

# Cultural Patterns of Parenting in Chile:

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The Children's Point of View  
About Punishment and Affection





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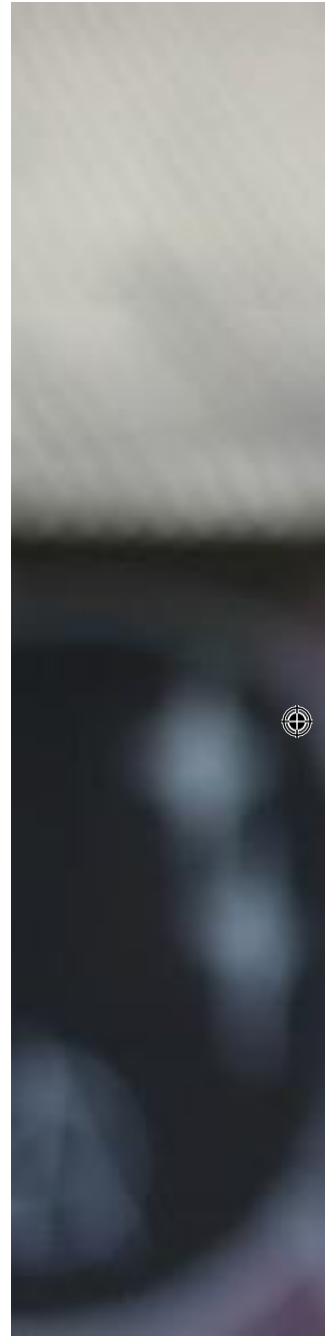
# Introduction

After almost three decades since Chile ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the country is moving toward a relative consensus on an schedule for institutional, legal, and political changes to fulfil the protection and guaranty of the full exercise of the rights of the children. The institutional and legal changes are a necessary and urgent step, but they are not enough. The country needs to promote deep social and cultural changes that allow it to remove every status or practice that violates or make easier the violations of the rights of the child. Changes that make possible to build a culture that protects, identifies, and legitimizes the condition of boys and girls as subjects of their rights and their leading role in the different social environment in which they live.

Children and adolescents maltreatment and violence against them still continue to be one of the main topics of concern of the international and civil society organizations, which are engaged with the rights of the child. During the convention preface it was stated that 'the child, for the full and harmonious development of his/her personality, should grow up in a family circle that has an atmosphere of happiness, love, and comprehension'. Based on this criterion, the CRC establishes that 'States Parties undertake to ensure the child the protection and care necessary for his/her well-being, considering the rights and duties of his/her parents, legal guardians, or other people legally responsible for him/her' (Art. 3); it is the primary responsibility of the parents (or legal guardians) to ensure the parenting and development of the child, and the country must create the conditions for parents to carry out this responsibility (Art. 18). It also requires that each country protects children from 'all forms of physical or psychological abuse' (Art. 19). The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 2006) has kept a special focus on the persistence and seriousness of violence and maltreatment against boys and girls, pointing out that most of the violence cases occur in the family (ONA, 2018:21).

The persistence of the use of violence and maltreatment against children has forced various international institutions and organizations to redouble their efforts in the social action and intervention field in order to contribute to socio-cultural changes in the institutional, community, and family environments in which boys and girls live (UNICEF 2012, Save the Children 2015, World Vision, 2017). Similarly, a continuous research effort has been developed to analyse and understand the complexity of this phenomenon and its persistence over time. Since 1994, in Chile, UNICEF has realized a systematic tracking of violence and maltreatment against children. As highlights in its last report, in 1994, 34.2% of children suffered serious physical violence, in 2012 that percentage decreased to 25.9%, remaining constant since the measurement done in 2000 (UNICEF, 2012), while 25.6% suffered mild physical violence in the same year.

The two percentages are equal to 51.5%, which is the amount of the country's children that suffered physical violence. This study affirms that Chilean family is a positive environment in terms of violence toward couples and boys and girls.





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For its part, the World Vision Latin America regional study (2017) addressed the public perception of violence against children and highlighted that this type of abuse is increasing and it has a negative impact on children's health, education, and their social relationships. In Chile's case, 37% of the people affirms to personally know a child victim of maltreatment and 54% thinks that violence against children has increased in the last five years. Besides, there is a very bad perception about the effectiveness of the organizations that protect boys and girls from violence. The worst rated are the government and the court system. Additionally, the first polyvictimization among children and adolescents national survey (Chilean Undersecretariat of Crime Prevention, 2017) reported that 34% of the children had suffered a type of maltreatment done by their caregivers.

The specialized research has warned that maltreatment against children is a painful reality at homes (ECLAC-UNICEF, 2009). The family still has a crucial role in children's lives. Parenting and care skills, socialization practices, and affective relationships impact boys and girls' lives. The family is an intergenerational environment in which children live their primary social experiences. The society expects the family to be an environment of childhood's privacy, care, and protection. However, the numbers show that it can also be a place where children's rights are violated. Violence's normalization and justification is shown in daily practices that make children responsible for it because of their behavior or indiscipline. Violence is still understood as a way to discipline, teach, and control<sup>1</sup>.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its General Comment No. 8, explicitly indicates that physical punishment is a form of child maltreatment, defining it as 'any punishment in which physical strength is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, even if it is in a minor degree' (2006: 116). Because of this, it has recommended numerous times the prohibition of maltreatment, in all its forms and settings, appreciating the family's importance in children's care and protection. Moreover, it has specified that violence arises because of a 'complex interaction among personal, familiar, community, and social factors' (ONA, 2018: 22). Therefore, it is vital to understand that the whole society fails when it is not able to create strategies that transform that vulnerability settings in which boys, girls, and adolescents grow up.

Within the framework of these debates, World Vision and the Childhood and Public Policies Certification Program of the University of Chile's Department of Anthropology, agreed to develop a collaborative socio-cultural research effort aimed at understanding the cultural models or styles and the parenting practices that Chilean families prefer within the framework of the relationships and educational processes that they establish with their children. The parenting practices are learned socialization methods, which constitute a privileged setting to replicate intergenerational behavior patterns.

Parenting styles are the group of 'ideological knowledge and surmises that shape the subject's actions at primary socialization levels (...) they are different ways in which fathers [and mothers] guide their children's behavior' (Salazar, 2006: 12). These include the behaviors and attitudes that parents carry out in their children's process of growing up and socialization (Baumrind, 1971), as well as the affective and communicative practices expressed in demonstrations of love, approval and/or acceptance, as well as the help given to boys and girls (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Parenting styles generate an emotional environment which greatly determines 'the type of relationship and communication between the parents and their children' (Save the Children, 2013: 12). Likewise, it establishes the bases of a reciprocal relationship of acknowledgment between parents and their children. Emphasized by Honneth (1997), in the affective relationships framework, the reciprocal acknowledgment helps to confirm the involved subjects' individuality, which affects the development of their personal identities, their participation in a community's public life, the development of the confidence to do so, and the confirmation of their individuality and autonomy<sup>3</sup>.



In this way, parenting styles give a relatively stable and permanent framework for the adults' actions and reactions toward children in any need, situation, and decision-making in the families' daily life (Comellas, 2003). However, there is a wider and more flexible scope in practice, since parents do not always use the same formative strategies in all situations or with all their children equally (Ceballos & Rodrigo, 1998). Parenting styles depend on a wide range of factors, such as the childhood definitions that predominate in certain political and socio-cultural environments, the adults' particular experiences of their childhood, the well-being degree associated with social classes and health condition, as well as interpersonal skills and the existence of a circle of support (Salazar 2006, Save the Children 2013).

From the beginning of this research, the staff of both institutions assumed that the parenting styles and practices that Chilean families prefer nowadays may include ways closer to affective, protective and skills encouragement models, as well as parenting styles that may include practices that limit children skills, and violent forms of connection with society. In the framework experimented in Chile by society and family, the investigation adopted a cultural approach, based on the assumption that traditional parenting and formative patterns are consequences of long-term cultural habits. The cultural factors have a critical influence on the parenting patterns execution that Chilean families prefer in the education of their children.

Culture directly influences on maltreatment naturalization and justification as a resource to discipline, correct, or control children's behavior. It is so important to expose it for its change and elimination in the children's daily life.

Culture is the group of knowledge, beliefs, and principles that guide and/or determine society's behavior and practices (Goodenough, 1975; Lahire, 2004; Santibáñez, 2013).

The fact that these beliefs and principles operate as rules and criteria for deciding what is right or wrong to do in a specific context is a factor that cannot be ignored. Furthermore, these can be modified over time, allowing to emerge new parenting styles and patterns.



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1 - <http://www.icsc.cl/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Informe-Final-V%C3%ADnculo.pdf>

2 - "(...) In most of the cases, it involves hitting children ("slaps", "punches", "beats"), either barehanded or with some objects like sticks, wands, belts, shoes, wooden spoons, among others. But it can also be, for example, kicking, shaking or pushing, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling children hair or ears, forcing them to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning them, and forcing them to eat extremely hot food or other items (for example, washing their mouths with soap or forcing them to swallow spicy foods). The committee considers that corporal punishment is always degrading" (CRC, General Comment No. 8, 2006: 116).

3 - "This thesis is reasonable if it is understood as an affirmation about the emotional status of ego's full development; the feeling of being recognized and recognized in his/her specific nature makes that the subject creates the degree of self-esteem that qualifies him/her to participate legitimately in the formation of the political will" (Honneth, 1997:53-54).



## Research Objectives

Assuming the challenge of promoting a parenting model based on tenderness, which recognizes the importance of emotional ties, trust and affection, along with the recognition of the rights of the children. This study has the objective of to understand and describe the parenting models and practices that families prefer nowadays, from the children's point of view. This research aims for achieve the following specific objectives:

### A

To determine the main types of violence and the unfavorable experiences that impact on childhood.

### B

To identify the practices of tenderness that significant adults use on children within familiar relationships.

### C

To describe the belief and principles that justify the types of parenting practices used by children's significant adults.

### D

Compare the children and significant adults' argumentative structures regarding the different types of parenting practices determined within the familiar environment.

# Methodological Notes

Mixed research, which combined qualitative and quantitative methods in a sequential logic (Mertens, 2016). In the first stage, a qualitative investigation was done for exploratory purposes. The following techniques were applied on this investigation:

Table I

Techniques	Subjects
32 in-depth interviews	2 adolescents 23 low social class adults 7 upper middle social class adults
4 focus groups	6-7 y/o children 11-13 y/o children 14-16 y/o adolescents 17-18 y/o adolescents

Source: self-elaboration

This qualitative stage sought to describe the parenting and discipline practices used by significant adults within their relationships with children. At the same time, the beliefs, principles and argumentative structures developed around the different types of parenting practices established in the family context were investigated. The diversity of the groups interviewed allowed to have an approximation of the continuities and discontinuities of cultural habits structured between different social and generational sectors. The interviews and focus groups carried out with children and adolescents provided a comparative view of the type of practices and relationships established between adults and children within the processes of daily parenting and family relationships. In turn, the results obtained in this stage allowed to design the quantitative instrument used in the following stage.

The second stage of this research was quantitative. An instrument created using the results of the qualitative stage was applied. This instrument investigated the perceptions that children develop regarding their experiences in the parenting processes and the relationships that they establish with adults in daily family life. The instrument was designed considering the main parenting practices and the significant topics identified as part of the qualitative research stage. The qualitative information provided in the first stage allowed to create an instrument adjusted to the practices indicated as recurrent and, consequently, recognized, normalized, and justified, as necessary in some cases for disciplinary processes.

The universe of this research corresponds to Chilean students at Key Stage 3 enrolled in public, state, and 'government and private-run' schools in *Región de Antofagasta*, *Región Metropolitana de Santiago*, *Región de Valparaíso*, *Región del Bío Bío* and *Región de La Araucanía*. The framework used is the 2016 Directory of Educational Establishments developed by the Chilean Ministry of Education.

The sampling design used is the simple random method with replacement of Key Stage 3 students in schools in the five regions indicated. The type of application was fielded and performed by two interviewers using a questionnaire from a paper survey. One of the interviewers gave the instructions and both answered the questions asked by the students.

The questionnaires were answered between **October 13, 2017** and **April 6, 2018**, resulting in a sample of **2,456 children**. This sample includes Key Stage 3 students of all types of schools in all the regions mentioned with a **±5 percentage points of margin of error** and a **95% of trust level**.



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## Research Structure

This research has been organized by presenting, in first place, a discussion of the socio-cultural impact that the Convention has had demanding the modification of cultural and social structures that have been in the same place for decades. Particularly, it addresses the new childhood paradigm proposed by this international treaty. To accept that children have rights and are social actors within the community continues generating discomfort in the 'adult world', due to the demands for change established regarding the connection with society that boys and girls have.

In the second chapter, there is a general description of the structure and composition of the families of the surveyed children. The results show that children perceive that their family dynamics are organized around the role their mothers play. This allows us to sustain, as a result of the research, a strong hypothesis regarding the centrality of the maternal figure and the absence of parents in the life of Chilean families and the parenting processes.

The third chapter is about the core of this research, which is the specific parenting practices that adults carry out through different parenting styles. To achieve this, the concept of 'complex of discipline' was developed, which is a system that incorporates, in a diffuse and ambivalent way, types of parenting based on tenderness and affection with others associated with punishment and the use of violence. In addition, five parenting styles created from 3 dimensions that were significant in the analysis are described. These are physical violence, tenderness practices, and recognition of children as subjects of rights.

