0.18
	Friendly	-4.41	-0.26
	Important	-9.35	-0.54*
	Welcoming	0.36	0.02
	Sweet_men	2.77	0.16
	Loving	-4.04	-0.23
	Decent	-2.05	-0.12
	Loyal	-3.22	-0.19
	Happy	-1.57	-0.09

	Trustworthy	-2.37	-0.14
	Committed	-2.53	-0.15
	Supportive	-1.69	-0.10
	Strong	-7.93	-0.46
	Acceptable	-7.15	-0.42
	Big_heart	-0.76	-0.04
	Passionate	4.17	0.24
	Compassionate	2.07	0.12
	Good	-5.38	-0.31
	Tough	-5.61	-0.33
	Involved	-0.54	-0.03
	Special	-2.10	-0.12
	Dependable	-2.83	-0.16
	Devoted	-1.30	-0.08
	Fun	-2.32	-0.13
	Affectionate	1.96	0.11
	Respected	-16.28	-0.95**
	Proud	-4.73	-0.28
	Great	-3.65	-0.21
	Kind	-2.59	-0.15
	Manly	-15.98	-0.93**
	Openminded	5.82	0.34
	Determined	-2.26	-0.13
	Positively_seen	-20.76	-1.20***
	Generous	-1.58	-0.09
	Courageous	-2.26	-0.13
	Well_seen	-14.80	-0.86**
	Brave	-1.95	-0.11
	Alright	-0.38	-0.02
	Heroes	-5.61	-0.33
	Nice	-1.85	-0.11
Adoptive fathers	Responsible	2.09	0.12
	Friendly	-3.12	-0.18
	Important	-2.91	-0.17
	Welcoming	5.65	0.33
	Sweet_men	5.97	0.35
	Loving	-0.45	-0.03
	Decent	1.86	0.11
	Loyal	2.53	0.15
	Happy	-12.93	-0.75*
	Trustworthy	3.38	0.20
	Committed_	3.51	0.20
	Supportive	2.46	0.14
	Strong	-2.32	-0.14
	Acceptable	0.26	0.02
	Big_heart	2.68	0.16

		Passionate	9.28	0.54*
		Compassionate	6.54	0.38
		Good	-0.79	-0.05
		Tough	0.00	0.00
		Involved	1.79	0.10
		Special	2.29	0.13
		Dependable	-2.60	-0.15
		Devoted	2.67	0.16
		Fun	-1.17	-0.07
		Affectionate	5.18	0.30
		Respected	-1.52	-0.09
		Proud	-3.04	-0.18
		Great	3.22	0.19
		Kind	3.74	0.22
		Manly	-1.24	-0.07
		Openminded	7.35	0.43
		Determined	0.36	0.02
		Positively_seen	0.42	0.02
		Generous	3.14	0.18
		Courageous	0.29	0.02
		Well_seen	0.64	0.04
		Brave	1.02	0.06
		Alright	6.50	0.38
		Heroes	5.42	0.32
		Nice	1.38	0.08
Lifestyle	Divorced fathers	Stable	-13.96	-0.81**
		Providers	-13.65	-0.79*
		Breadwinners	-12.48	-0.73*
		Hardworking	-11.44	-0.66*
		Workingman	-10.90	-0.63*
		Struggling	8.30	0.48
		Lookingforlove	9.40	0.55*
		Infertile	5.00	0.29
		Successful	-11.19	-0.65*
	Single fathers	Stable	-6.28	-0.37
		Providers	-3.78	-0.22
		Breadwinners	-0.77	-0.04
		Hardworking	-4.07	-0.24
		Workingman	-5.07	-0.29
		Struggling	12.09	0.70*
		Lookingforlove	11.64	0.68*
		Infertile	3.13	0.18
		Successful	-6.65	-0.39
	Stepfathers	Stable	-9.33	-0.54*
		Providers	-9.85	-0.57*
		Breadwinners	-6.74	-0.39