The fourth chapter talks about the children progressive participation and autonomy, under the assumption that the parenting styles that are sought to be promoted should encourage their autonomy. Under this context, a household 'margin of decision' index is developed, which shows different levels at which children can decide on everyday matters in which they are involved.

The last chapter presents the research's main conclusions and recommendations, under the perspective of strengthening measures and policies that promote relationships of respect, and protection and promotion of the rights of the children.

## The convention and constitution of children as individuals: cultural changes that trouble adulthood

During the last decade of the 20th century there was a deep and dynamic process of acknowledgment and protection of the rights of the children (Cillero, 1997). The highest expression of this process was the endorsement of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989 by the United Nations. Chile ratifies this instrument in August 1990. The CRC represents the consensus of mankind's different cultures and legal systems regarding essential aspects like children's relationship with their families, parents' responsibilities, and government obligations concerning childhood (Pilotti, 2001).

This consensus have not been free of polemic and difficulties, because the changes promoted by the CRC, particularly the new legal and social perception about childhood, not only impacts at a legislative level, but also at cultural, political, and institutional levels. In fact, the incorporation of the principles of the convention, the concept of integrality, and the promotion of a paradigm change in the childhood conception imply political and legislative modifications that force to see children and teenagers 'in the centre of the scenario as subjects of rights, converting their protection priority into a political and programmatic one' (Morlachetti, 2013:11). At the same time, they demand a substantial transformation of the design and implementation of institutional programs, policies, and practices, as well as a change in the relationships adults establish with children in daily life.

At socio-cultural level, the Convention promotes a paradigmatic shift in the way adults should interact with children in the different environments and fields where they live and grow up. This change particularly jeopardizes the historically predominant cultural conceptions regarding the way in which the adult world perceives and treats children. Indeed, one of the main social and cultural changes promoted by the CRC aims to modify the concept of children seen as objects to control and protect, or as property of their parents, from being seen as a familiar 'private issue' to become a social issue, which means a 'public issue' (Sauri, 2011).

This research analysed the imaginaries that parents and caregivers have developed about childhood, because they are part of a primary benchmarking framework from which we got a set of expectations regarding children's behaviour, well-being, and development, as well as guidelines regarding the parenting and/or education type that should be provided.

The results of the qualitative research allow us to uphold that the imaginaries that adults have historically internalized about childhood dramatically changes as a result of the mismatch noticed between the idealized imaginary they have and the 'real' experiences and perceptions they have about children.

The specialized literature has emphasized that modern families have undergone profound changes in its composition, relationships and dynamics. The parents were reared under an authoritarian parenting model in which they had a passive and obedient role characterized by submission and dependency. Nowadays, these styles face various types of controversies and doubts, which have demanded a new update and significance process, which is a phenomenon that has been called relational fracture. This fracture is also an evidence of the changes that the representations and ideals developed regarding childhood had experienced. In this regard, the expectations of many parents still are that their children were well behaved. Although at certain social classes, mostly the middle and upper-middle ones, independence is something which starts to be valued and 'children are recognized as people with their own individuality and characteristics, and no longer as small extensions of their parents' (Salazar, 2006: 77).



As a result of the previous fact, many adults who took part in this research analyzed and evaluated modern childhood - its preferences, practices and relationships - on the basis of **comparative and/or normative criteria, which determined contradictions about their idealized imaginaries or in the expected type of childhood<sup>4</sup>**, which tends to be seen as a critical and negative approach of the current children's social experiences.

Most of the **middle-low and low social class adults have an idealized** - or essentialist - view of the childhood. This expected view is fractured when it is compared with the 'real' childhood that face certain groups of marginalized children who live in environments where their rights are violated. This cultural category of 'ideal childhood' determines the points of view and expectations that adults have regarding the child they hope to raise. The distinctive concepts that form the semantic field of the ideal childhood are **innocence, naivety and defenselessness, games, and enjoyment**.

This idealized idea creates a decontextualized version of childhood that uses purity as a resource to validate an argument that justifies the protector or guardian role which would correspond to the adult world. This cultural model of childhood explains, and consequently makes possible, a conception that invalidates and disables the quality of children as subjects of rights.



*'Well, I think that bein' a child is like having almost no responsibilities, the only duty they have is to study and then play, have fun, make friends, that is what I suppose is a kid's life, I think' (Man, 33 years old, County of Cerro Navia).*

*'It's complicated bein' a child because our vision is like we always see'em not as people but as items that belong to us, so we make the decisions for them, many times we do not listen'em. Perhaps it's also because we love'em, we overprotect'em. So... it's difficult, we see'em as helpless human beings - they're defenseless - but more than they normally are' (Woman, 44 years old, Cerro Navia).*

4 - Idealized and/or expected childhood is a socio-cultural construction that remains, and it occurs as a consequence of our own childhood memories, or as a result of the acceptance and authentication of historical and normative cultural patterns.



This idealized childhood faces the different ways in which children live in modern society. In the evaluation carried out by the interviewed adults, the **'real children' are violent, aggressive, and/or evil**, which means that they are not innocent and naive as they expected. This picture is built as a warning about the risks that must be faced in the parenting processes and provides guidance on the role the parents have as responsible for the discipline of their children. The main factors involved in this 'loss of innocence' process are the technology's centrality in children's lives, which not only gives them greater independence when accessing information, but also it is seen as the cause of the change in children's mentality as a result of the exposure to inadequate information or other types of risks.

Based on this, children lost their innocence as a result of a set of complex socio-ecological factors: violent and dangerous environments, alongside issues such as alcoholism, and drug addiction. This and other types of factors hasten children's crucial life experiences and expose them to risks and vulnerabilities. These daily environmental situations explain some of the strategies and measures adopted by parents within the framework of the formative and disciplinary processes of their children.

To put it simple, the parents' challenge (or wish) is that their sons and daughters do not become 'evil' children.

*'Look, it's complicated here, it's very hard to be a kid in these places, in the County of Cerro Navia, as in the County of La Pintana, it's hard to be a kid, y'know? It's because the level of violence that exists toward them and the swear words. So, I don't know what limits people put, or what coexistence rules they have because I see they're little kids with tremendous responsibilities' (Woman, 44 years old, County of Cerro Navia).*

The previous elaborations have clear practical implications on the condition of the subject of rights and the freedom that lower-middle and lower social class adults give (or not) to children. In fact, both points of view, affirmative or negative, place children in clearly delimited environments and action fields: games, school, and home. Along with this, they reinforce the vision of treating children as passive and impressionable beings, because they belong to their parents.

In the case of **the upper-middle social class adults, their imaginaries show a childhood adapted to modern society**, as a result of the changes that have taken place in the last decades. This means that their conceptions are elaborated from the current children's lives. Within this framework, they based their imaginaries first on children's autonomy and, then, on the negative version of the first one: the tyrant child.

**Autonomous and empowered childhood** is situated within the digital culture environment. That autonomy is elaborated comparatively, to emphasize that today's children are 'more conscious', they have a greater understanding and capacity than adults to survive in this new IT world. Within the framework of this vision, an imaginary of a child exposed to violations is also present. Therefore, protection and care must be provided to develop the autonomous and empowered childhood properly.

Additionally, **the tyrant child** can be understood as an overflow of the children's empowerment and progressive individualization processes, and the ambivalence that it causes in adults. Tyrannical childhood is created as a result of a multimedia and digitalized society, which influences a hyperactive and over-stimulated child, who lives on the basis of immediacy and deals with stressful situations. This phenomenon is compounded by the low presence of significant adults in the growing up process.

*'I see this generation of children very empowered; they know perfectly that you can't hit them. Something that my generation did not know. No one wasn't aware of it, but they are very empowered because they know perfectly what they want' (Woman, 39 years old, County of Vitacura).*

*'First, children live as they are, I believe that children deal with a lot of stress nowadays; second, they are very motivated; and third, I believe that many children grew up alone, raised by people who are not members of their family' (Woman, 37 years old, County of Las Condes).*



In the framework of both imaginaries, and in their thin separation line, significant adults gave ambivalent responses: while they value the raising of a child who is more autonomous and more empowered regarding his/her tastes and needs, and therefore, able of making his/her own decision. The difficulties that this type of childhood entails for the bonds with their parental authorities are observed. The development of these abilities signifies a certain symmetrisation of the relationships between adults and children, which become into new requirements of the parenting models.

Beyond the ambivalences generated by the diffuse frontier between autonomy-empowerment and tyranny, it is possible to recognize that middle social class adults value and assume autonomy as one of the normative criteria to carry out the parenting and formative processes. In short, this is a trait that should be encouraged in order to enhance the children's personal abilities, and particularly their development of freedom. Along with autonomy, the idea of a responsible and happy child is also considered as part of the parenting goals.

To sum up, adults analyse and evaluate modern childhood - their preferences, practices and relationships - on the basis of comparative and/or normative criteria, which determine breaks in the idealized imaginaries or in the desired type of childhood - built on the basis of the recalled childhood experience - which tends to be seen as a critical and negative assessment of the social experience that children have nowadays. On this matter, the imaginaries developed about childhood reveal a common thought structure: **the elaboration of polarized views** which have clear positive and negative poles: **good child versus bad child, autonomous child versus tyrant child.**



The specific content of these views is what changes in both groups. On one hand, lower and lower-middle social classes have an idealized vision of childhood, and the break of this imaginary is the result of the effects of the environments and social conditions in which children live. The bad child is not an abstract category, but a consequence of children's type of life. On the other hand, upper-middle social class parents and grandparents develop a childhood concept socially and historically based on the present, and the break of this imaginary is the result of a 'deviation' of the type of child they expect to raise.

Under this research's perspective, these polarities of the descriptions, and the arguments they are based on, it can be possible to determine a series of negative consequences and risks that parenting processes should advise and foresee. This type of content is also integrated as criteria to guide the children's parenting and discipline. Consequently, the relevance of these imaginaries - and their breaks - is what determines a series of orientations regarding the type of guidelines adults should follow in their relationships with children, and the parenting processes they carry out. It is a set of strategies and instructions that integrate right/wrong, adequate/inadequate, useful/useless, and effective/ineffective notions in children's raising.



# 2

## Discipline and Affectivity: The Mother's Figure Centrality and the Father's Absence



Despite the transformations that have occurred during the last decades, the family remains as a main part of our culture and social organization (Valdivia, 2007, Scagliotti and Palacios, 2013). According to the CRC, the family is the society's fundamental group and a natural environment which allows the development process and well-being of all its members. At the same time, the family is a primordial element for people's social, cognitive, and emotional development, not only for children, but also for parents.

Traditionally, the social roles the family must fulfil are (Scagliotti and Palacios, 2013): **a) economic role**, it must earn money to satisfy its member's basic needs; **b) social or formative role**, it must be teach values, norms, behaviours, social skills, cultural patterns, and knowledge (Berk, 2004, Aluja del Barrio and García, 2007) which allow children to become part of the society; and **c) affective role**, it means to establish affective bonds, attachment, and emotional commitment (Scagliotti and Palacios, 2013: 80). In this area, the tasks of establishing **safe attachment and an affective, effective, and empathetic communication stand out along with taking care of the children emotional needs, and embrace, restore, and encourage their autonomy.**

Modern family systems allow a great variability in functional arrangements as a result of changes in their composition, structure, dynamics and roles (Gimeno, 2007)<sup>5</sup>. However, beliefs and attributions regarding the functions and roles that must be fulfilled or assumed by its members persist in the social and cultural imaginary, particularly the ones regarding domestic tasks, care, parenting and education. From the point of view of cultural analysis, it can be argued that gender stereotypes that determine fixed roles for women and men in the parenting and socialization processes persist, because people is still assigning fathers the provider's role, while mothers have to fulfil the role of daily care of the children (Salazar, 2006)<sup>6</sup>.

However, recent researches warn that, in the context of the alternatives offered by the public policies, the market, and the different transformation processes that modern society experiences, the processes of the modification of the roles that men and women play or assume in the parenting and socialization processes are intensifying (Salazar, 2006, Ullmann et. Al, 2014). In other words, the ways of being parents, and the concepts and roles related to them, are currently in dispute as a result of major transformations that have created 'motherhood and fatherhood alternative meanings, which coexist with the persistence of the traditional models' (Salazar, 2006: 42). The result that seems to introduce these transformations is that women are starting to be responsible for the children's discipline in a preponderant way, which means that it is not a task exclusively performed by men.

5 - In Latin America's case, the families configuration has undergone important changes due to phenomena such as an increase of the amount of women who have jobs, the demographic dynamics, an increase of single mothers, informal cohabitation, and changes in maternity patterns, among others (Ullmann et. al, 2014).

6 - This can be clearly seen in the report developed by the *Universidad Diego Portales* (2015) about families that belong to the protection network of the Chilean's National Service for the Minor (SENAME, by its acronym in Spanish). The research's results describe these family models as 'patriarchal', since it is observed that women are ruled by men. Patriarchal families create and replicate hierarchical and conventional gender roles, designating men the provider's role, and giving them privileges and power positions, while women and children must fulfil domestic duties and obligations (Therborn, 2004). It should be noted that this type of family does not exist exclusively in this group. The evidence shows firmly that this is Chile's predominant family model, even in the upper social class (Universidad Diego Portales, 2015).

Within the framework of these debates, one of this research's objectives is to determine positions and roles designated to significant adults in the parenting process, based on the perceptions and assessments made by children. To achieve this objective, one of the qualitative instruments was a group of questions aimed to identify the significant adult responsible for children's discipline, and the one who plays a fostering role when children were sad or had some kind of problem. The results show that the maternal figure is crucial to children's lives, as a structural perspective, because in all households there is a mother, and as well as the perspective of the roles she plays at home and in the relationship she establishes with her children.