		Hardworking	-8.66	-0.50*
		Workingman	-11.00	-0.64*
		Struggling	1.33	0.08
		Lookingforlove	3.03	0.18
		Infertile	5.84	0.34
		Successful	-7.87	-0.46
	Gay fathers	Stable	-5.03	-0.29
		Providers	-6.85	-0.40
		Breadwinners	-4.59	-0.27
		Hardworking	-6.32	-0.37
		Workingman	-9.51	-0.55*
		Struggling	6.77	0.39
		Lookingforlove	3.20	0.19
		Infertile	9.46	0.55*
		Successful	-3.46	-0.20
	Adoptive fathers	Stable	1.52	0.09
		Providers	-1.34	-0.08
		Breadwinners	-1.89	-0.11
		Hardworking	-1.87	-0.11
		Workingman	-3.68	-0.21
		Struggling	-0.95	-0.05
		Lookingforlove	3.33	0.19
		Infertile	23.39	1.36***
		Successful	1.65	0.10
Parenting and family	Divorced fathers	Fatherfigures	-12.70	-0.74*
		Rolemodels	-13.81	-0.80**
		Maternal	0.85	0.05
		Strict	-9.85	-0.57*
		Absent	16.23	0.94**
		Men_who_step_up	-12.48	-0.73*
		Controlling	-2.37	-0.14
		Removed	15.73	0.91*
		Replacements	6.30	0.37
		Easy_going	-5.032	-0.29
		Protective	-15.66	-0.91**
		Anotherfatherfigure	-2.90	-0.17
		Goodexamples	-17.61	-1.02**
		Outsiders	11.78	0.68*
		Notthechildfather	4.94	0.29
		Willing_to_maintain	-10.55	-0.61*
		Distant	7.85	0.46
		Cheaters	12.54	0.73*
		Caregivers	-14.32	-0.83**
		Saviors	-5.98	-0.35
		Selfsacrificing	-11.16	-0.65*

	Family_man	-20.31	-1.18**
	Caring	-12.35	-0.72*
Single fathers	Fatherfigures	-1.65	-0.10
	Rolemodels	-5.04	-0.29
	Maternal	9.59	0.56*
	Strict	-3.97	-0.23
	Absent	1.24	0.07
	Men_who_step_up	2.44	0.14
	Controlling	-0.65	-0.04
	Removed	1.95	0.11
	Replacements	4.69	0.27
	Easy_going	0.94	0.05
	Protective	-8.05	-0.47
	Anotherfatherfigure	4.27	0.25
	Goodexamples	-3.01	-0.17
	Outsiders	8.04	0.47
	Notthechildfather	4.30	0.25
	Willing_to_maintain	-2.68	-0.16
	Distant	2.03	0.12
	Cheaters	1.45	0.08
	Caregivers	0.32	0.02
	Saviors	3.60	0.21
	Selfsacrificing	1.14	0.07
	Family_man	-5.08	-0.30
	Caring	-2.48	-0.14
Stepfathers	Fatherfigures	-9.19	-0.53*
	Rolemodels	-12.86	-0.75*
	Maternal	-0.33	-0.02
	Strict	-8.18	-0.48
	Absent	3.49	0.20
	Men_who_step_up	-3.46	-0.20
	Controlling	-2.37	-0.14
	Removed	3.04	0.18
	Replacements	16.53	0.96**
	Easy_going	-1.15	-0.07
	Protective	-16.05	-0.93**
	Anotherfatherfigure	5.86	0.34
	Goodexamples	-9.01	-0.52*
	Outsiders	12.99	0.76*
	Notthechildfather	18.54	1.08**
	Willing_to_maintain	-9.31	-0.54*
	Distant	1.18	0.07
	Cheaters	1.57	0.09
	Caregivers	-6.07	-0.35
	Saviors	5.14	0.30
	Selfsacrificing	-5.37	-0.31