From the obtained results, the study allows us to observe that the emotional containment role is mainly played by the maternal figure, which is also responsible of the discipline of her children. These roles are designated regardless the family composition, so it cannot be a result related to single-mothered households. However, it implies that the paternal figure is in a withdrawal situation or position from the point of view of children discipline<sup>7</sup>, as well as from his potential affective role<sup>7</sup>. Within this framework, this chapter studies the home's composition, the roles played by mothers, fathers and significant adults in the families, and the relevance of the different identified settings.

7 - In this research's framework, it is not possible to analyse the factors that take part on the activities or changes that Chilean families are adopting regarding the children's care, education, disciplinary, and affection processes. However, it is possible to appreciate that, depending on the roles played by the significant adults, various parenting methods are configured in the surveyed children's homes. However, that is a fact that will be explained in another chapter.

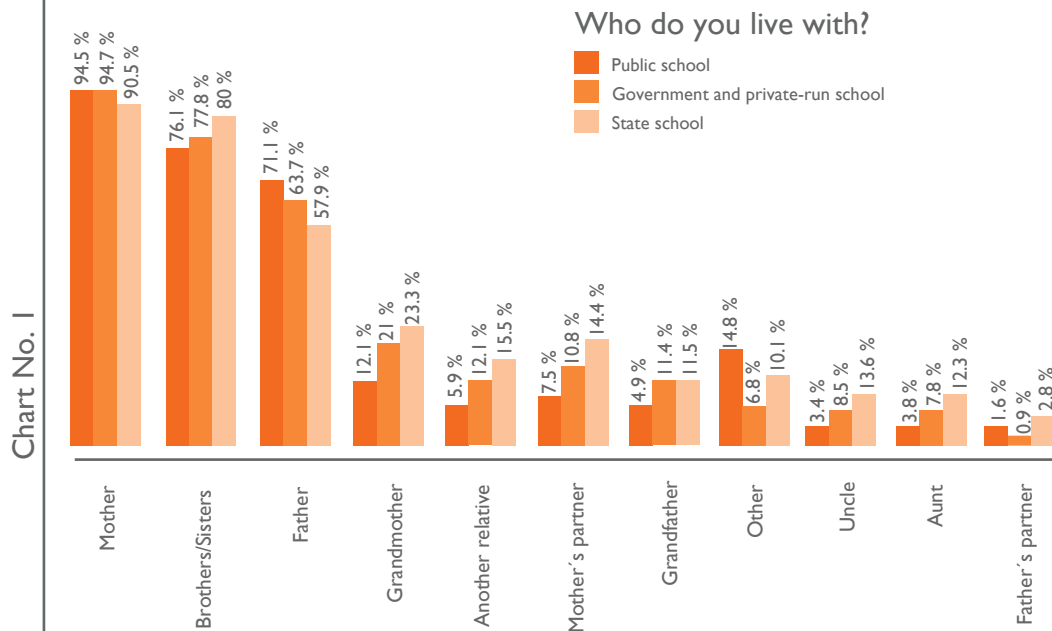




# Household composition

In 92.8% of the surveyed children households, the mother is present, compared to 62.7% in which the father plays his role.

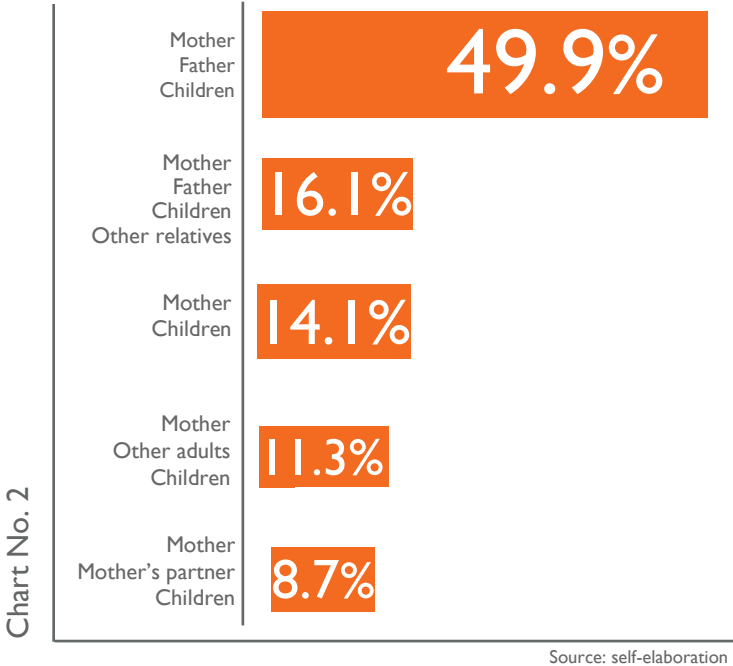
The Chart No. 1 shows the types of relatives living with children according to the type of school they attend. As it can be seen, in the case of the children from state schools, their parent's presence is lower compared to the situation of the other two types of Chilean schools. Grandmother has a greater presence in the homes of the children from state schools.



Source: self-elaboration

Most of the household composition of the surveyed children is mother, father, and children (49.9%), which is the traditional family model. Only 14.1% of the household composition of the surveyed children was exclusively mother and children, which means single-mother households.

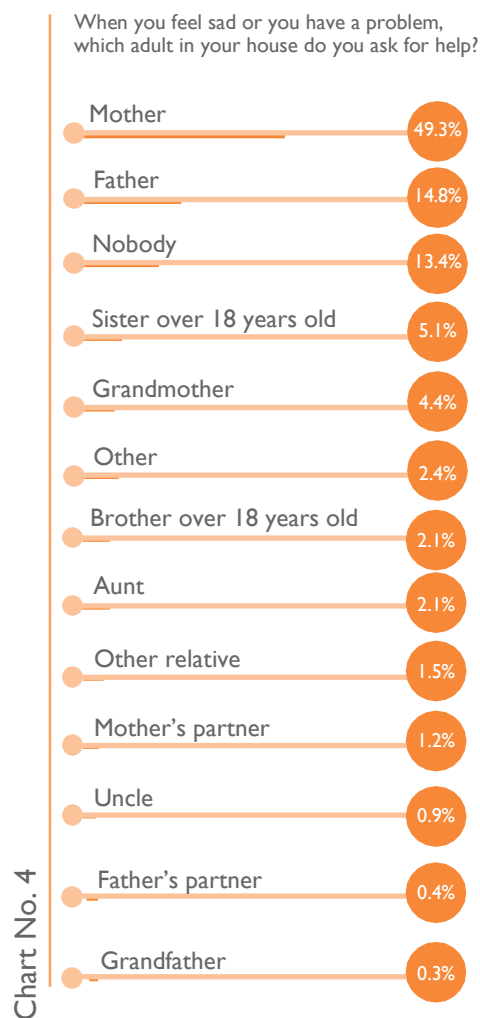
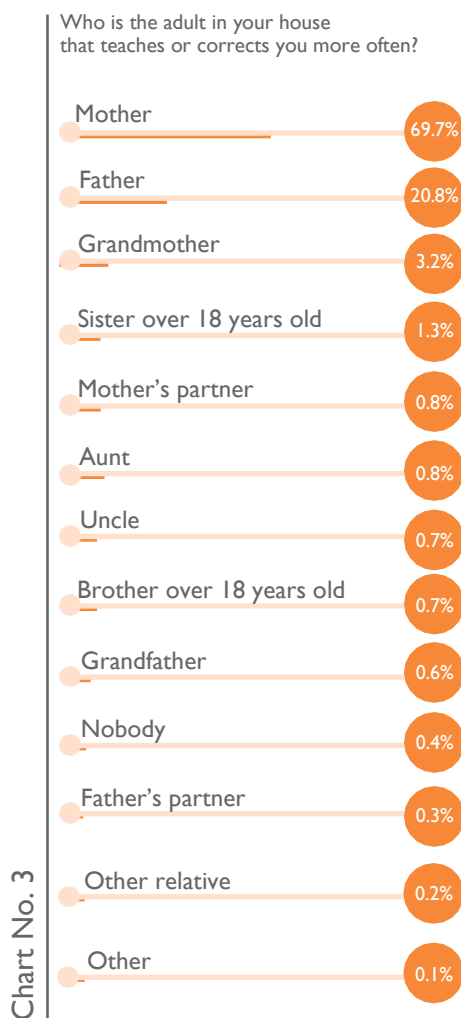
Household composition



In the case of the public schools, the percentage of children living with their parents in the house increased to 63.2%, as compared to 49.6% for government and private-run schools, and 43.4% for state schools. In the case of children from public schools, 18.8% said that they live with their parents, brothers/sisters, and other relatives, which is known as the extended family model.

The household composition does not determine the way in which the relationships between its members are established and the role played by each one of them in the family dynamics. In order to establish the parents role in children's lives, they were asked to talk about the significant adults who teach or correct them when they not fulfill their duties or behave badly, and the functions of giving emotional support when they had a problem or felt sad. As can be seen in Charts No. 3 and No. 4, the mother figure plays both roles at very high percentages. In the first case, 69.7% of the surveyed children reported that it is his/her mother who corrected and taught them, compared to 20.8% who told that it is his/her father.

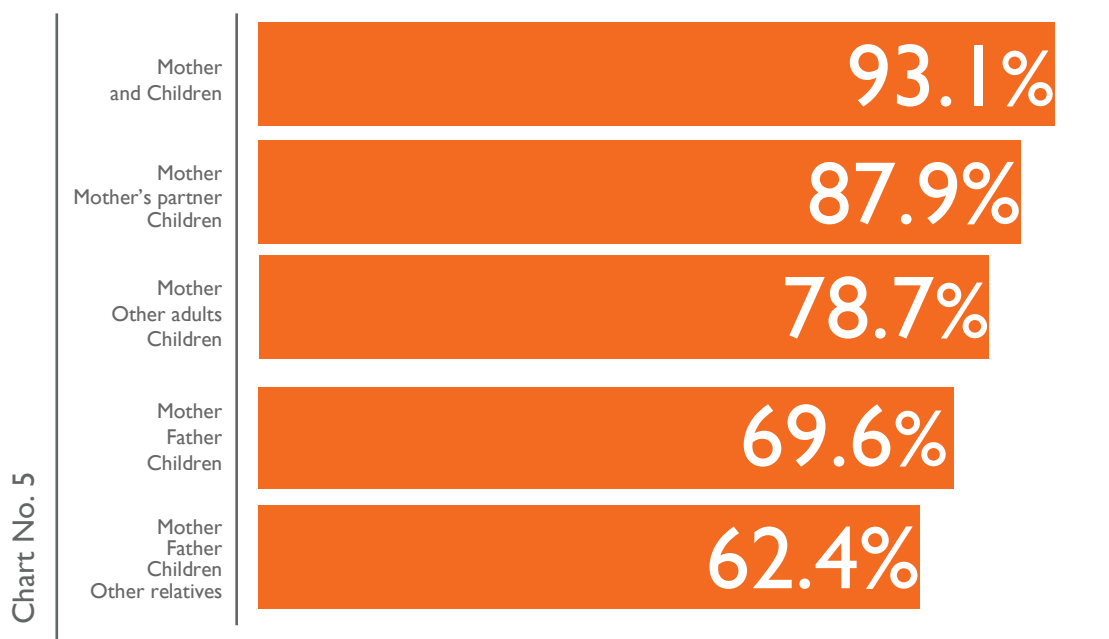
On the contrary, in the case of the significant adult who gives them emotional support, 49.3% of the surveyed children reported that it is his/her mother. It should be noted that, in this case, the father figure role reduced its participation to 14.8%, and it is not present in the 13.4% of the cases. A more specific analysis shows that in the case of the children from state schools, 45.6% of the surveyed children reported that their mother gives them emotional support, compared to 14.2% of fathers, and 15.7% of nobody performing that task. This means that 15 out of every 100 children do not have a significant adult to ask for help when they feel sad or have problems.



Source: self-elaboration

Chart No. 5 shows that mother figure is crucial regarding the role of correction in each one of the surveyed children's household types. By the way, there are substantive differences between the case of only mother and children families and parents, children, and other relatives families. In the first one 93.1% reported that the mother is the one who corrects, as in the second one only 62.4% of surveyed children reported that the mother plays a role of correction.

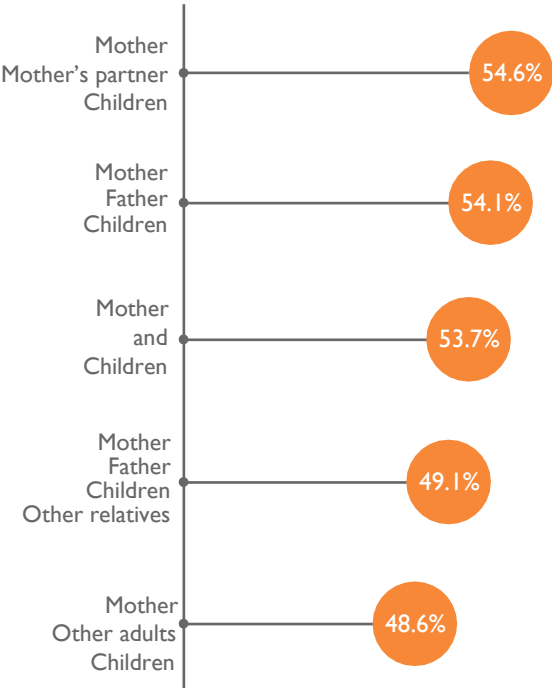
### Significant adult who teaches or corrects regarding the composition of the family



Source: self-elaboration

Additionally, Chart No. 6 shows that the mother's role decreases its importance when it comes to the role of emotional support and its relative centrality changes according to the household composition. It is worth noting that the role of emotional support is played in 54.6% of those families made up of a mother, her partner, and her children, while in the reality of families made up only of a mother and her children, this role is played in 53.7% of the cases. Finally, it decreases when there are other adults living with the families.

Significant adult of your family who gives you emotional support



Source: self-elaboration

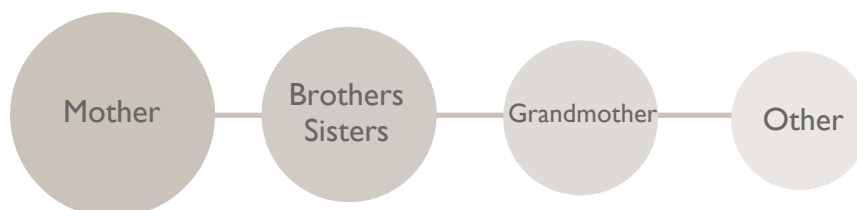
As it can be observed, the mother figure acquires a strategic centrality in the discipline and the role of emotional support. This is corroborated by the results of the survey regarding children's perceptions of the head of household, and of those who spend more time with them every day. This can be seen in figures No. 1 and No. 2. It is worth mentioning that in figure 2, the father is not one of the family members who spends time with children. The relatives that play that role are brothers, sisters, and grandparents.

Figure 1:  
Who makes the decisions in the house?



Source: self-elaboration

Figure 2:  
Who is the person that spends more time with you?<sup>8</sup>



Source: self-elaboration

8 - Researches developed in the last decade show that women's integration in labour market has decreased the time mothers spend with their children. The time they invest in their work does not mean they spend more time taking care of their children (Valenzuela and Herrera, 2006). In these cases, other people tend to take care of the children: grandparents and maids in upper and upper-middle social classes.







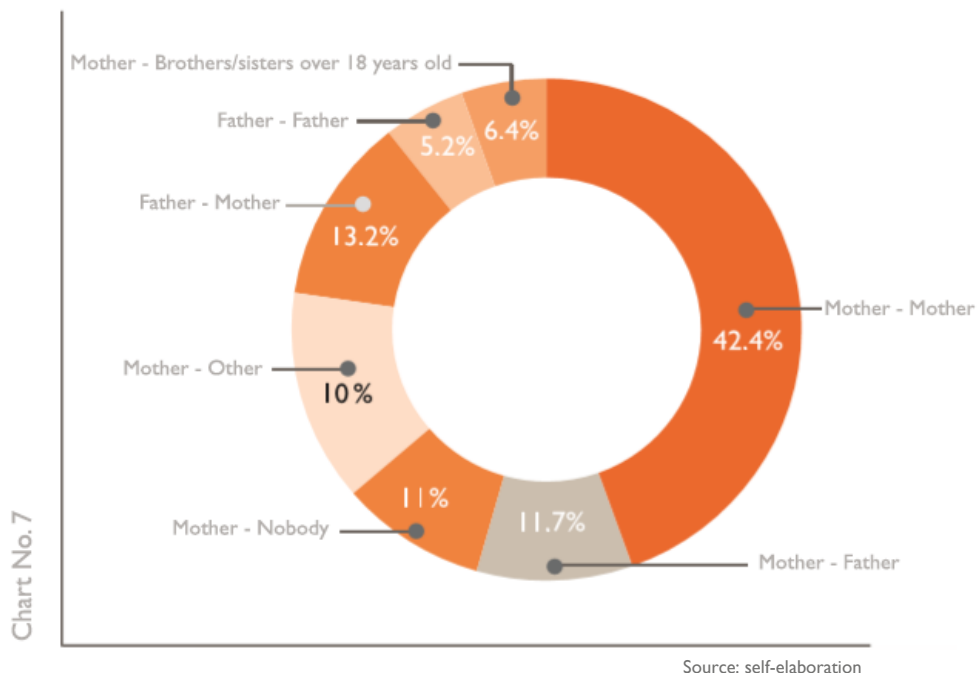
These results coincide with comparative researches that reported that the woman is the core of the families, especially in the ones in which she is the head of the household. This phenomenon is known as **matrifocality** (Smith, 1996). According to the results of Chile's 2007 Bicentennial Survey, the changes in the country's parenting model imply a weakening of the authority or control that parents have over their children. This conclusion is based on the fact that '53% of fathers reported that both parents often discipline their children at home; 25% reported that is only the father; 18% that is only the mother; and barely 4% reported that none of them do it' (Herrera, 2008: 11). According to the author, this does not mean that the parents do not discipline their children, but that its former primacy is increasing the adaptability, in order to share this task with the mother. In other cases, it is the mother who has begun to play this role in a preponderant way<sup>9</sup>.

9 - This is the case of younger people (between 18 and 34 years old), where the mother is the one who applies discipline at home, her primacy 'is above sharing this task and well above the father's primacy. However, among those over 65, it was the father who mainly applied discipline and the mother's primacy was below sharing the task' (Herrera, 2008: 11).

## The mother-mother model's primacy:

### the parenting dual role

Based on these results, the research analyses the relative impact the mother-mother model<sup>10</sup> has on the whole sample. This is done by determining the children percentage who reported that their mother played the parenting dual role: to care, give emotional support, and apply discipline. As can be seen in Chart No. 7, 42.4% of surveyed children reported that the mother figure plays both roles. Further back, 13.2% of the surveyed children said that their father applies discipline, while their mother gave them emotional support. The mother disciplines / father gives emotional support model applies to 11.7% of the sample, while 11% of the surveyed children reported that the mother applies discipline, and nobody gives them emotional support.



10 - It should be noted that it is not possible to establish clear patterns in the traits of women who make up the different configurations identified.

Chart No. 8 shows the mother's centrality in her role of authority in each of the developed configurations based on the analysis of the dual role. Consistently, her centrality is clearly observed in all the configurations except for those in which the father applies discipline.

Significant adult who teaches or corrects

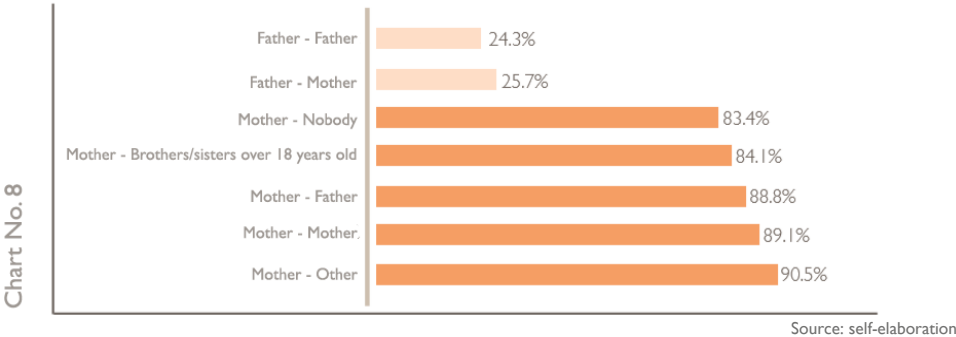


Chart No. 9 shows that the mother in her role as hostess or emotional supporter is relevant only in the configurations in which she assumes the dual role or in the case of the configuration in which the father applies discipline.

Significant adult who gives you emotional support

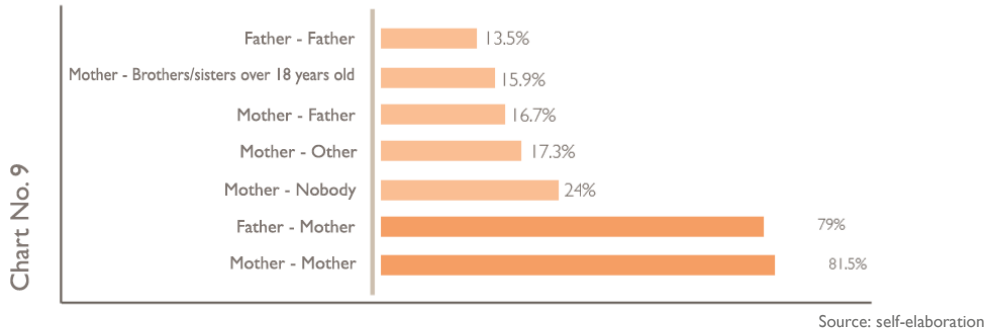


Table 2 shows that parenting models are configured independently of the types of families, because each of the configurations can be identified in the different household compositions. The mother-mother model importance can be seen in each of the different types of family. It has a greater impact in the case of families made up of a mother, and her children; and the ones comprises of a mother, her partner, and her children. This model loses importance in households made up of parents, their children, and other relatives (extended model), which can be caused by the role played by other significant adults regarding emotional support. At the same time, this is consistent with the mother-other model, because it is mainly applied in families made up of a mother and other adult.

Table 2

Formative-affective dyad

	Mother and Children	Mother - Father Children	Mother - Mother's partner Children	Mother Other adults Children	Mother - Father Children Other relatives
Mother - Mother	46.9%	43.2%	51.6%	45.3%	34.4%
Mother - Father	9.9%	13.7%	3.2%	6.8%	15.2%
Mother - Nobody	15.6%	9.6%	12.9%	10.9%	8.9%
Mother - Other	13.7%	5.9%	17.4%	19.8%	8.2%
Father - Mother	3.8%	16.2%	7.7%	8.9%	19.1%
Father - Father	2.7%	5.4%	1.9%	1.6%	6.%
Mother - Brothers/sisters over 18 years old	7.3%	5.8%	5.2%	6.8%	8.2%

Source: self-elaboration

Source: self-elaboration



Similarly, it is interesting to note that the role of emotional support played by parents acquires greater importance in the case of nuclear and extended family models.

At the same time, the mother-nobody model, which means that the mother plays the disciplinary role and no significant adult gives children emotional support, prevails in single-mother homes and families made up of a mother, her couple, and her children. Finally, it should be noted that the traditional father-mother model has a greater importance in nuclear and extended families.

Lastly, it is important to specify that, despite the changes and progress made in the last decades, particularly the ones regarding the rising women's incorporation into the labour market, cultural gender patterns not only persist in their traditional parenting roles assignment, but also adopting new expectations, roles and tasks into women's duties at home and in the parenting processes. A preponderant role to the discipline they must apply is added to the double and triple domestic responsibility (paid work/household management). The hypothesis that can be suggested in this research is that this situation reacts to a long-term cultural model that, in the current changes' framework, reinforces the female/mother figure centrality in the domestic/family environment, which produces a withdrawal of the fathers.

# 3

## Parenting Styles and Practices: The Complicated Discipline

The strategies and guidelines used by adults in their children parenting processes integrate notions of what is right/wrong, useful/useless, and effective/ineffective, as well as what is socially and morally appropriate/inappropriate and legal/illegal. The configurations of these categories are diffuse in many cases, so that they are often overflowed and persistently transgressed in daily life. Because of this, it is not possible to separate affective patterns from ways of punishment when the parenting practices and processes that adults carry out with their children are analysed.

This research qualitative and quantitative data analysis allowed us to describe the different parenting practices within the framework of something that can be called **disciplinary complex**. This can be understood as **a system that gathers parenting styles based on tenderness and affection with other ones based on punishment and the use of violence in diffuse and ambivalent ways**. In this way, it is supported by a structure that integrates affective patterns and punishing modalities that work making each other possible, even when they are contradictory<sup>11</sup>.

The affective patterns respond to a good parenting morality that appeals to the comprehension skills of the children, it gives adults the point of view of breaking the past and its cultural tradition. It prevents them from committing morally sanctioned practices, which reinforces children's well-being and their growing up process. Good parenting is exposed to be threatened by punishing modalities, and therefore it is reinforced as the right parenting through a group of mechanisms and guidelines aimed to preserve them over time, eliminate them, or use them as a symbolic threat. Its effectiveness is tested to the extent that it only remains as a threat. Due to this complex characteristic, the imprecision of the limits that separate affective behaviours from punishment is difficult to determine.

Within this framework, adults make a clear distinction between discipline and punishment. While discipline is part of the formative process, punishment is the resource used when limits are exceeded. Discipline means the rules and routines that help children to develop specific characteristics that they will need to use in the future.<sup>12</sup> It also determines the expectations that adults have of children's everyday behaviour. Applying discipline is different from punishing children, because this is a necessary measure in case they do not follow the rules imposed by adults. For this reason, adults reported that communication should be the main resource to apply discipline properly, since punishment is usually a resource that is considered as a 'last resort'.

11 - It is important not to ignore the fact that the disciplinary practices that compose this complex are based on a group of a) beliefs regarding what is right from a moral point of view, but also effective from a pragmatic perspective; b) expectations about the type of children their parents desire to raise; c) considerations of the risks and threats children face, and above all, d) moral criteria that determine what is appropriate to do, and e) justification repertoires that allow to develop arguments that justify or resolve polemics derived from practices that do not match the socially dominant moral criteria.

12 - For example, responsibility and the ability to discern what is right/wrong, which develops the process of moral development of the children.