	Family_man	-9.12	-0.53*
	Caring	-8.51	-0.49
Gay fathers	Fatherfigures	-8.71	-0.51*
	Rolemodels	-8.40	-0.49
	Maternal	13.65	0.79*
	Strict	-9.05	-0.53*
	Absent	-1.37	-0.08
	Men_who_step_up	-1.70	-0.10
	Controlling	-4.36	-0.25
	Removed	-0.17	-0.01
	Replacements	8.75	0.51*
	Easy_going	0.45	0.03
	Protective	-8.04	-0.47
	Anotherfatherfigure	5.47	0.32
	Goodexamples	-6.38	-0.37
	Outsiders	14.04	0.82**
	Notthechildfather	16.58	0.96**
	Willing_to_maintain	-3.37	-0.20
	Distant	-3.40	-0.20
	Cheaters	-1.61	-0.09
	Caregivers	-0.66	-0.04
	Saviors	1.82	0.11
	Selfsacrificing	-2.22	-0.13
	Family_man	-7.31	-0.43
	Caring	-2.17	-0.13
Adoptive	Fatherfigures	-1.24	-0.07
	Rolemodels	0.64	0.04
	Maternal	6.24	0.36
	Strict	-6.71	-0.39
	Absent	-3.01	-0.17
	Men_who_step_up	5.47	0.32
	Controlling	-2.54	-0.15
	Removed	-0.03	-0.00
	Replacements	15.48	0.90**
	Easy_going	5.92	0.34
	Protective	-7.34	-0.43
	Anotherfatherfigure	11.17	0.65*
	Goodexamples	1.39	0.08
	Outsiders	6.66	0.39
	Notthechildfather	26.48	1.54***
	Willing_to_maintain	-1.12	-0.07
	Distant	-5.16	-0.30
	Cheaters	-2.55	-0.15
	Caregivers	3.77	0.22
	Saviors	13.04	0.76*
	Selfsacrificing	2.43	0.14

		Family man	0.50	0.03
Negative	Divorced fathers	Caring	-0.22	-0.01
		Atypical	3.59	0.21
		Awkward	6.48	0.38
		Negatively seen	20.88	1.21***
		Uncommitted	17.51	1.02**
		Controversial	10.76	0.63*
		Odd	5.45	0.32
		Abnormal	7.44	0.43
		Unreliable	14.26	0.83**
		Lonely	20.62	1.20***
	Single fathers	Dishonest	11.63	0.68*
		Betraying	12.83	0.75*
		Atypical	4.80	0.28
		Awkward	5.34	0.31
		Negatively seen	6.71	0.39
		Uncommitted	4.35	0.25
		Controversial	8.82	0.51*
		Odd	7.01	0.41
		Abnormal	8.49	0.49
		Unreliable	3.01	0.17
Stepfathers	Lonely	20.01	1.16**	
	Dishonest	1.48	0.09	
	Betraying	0.51	0.03	
	Atypical	0.25	0.01	
	Awkward	5.84	0.34	
	Negatively seen	11.94	0.69*	
	Uncommitted	4.73	0.27	
	Controversial	8.61	0.50*	
	Odd	6.51	0.38	
	Abnormal	6.11	0.35	
Gay fathers	Unreliable	3.69	0.21	
	Lonely	6.87	0.40	
	Dishonest	4.11	0.24	
	Betraying	0.05	0.00	
	Atypical	8.27	0.48	
	Awkward	5.82	0.34	
	Negatively seen	20.67	1.20***	
	Uncommitted	0.98	0.06	
	Controversial	18.00	1.05**	
	Odd	10.69	0.62*	
Abnormal	14.97	0.87**		
Unreliable	0.37	0.02		
Lonely	5.23	0.30		
Dishonest	0.76	0.04		
Betraying	-1.42	-0.08		