*'Discipline... sure! because punishment is one thing and discipline another, discipline... I don't know... it's to teach him to act properly in front of others... to know how to behave, what to do and what not to do, and of course that's not the same as punishments... When they're not gonna obey the rules anymore, the discipline must be replaced by punishment. When I talk to them two or three times and they don't listen to me, when they see me angry, or holding a wooden spoon I scare'em, and then they say "mommy, please, no, we're gonna do it now..." Do you understand me? But of course, as I tell you, discipline and punishment are two different things, y'know' (Woman, 37 years old, County of La Pintana).*

The disciplinary complex cannot eliminate punishment as part of its characteristics. Punishment is used as a strategy in the formative process of the children. In other words, it is a good resource to support the process. It often works as a threat, but it becomes effective when limits are exceeded. Punishment can work properly if it integrates pain as an effective resource.

Regarding the previous fact, it is quite recurrent to punish children by taking away their favourite things or by restricting the activities they enjoy and that adults know children like. However, it can also include verbal, psychological, or physical abuse.

*'Punishment is like... um... it's like... it's like a threat, because if you do that I'm gonna do this to you, you understand? and discipline is not like that... Discipline is like teaching the kid not to do bad things or hitting another one, talking to him rather than taking something away from him, or locking him up in a place like his room, for example'.*

*'I think that since I don't like to hit them it's necessary to punish'em, if he did something that is not right he has to know that it's wrong, it's not enough to tell him "you can't do that", you have to punish him even if it hurts' (Women, 29 years old, County of Cerro Navia).*



The violence can be used as a last resort that parents and significant adults use to overcome the problems they face during children's parenting and disciplinary processes, despite the fact they say that they morally disapproved it regarding its use, because it is seen as a wrong practice<sup>13</sup>. Adults from different social classes reported that the use of violence is morally penalized, however, it is possible to establish that its use is not external to the surveyed people's experiences. Certain types of physical punishment are justified, and their effects do not only involve children.

It is not possible to understand the adults' elaborations and opinions about the use of violence without noticing that moral speeches affect the developed approaches. From this point of view, it is possible to notice that contemporary moral speech regulates the adults point of view by **placing them in a situation that oscillates between penalizing, recognizing, and/or justifying violence** against children in their formative and disciplinary processes. The physical abuse symbolic minimization allows to justify or legitimize some types of physical punishment, and to detect its use at specific times.

**Symbolic minimization** can be understood as an argumentative resource that oscillates between a definition that do not justifies neither uses violence against children, and the rejection, and acknowledgment of mild and innocuous verbal, emotional, or physical abuse. Symbolic minimization, as an argumentative resource, allows us to observe the ambivalences and difficulties faced by significant adults determining what exactly means total exclusion from any type of abuse and the acceptance of specific types of physical violence against children<sup>14</sup>.

13 - This may be the result of the changes gradually experienced by Chilean society regarding the status and the rights of the children and the impact of new social and legal frameworks that seek to regulate the relationships between adults and children. As the following quote points out: 'years ago, if we didn't arrive on time, our parents punished us, if they hit you, they hit you. But parents can't hit children now, because children have rights. It wasn't like that in the past, because if we already told our fathers a specific time to arrive home, we must arrive at that time or else they'd hit us. Sometimes it wasn't our fault to arrive late, but it doesn't happen today because kids tell mother the time they'll arrive and then do it about two, three hours later, and they aren't hit'. (Grandmother, 64 years old, County of Cerro Navia).

14 - It is important to understand that any developed argumentative structure must solve the socio-cultural orders that establish moral penalties regarding the use of violence. According to the statements made by the surveyed sample, the main arguments that support moral penalties are the following ones: a) a negative abuse assessment, b) the lack of a right to abuse by adults, c) the harmful effects abuse has on children, and d) the adults' moral responsibility regarding the use of violence.





## Violence against children on parenting

According to the WHO, child violence is defined as 'physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; children abandonment and negligent treatment; and their exploitation for commercial or other purposes' (2009: 7). The international debate insists on analysing and understanding the children abuse hidden aspects which are committed within the private life of the families. Its complexity is in the abuse nature and severity as well as in its effects, which extremely vary, they threaten the children survival chances, integral development, and dignity in situations regarding relationship of responsibility, trust, and power.

Violence against children within the family continues to be a widespread and accepted practice, and even until after a very short legal time despite the ratification made by the Convention in 1990 -due to the absence of explicit legal prohibitions. Until 2017, physical punishment was a legally and socially accepted type of abuse against children in Chile. It was not until 2017 that it a bill was approved that defines the crime of abuse as acts of physical violence that do not necessarily cause injuries, such as those that cause degrading treatment, humiliation, or loss of the victims dignity (Children's Council, 2017).

In its public discourse, child abuse is increasingly being condemned<sup>15</sup>. However, in daily life, mainly in family's privacy, physical abuse is much more common than it is publicly claimed to be (Salazar 2006, WHO 2009, ONA 2013, UNICEF 2015, ONA 2015). The work carried out by UNICEF (1994, 2000, 2006 and 2012) has allowed the country to have a longitudinal perspective about children abuse persistence and the use of violence in family environments.

As highlighted in specialised researches, a wide range of violence is accepted -and sometimes approved- in the family. Domestic violence is frequent 'because of the familiar bonds' strength (which often is a mix between love and hate) and intimacy of the family life' (Salazar, 2006:14). Many parents **justify** physical punishment in cases where **oral resources** have not been effective, so this abuse would correct and restore the adult's authority or the family's hierarchy.

Most violence against children at home involves disciplinary strategies which end in physical punishment, but also includes negligence or carelessness. They may include isolated situations or systematic carelessness given by significant adults regarding children's development and well-being in health, education, emotional development, nutrition, home, and safe living conditions. This type of practices is not directly related to a particular social class, because it is common in all of them (WHO, 2009). Violence against children occurs in different social, economic, and cultural environments, and cannot be established as a characteristic of a specific social class<sup>16</sup>.

Despite the previous fact, Gómez, Muñoz and Haz (2007) identify that 'structural' risk factors increase the possibilities of families to face adverse conditions and biopsychosocial vulnerability, they show a tendency to **progressive conflict and polemic dynamics** which lead to different forms of child abuse. According to Auyero and Berti (2013) **physical punishment** is the most widely used disciplinary strategy in Latin American slums. The family must deal with a greater poverty and unsafe environment, which highly increases risk factors and hazards levels that threaten the parenting process. There is evidence regarding the existence of a link between domestic and street abuse because significant adults use physical and psychological violence as a legitimate way to protect children and adolescents from other types of maltreatment<sup>17</sup>.

These tensions and ambivalences are the ones which show the results obtained from the quantitative instrument used in children from different states of the country. Research on children abuse has at least two dimensions of analysis. In the first place, violence that affects the children psycho-emotional life. In the case of this research, three variables have been considered in order to know the type of psycho-emotional experience that children live in their daily routines. According to the qualitative results, criticism and threats made by parents and significant adults determine the types of practices that negatively affect children self-esteem. On the contrary, children value positively when adults treat them as human beings, because that make children feel good about themselves. As seen in Table 3, criticism is the most frequent practice applied on children, because 16.1% of them reported that their parents always or almost always criticize them, and 8.3% of the children said that their mother or father never or hardly ever tell them positive things.

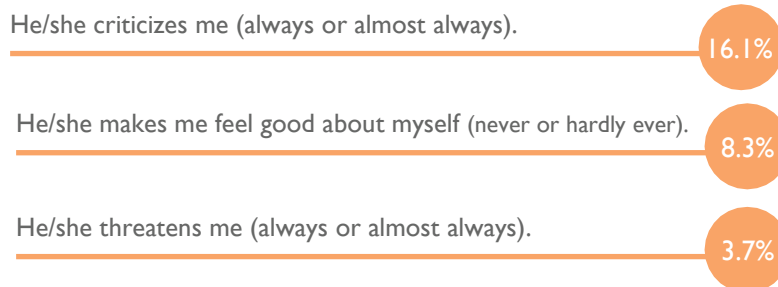
15 - As the research highlights, 'not all the people dare to admit to punish their children hitting them, neither through practices that were accepted in the past like slaps, strikes, or blows' (Salazar, 2006: 76).

16 - Physical abuse is a kind of abuse of power, which turns into a highly complex phenomenon which is a result of the acknowledgment of a dysfunction in the parent-child-environment-culture system.

17 - Due to parenting negligence, domestic violence, alcoholism, maternal depression, or hopelessness, it is true that some families live in a multi-problem life cycle, which consequently has a high impact on the child and family development (Calkins et al. 2007, Walker et al. 2007).

Table 3

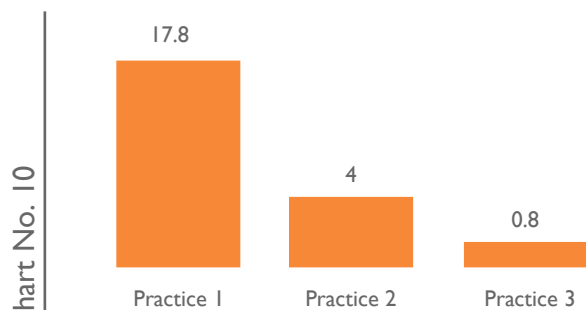
### Actions related to psychological abuse



Source: self-elaboration

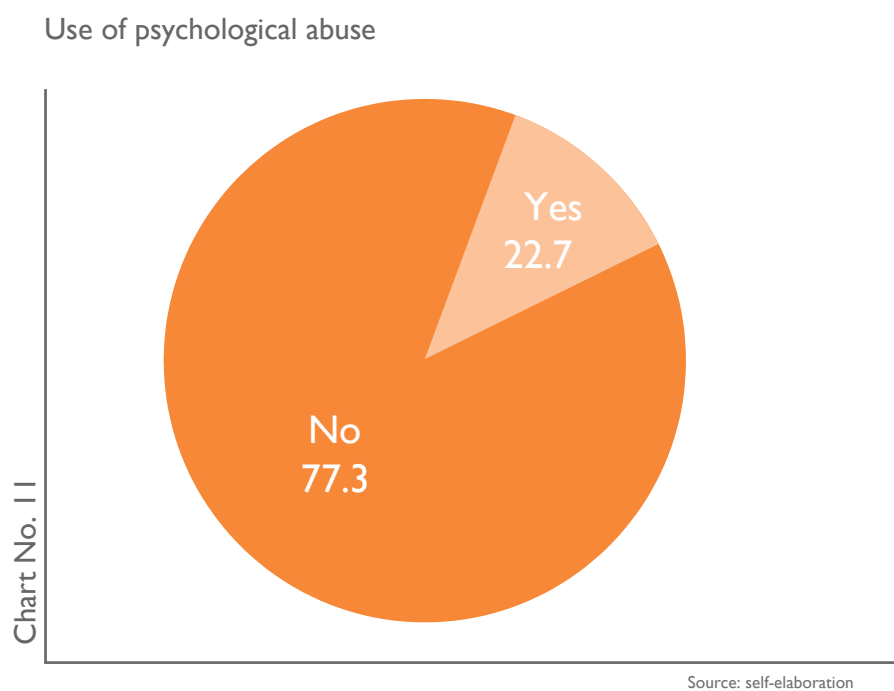
Chart No. 10 shows that 17.8% of the surveyed children suffer at least one of these psycho-emotional form of abuse in their daily lives, while 4% reported to experience only two out of three, and 0.8% all of them.

### Use of psychological abuse according the amount of practices



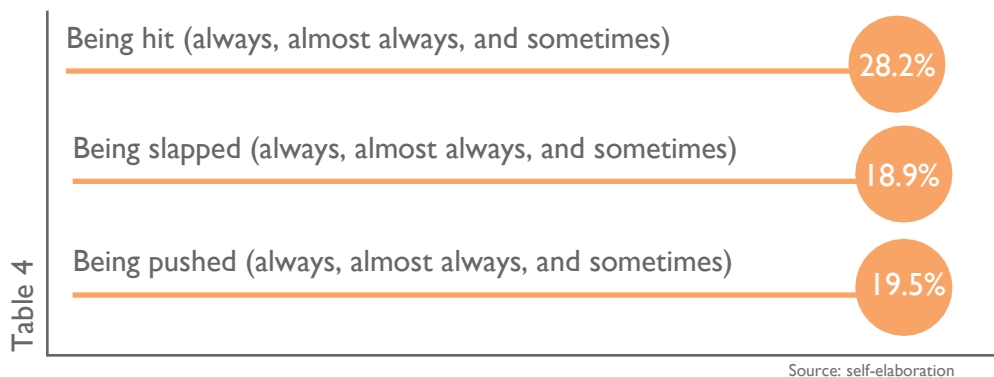
Source: self-elaboration

Chart No. 11 shows that 22.7% of the surveyed children have suffered abuse or psycho-emotional violence.



Secondly, the research investigated the violence that affects the children's bodily integrity<sup>18</sup>. In the case of this research, three variables have been considered in order to know the type of physical abuse children suffer in their daily lives: blow (being hit), slap, and push. As Table 4 shows, being hit is the most recurrent practice, because 28.2% of the surveyed children reported to be hit sometimes, almost always, or always. 19.5% reported that pushing is a practice they suffer sometimes, almost always, or always. While slapping is the practice reported by 18.9% of the surveyed children.

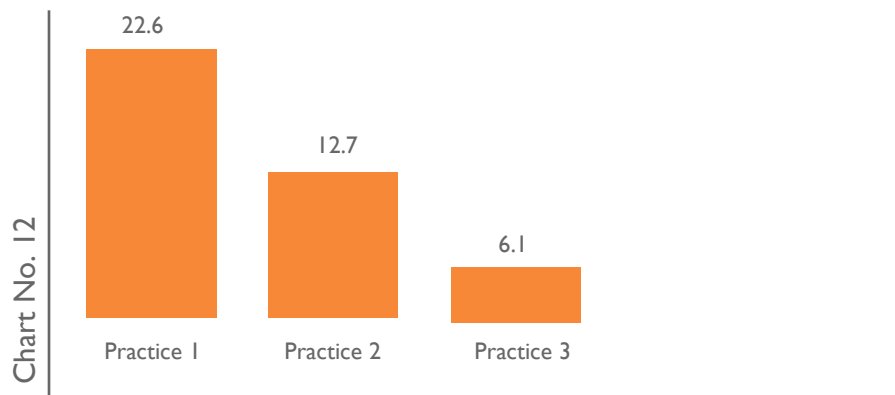
### Actions related to physical abuse



18 – 'Physical abuse against a human being is a way of contempt that damages the confidence learned by love, and the body's autonomous coordination capacity; therefore, its consequences are a kind of social shaming, and the loss of trust in oneself and the society that can be seen when somebody daily interacts with other people. As a result, that contempt takes away from the person the evident respect to that autonomous disposition over his/her own body that can only be acquired by the emotional dedication in socialization experiences; the achieved integration of the qualities of physical or emotional behaviour are broken from the outside and with that the basis of practical self-reference and self-esteem are destroyed' (Honneth, 1997: 161-162)

Chart No. 12 shows that 22.6% of the surveyed children suffer at least one of these physical types of abuse, while 12.7% reported to experience only two out of three, and 6.1% all of them.

### Use of physical abuse according the amount of practices

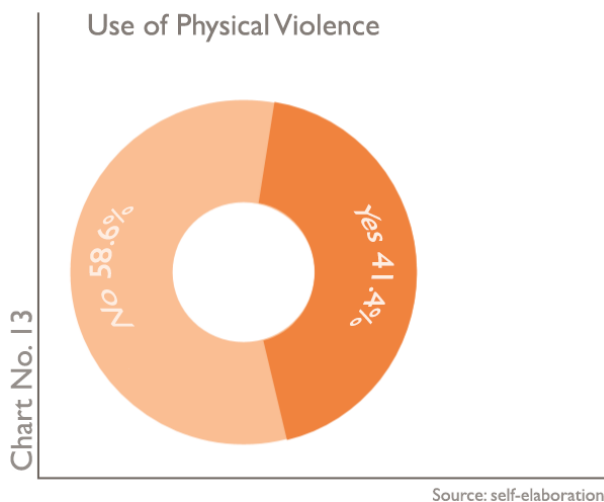


Source: self-elaboration





Chart No. 13 shows that 41.4% of the surveyed children have suffered some kind of abuse or physical violence in their relationships with their mothers, fathers, or significant adults.



Practically **1 out of 2** surveyed children has suffered some type of physical or psycho-emotional violence at their home, as it is indicated in Chart No. 14.

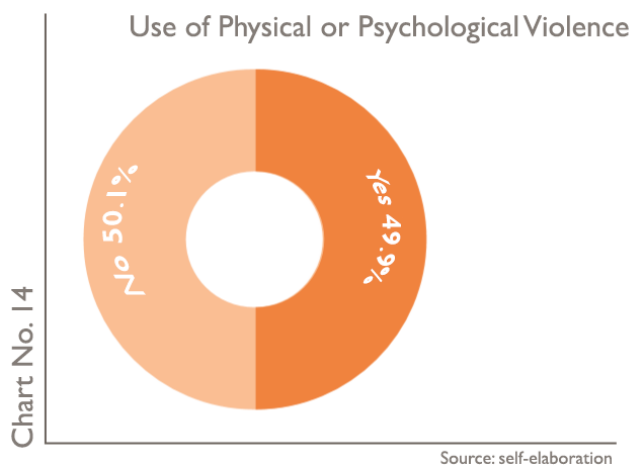
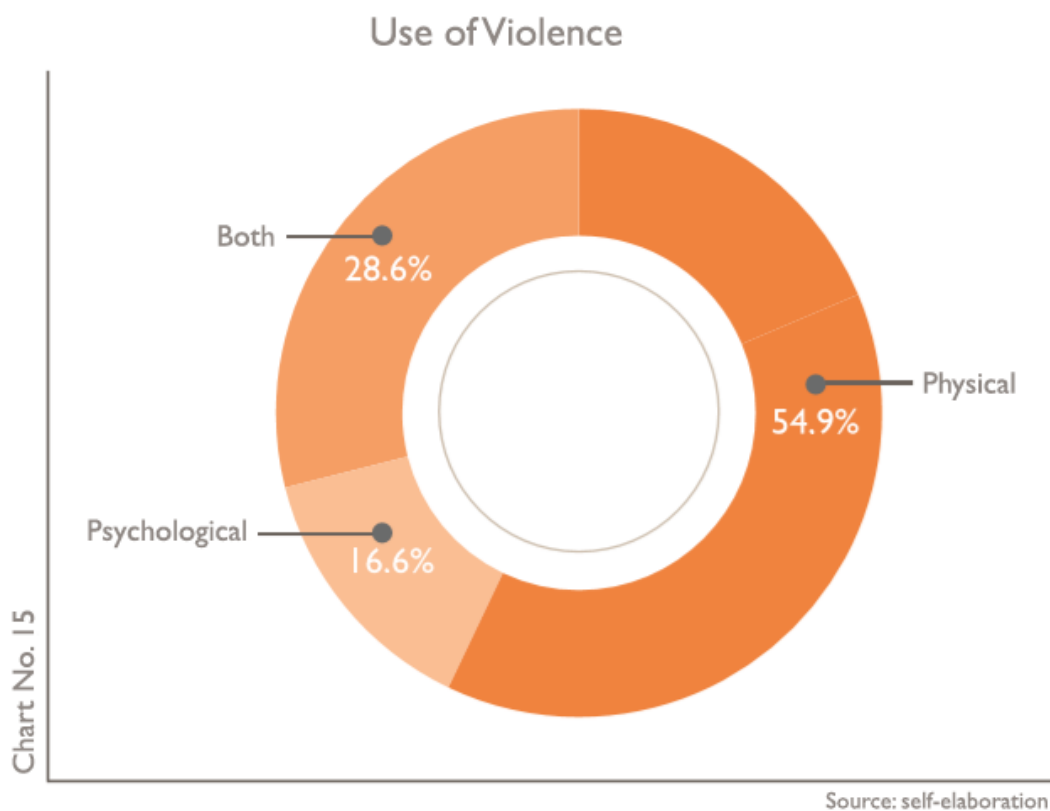


Chart No. 15 shows that of all surveyed children who have experienced some type of abuse at their homes, 54.9% have suffered only physical violence, while 16.6% have suffered only psycho-emotional violence, and 28.6% have experienced both kinds of abuse.



## Good treatment and tenderness in parenting

This research specially considered an investigation about the practices of love or tenderness present in the relationships between children and their mothers, fathers, or significant adults, which are carried out within the parenting processes at home.

In the case of this research, three variables were considered in order to know the affective or tender expressions that are more recurrent among the families of the surveyed children. The variables considered were affective expressions like kisses, utterances (I love you) and making children feel good about themselves. Table 5 shows that 84.8% of the surveyed children reported that their mothers or fathers make them feel good about themselves always or almost always; 84% said that their parents tell them 'I love you' almost always or always; and 74.4% mentioned that their parents express them love kissing them almost always or always.

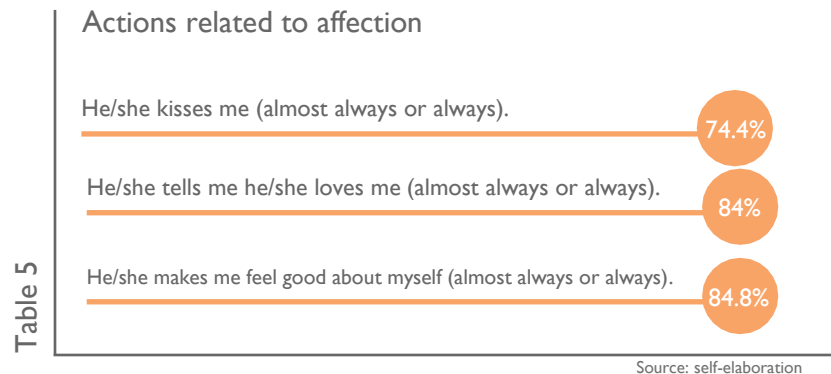


Chart No. 16 shows that 8.9% of the surveyed children experience at least one of these affective expressions, while 20.4% reported to experience two out of three, and 64% all of them.

### Use of affection according the amount of practices

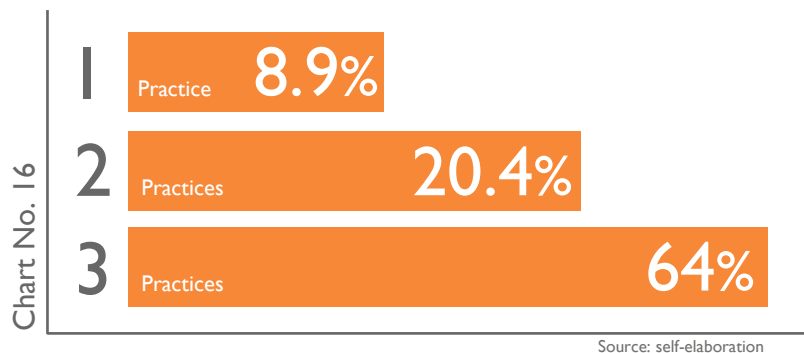
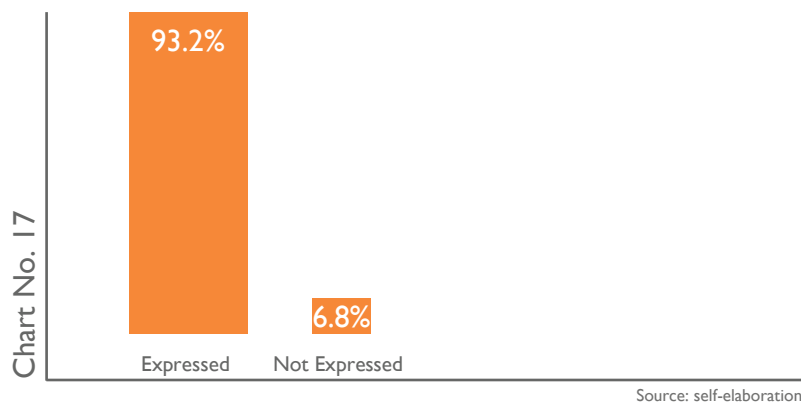


Chart No. 17 shows that 93.2% of the surveyed children said that in the relationships they establish with their mothers, fathers, and significant adults they receive some type of expression of love or tenderness.

### Affection Practices



## The Recognition of Children as Subjects of Rights

Social research regarding child population warns that it is not possible to address the reality in which children live without considering how good or bad are their autonomy and participation in the environments in which they grow up. In this case, the way in which their autonomy and participation is seen positively or negatively within the context of the parenting processes, the discipline applied on them, and the relationships they keep with the adult society, and the significant adults that live in the children's environment.

Within the framework of the qualitative results produced by this research, it was observed that among the surveyed adults, their childhood traditional cultural conceptions persisted and prevented them to accept children as autonomous people and protagonists of their own lives and, consequently, as subjects of rights. Despite this, some low and lower-middle social class parents consider that conversations are a necessary and useful strategy to keep an affective discipline. This implies appealing to children's reflective capacity, which means, in one way or another, to recognize them as subjects of rights. Furthermore, the surveyed middle and upper middle social class adults reported that the children parenting process' expectation and objective is the development of an autonomous and empowered childhood.

Similarly, the accounts of the children who participated in the qualitative stage of this research reveal the evaluations and strategies that they develop to negotiate the disciplinary processes they must face. The strategies they use and the critical judgments they make about those practices that imply some kind of ignorance, contempt, or injustice are radical expressions of the assertion of their autonomy and capacity to play a leading role in the decision-making regarding matters that affect them.

As can be seen, the expression of children's autonomy and participation in the significant environments they live is disputed, diffuse and complex. This is because autonomy and participation are characteristics that adults consider for the type of relationships they want to establish with children. The relational nature of both concepts highlights the rigorousness adults must have to understand children as people who interact socially. That is, to recognize their quality as people who interact with the world through their experiences and interests.

Two levels of analysis have been considered in this research's framework. The first one is related to the recognition problem that must work within the context of primary or close relationships where expectations of reciprocal recognition are supported by the affective bonds established between them (Honneth, 1997)<sup>19</sup>. The second one is related to the margins of decision that children have in their daily lives.

The first level of analysis has been considered the basis of the second, since as Honneth (1997) points out in the affective or lovely relationships, such as those among mothers, fathers, and children, reciprocal recognition helps to develop and confirm people's individuality and, therefore, their personal identities development, the presupposition about their participation in the community's public life, as well as the development of a basic trust for this purpose, and the confirmation of their individuality and autonomy<sup>20</sup>. The development of these possibilities depends on the conditions offered by emotional connection and careful attention, which can also face difficulties and polemics<sup>21</sup>.

Within the framework of these theoretical orientations, the research investigated the recognition relationships established between significant adults and their significant children. Chart No. 18 shows 4 variables that were considered for this end: respectful treatment at home, fair treatment, trust that parents place in children, and if their opinion is considered or not. As can be seen, 67.6% of the surveyed children evaluated positively the level of respect they received at their homes; and 58.4% evaluated favorably the fairness of the treatment they received; while 58.9% evaluated positively the trust level received; and only 43.6% evaluated favorably the way in which their opinion is considered.