	Adoptive fathers	Atypical	3.40	0.20
		Awkward	1.10	0.06
		Negatively seen	0.02	0.00
		Uncommitted	-0.00	-0.00
		Controversia	1.37	0.08
		Odd	2.27	0.13
		Abnormal	5.59	0.32
		Unreliable	-1.84	-0.11
		Lonely	4.68	0.27
		Dishonest	-0.96	-0.06
		Betraying	-1.98	-0.12
Neutral	Divorced fathers	Stereotypical dad	-13.67	-0.79*
		Trying	-11.58	-0.67*
		Normal	-11.21	-0.65*
		Victims	13.14	0.76*
		Unconventional	5.14	0.30
		Traditional	-17.53	-1.02**
		Standard	-16.90	-0.98**
		Scrutinized	16.09	0.94**
		Common	16.01	0.93**
	Single fathers	Stereotypical dad	-9.21	-0.54*
		Trying	-2.16	-0.13
		Normal	-12.07	-0.70*
		Victims	10.11	0.59*
		Unconventional	8.06	0.47
		Traditional	-16.47	-0.96**
		Standard	-10.37	-0.60*
		Scrutinized	6.37	0.37
		Common	6.79	0.39
	Stepfathers	Stereotypical dad	-12.45	-0.72*
		Trying	-4.56	-0.27
		Normal	-8.87	-0.52*
		Victims	7.41	0.43
		Unconventional	5.32	0.31
		Traditional	-15.45	-0.90**
		Standard	-12.48	-0.73*
		Scrutinized	8.96	0.52*
		Common	13.34	0.78*
	Gay fathers	Stereotypical dad	-14.83	-0.86**
		Trying	-2.50	-0.15
		Normal	-10.38	-0.60*
		Victims	19.82	1.15**
		Unconventional	11.47	0.67*
		Traditional	-24.06	-1.40***
		Standard	-14.91	-0.87**
		Scrutinized	21.72	1.26***

	Common	-0.26	-0.02
Adoptive fathers	Stereotypical dad	-2.19	-0.13
	Trying	-3.09	-0.18
	Normal	-5.17	-0.30
	Victims	-1.17	-0.07
	Unconventional	5.75	0.33
	Traditional	-6.91	-0.40
	Standard	-9.69	-0.56*
	Scrutinized	0.41	0.02
	Common	9.17	0.53

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\*  $p \leq .01$

Table 7

*Winsorizing Transformations for Multiple Linear Regressions*

Problematic dependant variables	Before winsorizing ( $> 3.29$ )	After winsorizing ( $\leq 3.29$ )
Lifestyle adoptive fathers	-6.96	-2.08
Parenting/family adoptive fathers	-8.65	0.37
Positive adoptive fathers	-5.53	-1.35
Lifestyle homosexual fathers	-8.89	-1.09
Neutral homosexual fathers	-6.92	-2.21
Parenting/family homosexual fathers	-11.17	-0.82
Positive homosexual fathers	-8.12	-1.76
Negative married fathers	3.45	3.18
Positive married fathers	-3.63	-2.89
Lifestyle single fathers	-3.51	-2.63
Parenting/family single fathers	-3.45	-3.01
Lifestyle stepfathers	-3.47	-1.92
Parenting/family stepfathers	-4.54	-2.93
Negative adoptive mothers	5.72	2.08
Neutral adoptive mothers	5.53	2.87
Positive adoptive mothers	-3.75	-2.50
Parenting/family adoptive mothers	7.40	1.51
Negative divorced mothers	-3.83	-2.89
Positive lesbian mothers	-6.13	-2.07

Table 8

*Coefficients' Table for Positive Married Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error			
Gender	4.576	1.507	0.160	3.038	0.003*
Relationship status	-3.142	1.362	-0.134	-2.307	0.022*
Parental status	-7.969	1.814	-0.255	-4.394	0.000*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 9

*Coefficients' Table for Lifestyle Married Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Gender	2.302	1.107	0.111	2.080	0.038*
Ethnicity	3.095	1.013	0.164	3.055	0.002*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 10

*Coefficients' Table for Parenting and Family Married Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Ethnicity	2.439	1.037	0.125	2.353	0.019*
Parental status	-5.069	1.237	-0.219	-4.098	0.000*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 11

*Coefficients' Table for Negative Divorced Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Age	-1.802	0.930	-0.138	-1.937	0.054*
Sexual orientation	-4.729	2.105	-0.120	-2.246	0.025*
Parental status	-4.569	2.375	-0.136	-1.924	0.055

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 12

*Coefficients' Table for Neutral Divorced Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error			
Age	-2.304	0.652	-0.204	-3.532	0.000*
Relationship status	-2.541	1.253	-0.117	-2.029	0.043*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 13

*Coefficients' Table for Negative Single Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Age	-1.630	1.021	-0.114	-1.596	0.111
Relationship status	-4.212	1.627	-0.153	-2.589	0.010*
Parental status	-6.100	2.694	-0.166	-2.264	0.024*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 14