Cultural Patterns of Parenting in Chile: The Children's Point of View About Punishment and Affection

19 – 'Only when each subject experienced the sensation of "seeing himself in the other one", he/she can be sure that "the other one... is there for me". To identify such "seeing yourself in the other" relationship, Hegel uses for the first time the term called "recognition"' (Honneth, 1997): 52).

20 – 'This thesis is reasonable if it is understood as an affirmation about the emotional status of ego's full development; the feeling of being recognized and confirmed in its specific nature of will makes that the subject creates the degree of self-esteem that qualifies him for a legitimate participation in the formation of the political will' (Honneth, 1997:53-54).

21 – 'If we speak of recognition as a love's constitutive element, what is expected is not a cognitive respect, but one based on dedication, an affirmation supported by autonomy' (Honneth, 1997:132).

Chart No. 18

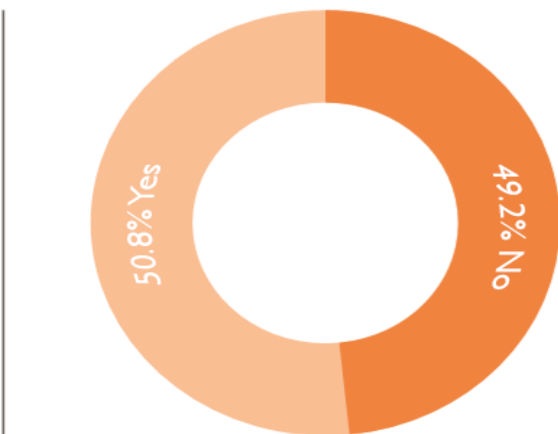
### How Do You Think People Treat You at Home?



Source: self-elaboration

This analysis considers that a child is recognized as a subject in the context of the relationships he/she establishes with the adults living in his/her house **when 3 or all these variables are evaluated positively**. As a result, Chart No. 19 shows that 50.8% of the surveyed children are recognized as subjects at their homes.

Chart No. 19



Source: self-elaboration





## Parenting styles

Behind these overall numbers, different types of experiences are hidden. For example, children who are aware of the different types of physical abuse described in the instrument, and no affection expression or recognition. On the contrary, children who have not experienced physical violence in their daily lives, and in their relationships with their mothers and fathers are based on recurrent tenderness expressions. Similarly, the development of a parenting based on tenderness or affection does not ensure a socialization process that promotes relationships in which children are recognized as subjects of rights.

Because of this, a more detailed analysis was made of the different parenting experiences, and the types of relationship that parents or significant adults develop and establish with children. This was done by crossing the levels of maltreatment or violence experienced by children, the types of tenderness expressions, and the level of recognition they perceive at their homes.

As a result of this procedure, 6 parenting styles were identified:

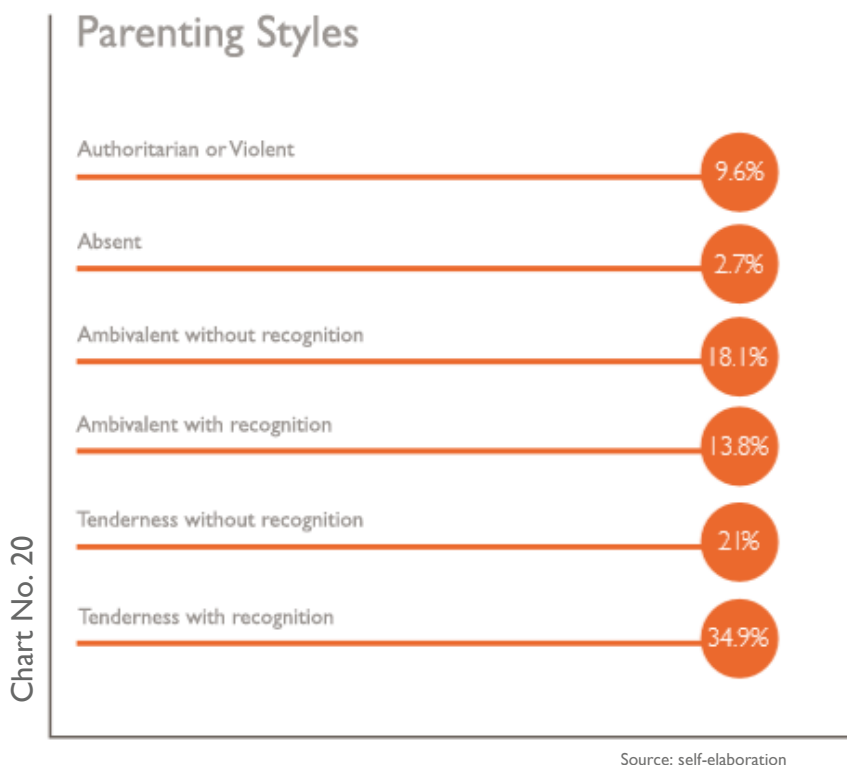
Absent	Negligent parenting model in which there are no expressions of tenderness, or abuse, or use of physical violence.
Authoritarian or Violent	Parenting model that bases its discipline on the use of physical punishment, and there is no such thing as tenderness expressions.
Ambivalent without recognition	Parenting model in which there are use of violence and tenderness expressions, but children are not recognized as subjects of rights.
Ambivalent with recognition	Parenting model in which there are maltreatment and tenderness expressions, but, at the same time, parents establish relationships recognizing children as subjects of rights.
Tenderness without recognition	Parenting model in which there are tenderness expressions and no violence, but parents does not establish relationships recognizing children as subjects of rights.
Tenderness with recognition	Parenting model in which there are tenderness expressions, no violence, and parents establish relationships recognizing children as subjects of rights.

Table 6

Source: self-elaboration

Cultural Patterns of Parenting in Chile: The Children's Point of View About Punishment and Affection

Chart No. 20 shows the relative impact of each parenting style on the sample. 34.9% of the surveyed children experience a parenting model based on tenderness and recognition; 21% perceive a parenting model based on tenderness without recognition of their quality as subjects; 18.1% of the surveyed children experience an ambivalent without recognition parenting model, 13.8% perceive an ambivalent with recognition parenting model; 9.6% of the surveyed children experience an authoritarian parenting model, and 2.7% an absent one.



According to the results produced in this research's qualitative stage, mothers, fathers, and significant adults use and deploy different types of strategies and practices in the children's parenting and disciplinary processes. Among them, three types must be pointed out: (a) the ones based on a **formative** nature regarding the creation of bonds of trust, education, positive reinforcement, conversation practices, and encouragement of values; (b) **corrective actions** regarding scolds, prohibitions, and punishments; and (c) the **use of violence**.

It cannot be ignored the slight limits seem to exist between a parenting based on affection and other one based on punishment, scold, and prohibitions. Conversation strategies and positive reinforcement can develop mechanisms that prevent over-regulation of adults in the formation processes of children. When they are effective, they can make punishment unnecessary or do not use it as a last resort. In this way, they are resources that allow to exclude, neutralize, or avoid disciplinary models based on punishment and violence.

The conversations can be understood using a double logic: a) a **logical sequence** as a strategy that reduces punishment over time and tries to use it as a last resource - in extreme and exceptional cases; and b) a **relational logic** which uses resources that appeal to children understanding abilities, with the aim to make them internalize what is expected from them regarding good behaviour to avoid the use of violence or punishment. The **rational-reflective** strategy can be used in different parenting styles, and as can be seen, it is inversely proportional to the use of violence and punishment.

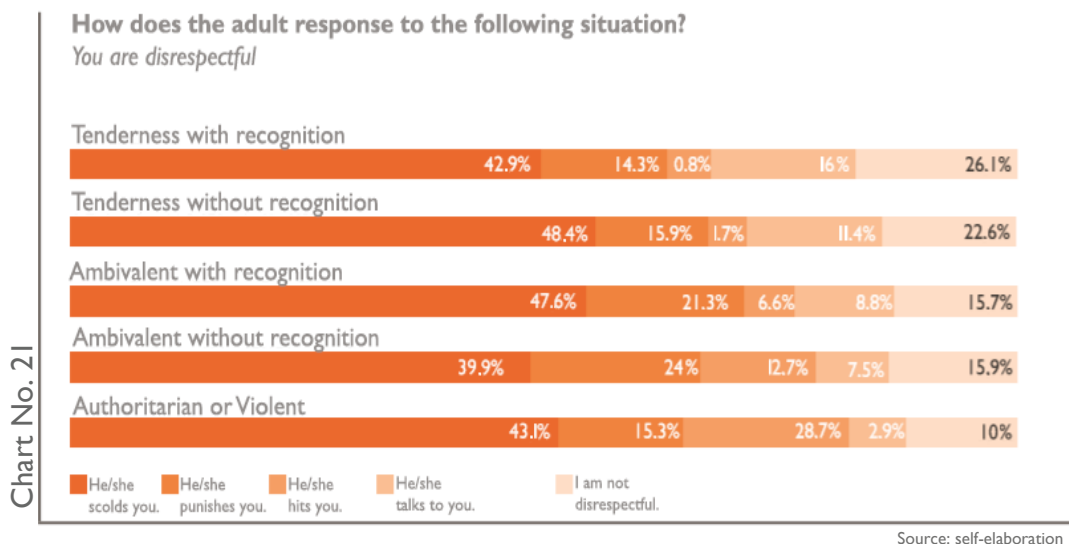
From children's perspective, scolds and punishments are consequences of not fulfilling their duties or transgressing rules and norms. At the same time, they recognize **positive reinforcement** as a consequence of good behaviour, the fulfilment of their responsibilities, and the obedience of norms and rules. Some of the positive reinforcement children experience are congratulations, demonstrations of physical affection, and in some cases, they get a reward.

The results obtained through the applied survey allow us to observe that scolds are one of the main practices carried out by parents when they face situations which require formative and disciplinary strategies. The charts below show the strategies and practices that children perceive their parents use in situations such as **being rude or yelling at them**.

*'I think there's a difference, because punishment is a negative reinforcement, you know, but I think that disciplining children is to make them understand what is right and what is wrong, but through actions rather than words, because I am punishing him to make him aware of what he's doing is wrong and it has consequences' (Woman, 36 years old, County of Providence)*

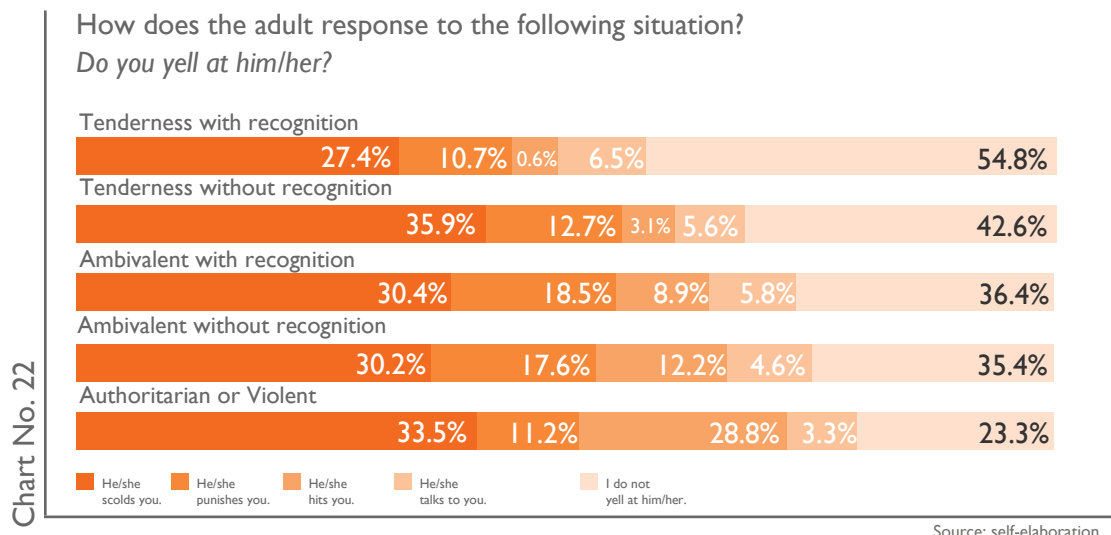
*'They congratulate me [when I'm a good kid] How do they congratulate you? They hug me and kiss me. A different girl: When I'm good at school, my... they give me stars and I win candies' (Woman, 6 and 7 years old Boys and Girls Focus Group) [when he's a good boy] 'They congratulate me and ask me where I want to go on vacation and also they let me choose the present I want for my birthday' (Man, 11 to 13 years old Boys and Girls Focus Group)*

Chart No. 21 shows the parents' reactions experienced by children in response to a behaviour described as disrespectful regarding the parenting styles already defined.



This chart shows that scolding is the main resource used by adults regardless of their parenting model. However, punishment has a more significant use in the ambivalent with recognition (21.3%) and ambivalent without recognition models (24%). The use of violence is significantly higher in the ambivalent without recognition model (12.7%), and in the authoritarian model (28.7%). On the contrary, to talk with the child is the most used resource in tenderness with recognition (16%) and tenderness without recognition models (11.4%). Finally, it should be noted that the highest percentages of the surveyed children that reported they are not disrespectful belong to tenderness with recognition (26.1%), and tenderness without recognition models (22.6%).