*Coefficients' Table for Lifestyle Single Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Age	-1.828	0.490	-0.199	-3.727	0.000*
Gender	2.891	1.148	0.135	2.518	0.012*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 15

*Coefficients' Table for Neutral Single Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Age	-1.703	0.889	-0.136	-1.915	0.056
Relationship status	-5.382	1.416	-0.224	-3.802	0.000*
Parental status	-4.959	2.345	-0.154	-2.115	0.035*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 16

*Coefficients' Table for Neutral Stepmothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Age	-2.072	0.685	-0.176	-3.027	0.003*
Relationship status	-2.622	1.315	-0.116	-1.993	0.047*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 17

*Coefficients' Table for Positive Lesbian Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error			
Gender	4.470	1.748	0.135	2.558	0.011*
Ethnicity	-4.563	1.616	-0.151	-2.824	0.005*
Sexual orientation	6.539	2.271	0.154	2.879	0.004*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 18

*Coefficients' Table for Negative Lesbian Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Sexual orientation	-6.083	2.632	-0.123	-2.312	0.021*
Parental status	-8.057	2.236	-0.192	-3.603	0.000*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 19

*Coefficients' Table for Lifestyle Adoptive Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Age	-1.919	0.617	-0.179	-3.113	0.002*
Gender	4.072	1.344	0.162	3.031	0.003*
Relationship status	-2.701	1.182	-0.131	-2.286	0.023*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 20

*Coefficients' Table for Parenting and Family Adoptive Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Relationship status	-3.404	1.057	-0.186	-3.219	0.001*
Parental status	-7.481	1.410	-0.307	-5.307	0.000*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 21

*Coefficients' Table for Neutral Adoptive Mothers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Relationship status	-3.201	1.363	-0.137	-2.349	0.019*
Parental status	-8.608	1.816	-0.277	-4.739	0.000*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 22

*Coefficients' Table for Neutral Married Fathers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Relationship status	-2.870	1.370	-0.130	-2.095	0.037*
Parental status	-6.129	1.665	-0.229	-3.682	0.000*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 23

*Coefficients' Table for Positive Divorced Fathers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Gender	3.700	1.926	0.110	1.921	0.056
Ethnicity	-5.361	1.764	-0.174	-3.040	0.003*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 24

*Coefficients' Table for Positive Single Fathers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Gender	3.938	2.003	0.110	1.967	0.050*
Ethnicity	-4.313	1.885	-0.132	-2.288	0.023*
Parental status	-8.088	2.242	-0.208	-3.607	0.000*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 25

*Coefficients' Table for Positive Gay Fathers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Gender	7.104	1.901	0.196	3.736	0.000*
Ethnicity	-9.888	1.789	-0.297	-5.526	0.000*
Parental status	-8.722	2.129	-0.220	-4.097	0.000*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 26

*Coefficients' Table for Negative Gay Fathers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Gender	-5.145	1.974	-0.148	-2.607	0.010*
Parental status	-7.126	2.150	-0.188	-3.315	0.001*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 27

*Coefficients' Table for Lifestyle Gay Fathers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Gender	4.318	1.690	0.140	2.555	0.011*
Ethnicity	-4.495	1.598	-0.159	-2.812	0.005*
Relationship status	-4.197	1.658	-0.152	-2.531	0.012*
Parental status	-9.448	2.074	-0.281	-4.554	0.000*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 28

*Coefficients' Table for Parenting and Family Gay Fathers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Gender	3.235	1.355	0.129	2.387	0.018*
Ethnicity	-4.420	1.275	-0.192	-3.465	0.001*
Parental status	-7.505	1.518	-0.274	-4.946	0.000*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 29

*Coefficients' Table for Neutral Gay Fathers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Gender	3.702	1.630	0.125	2.271	0.024*
Ethnicity	-4.008	1.534	-0.147	-2.612	0.009*
Parental status	-8.442	1.825	-0.261	-4.625	0.000*

\*  $p \leq .05$

Table 30

*Coefficients' Table for Negative Adoptive Fathers' Reduced Model*

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	$\beta$		
Gender	-4.354	2.295	-0.108	-1.897	0.059
Parental status	-8.862	2.500	-0.202	-3.545	0.000*

\*  $p \leq .05$