Chart No. 22 shows, based on the parenting styles already defined, the parents' different behaviours or reactions toward children when they yell at them.



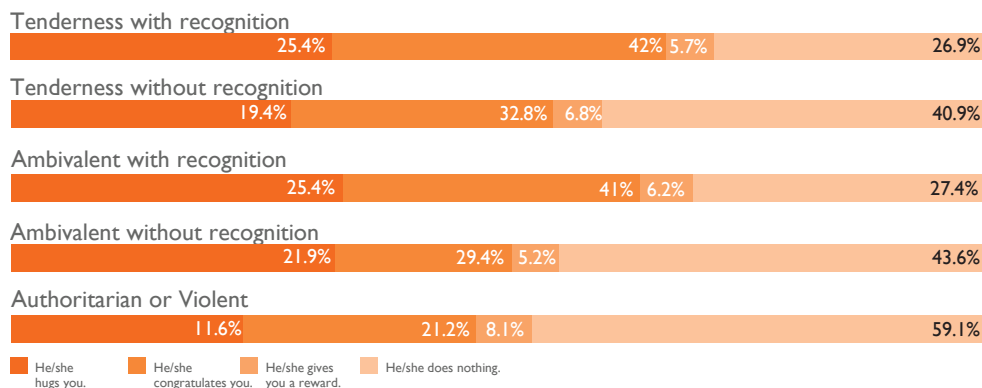
Again, scolding is the main resource used by parents to deal with the child if he/she yells at them. In the case of the tenderness with recognition model, it is possible to observe a lower percentage than the rest of the identified parenting models (27.4%). Similarly, punishment has a greater presence in ambivalent with recognition model (18.5%), and ambivalent without recognition model (17.6%). The use of violence is significantly higher in the ambivalent without recognition model (12.2%), and in the authoritarian model (28.8%). Talking with the child is the least used strategy in these models; the tenderness with recognition model is the one with the highest percentage of use of this strategy (6.5%). Finally, it should be noted that the highest percentages of the surveyed children that reported that they do not yell at their parents belong to the tenderness with recognition (54.8%) and tenderness without recognition models (42.6%).



When the positive reinforcements parents use regarding the fulfilment of norms and duties by their children are analysed, the same type of behaviour in the parenting model is observed. Chart No. 23 shows the type of reinforcements adults use to recognize the respectful behaviour children express towards them.

## How does the adult response to the following situation?

*You are respectful*



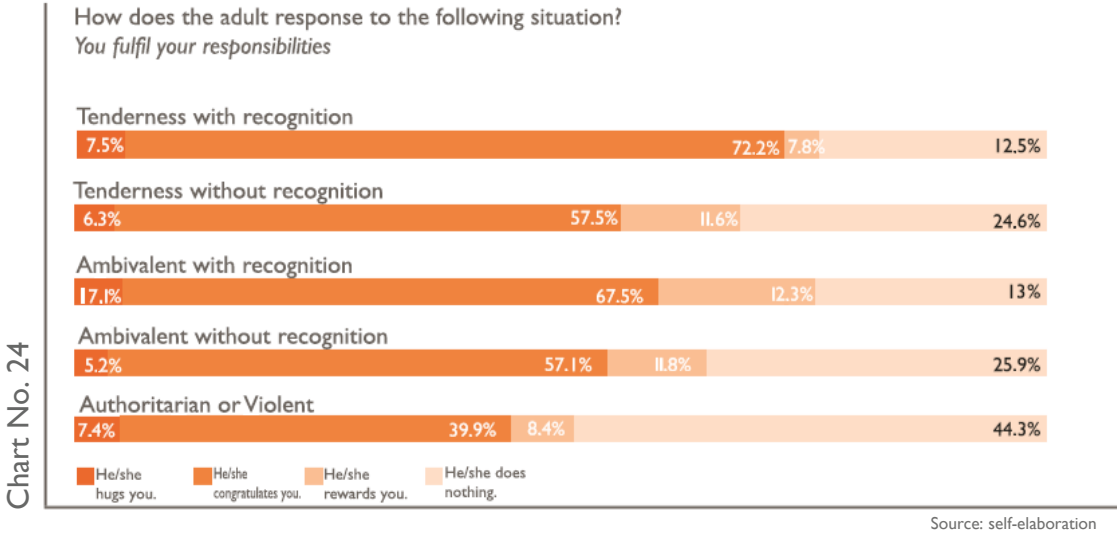
Source: self-elaboration

As can be seen, the use of positive reinforcements such as hugs, congratulations or rewards are some of the resources used within all parenting models except the authoritarian one. The most used strategy in all parenting styles, except the authoritarian one, is 'to congratulate the child', which is most used in the tenderness with recognition model (42%) and the ambivalent with recognition model (41%). The hug is also a resource used by one out of four of the cases in the previous parenting models.

The recognition is likely to make an important difference in the use of positive reinforcement, because in the cases of the models that do not recognize children, it is noted a higher percentage of lack of reinforcement ('he/she does nothing'). In the case of the tenderness without recognition model this percentage is 40.9%, while in the ambivalent without recognition model it is 43.6%. This is more significant in the authoritarian or violent model; whose percentage is almost 60%.

Chart No. 23

Furthermore, Chart No. 24 shows the type of reinforcements that significant adults use to recognize the fulfilment of duties by children.



In this case, 'to congratulate the child' is the main positive reinforcement used by parents. This strategy is most used in the tenderness with recognition model (72.2%), while it is least used in the authoritarian model, whose use is 40%. Again, the models that do not recognize the children have a higher percentage of lack of reinforcement, as it can be seen in the authoritarian or violent model, whose percentage is 44.3%. In the case of the tenderness without recognition model this percentage is 24.6%, and in the ambivalent without recognition model it is 25.9%. 'To hug and reward children' are the least used strategies in this model and it generates fewer differences between different parenting styles.

Within the framework of disciplinary processes, the practices children experience the most are punishments based on prohibitions, as well as negative criticism and scolds. According to the qualitative results, the negative criticism and the scolds are contempt that affects self-esteem and a sign of mistrust which is not always related to the situation that made the adult scold the child.

Prohibitions are widely used strategies, because according to the surveyed adults' conceptions, prohibitions causes a kind of innocuous pain which is a measure of effectiveness. It is quite recurrent to punish children by taking away their favourite things or by restricting the activities they enjoy and that adults know children like.

From the surveyed children's point of view, to get permission to do a specific activity is a way of negotiating with adults in which agreements and exchanges are established, based on the conditions set by the adults. This type of reasoning is developed identifying the strategies that adults use to control children's behaviour.

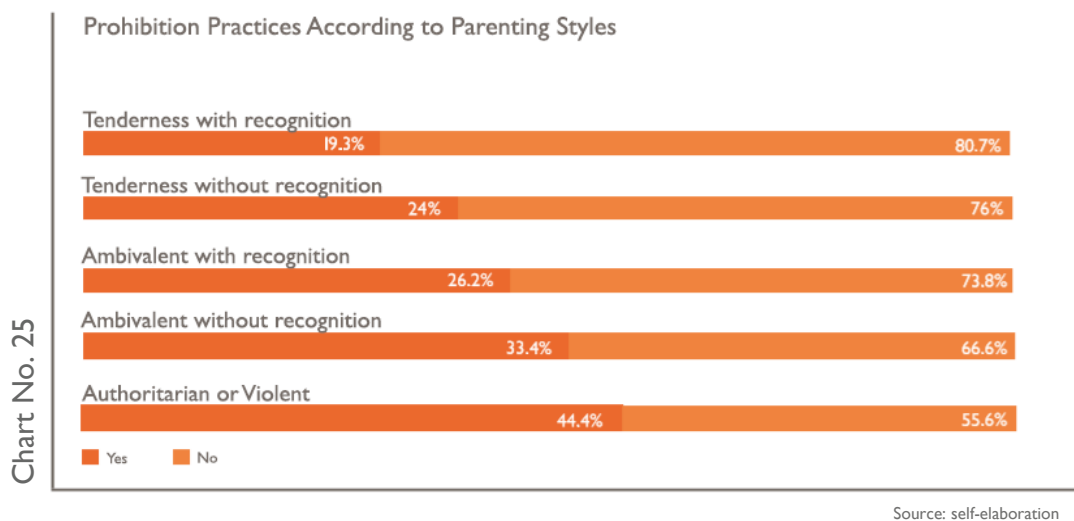
*'When they scold me, I don't like they tell me what they think about me, Interviewer: I mean, I don't like they judge me, that's right. For example, when I'm not doin' something or when they scold me, they start to criticize me for other things' (Women, 11 to 13 years old boys and girls Focus Group).*

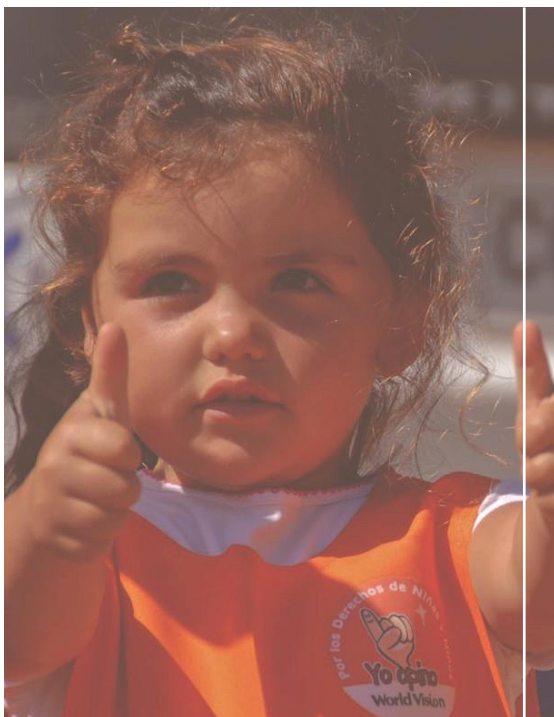
*'I think that since I don't like to hit them it is necessary to punish them, if he did something that is not right, he has to know that it's wrong, it's not enough to tell him "you can't do that", you have to punish him even if it hurts' (Women, 29 years old, county of Cerro Navia).*

*'We try to punish her, but those punishments are quite short, how do we punish her? Taking away something she likes, got it? something like... I don't know... Whatever she watches on TV or not giving her permission to go out of the house, got it? These are the punishments' (Women, 36 years old, county of Providence).*

*'It depends, because an adult can convince you to do something, always you ask permission to go out they are going to order you doing something to get it. For example, clean your room because it's a mess and after that you can go out. It's like doing something to get a reward (...) Rather than doing it to get permission to go out it's to get a reward for doing a job (...) Technically, to go out is like a prize, so if you're lazy or you just simply don't want to do it, you won't get the prize, which is to go out' (Man, 14 to 16 years old teenagers focus group).*

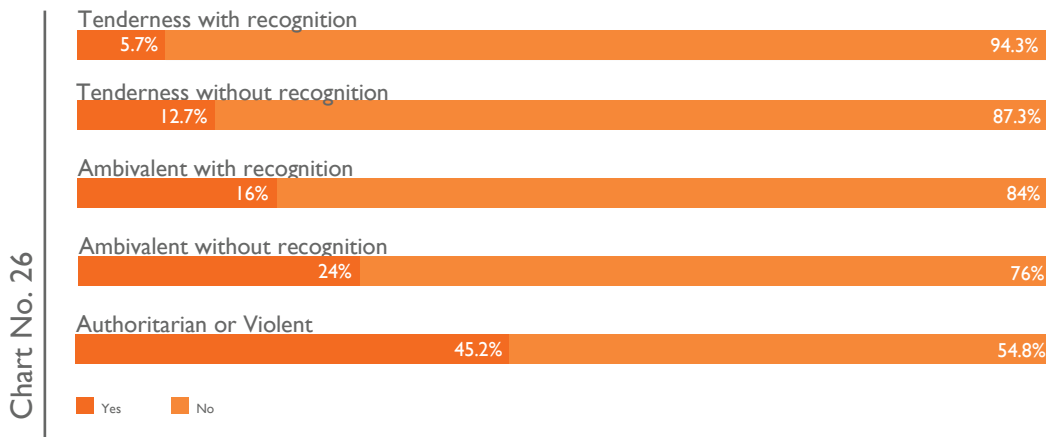
It is interesting to note that the banning to go out and the banning to use technological devices are resources widely used by adults. Both practices can be a problem, due to the surveyed children's age (11 to 13 years). Therefore, they were considered a prohibition when they were reported as always or almost always. Chart No. 25 shows that these prohibitions are more present in the authoritarian model (44.4%) and their use decreases greatly in the case of the tenderness with recognition model (19.3%).





At the same time, children who experience an authoritarian parenting style receive criticism more frequent than the ones who experience the other parenting models. Chart No. 26 shows how often children of different parenting models experience criticism. While only 5.7% of the surveyed children that experience parenting styles based on tenderness and recognition receive critique; 45.2% of the surveyed children who experience the authoritarian model are frequently criticized as part of their parenting experience.

Do you think your significant adults ‘criticize you’? (always or almost always)



Source: self-elaboration

Finally, the qualitative data made it possible to conclude that the time sharing between adults and children is one of the most valued aspects by all the social classes that participated in this research. In relation to the practices developed by adults, time sharing is determined as one of the main strategies for establishing bonds of trust and affection with children, developing recreational and/or cultural activities with them, and promoting their learning. On this matter, spending time with children is valued positively. Children need to spend time with their parents, because it is in this instances that significant knowledge and values are learnt, rules are established, and bonds of trust and affection are generated.

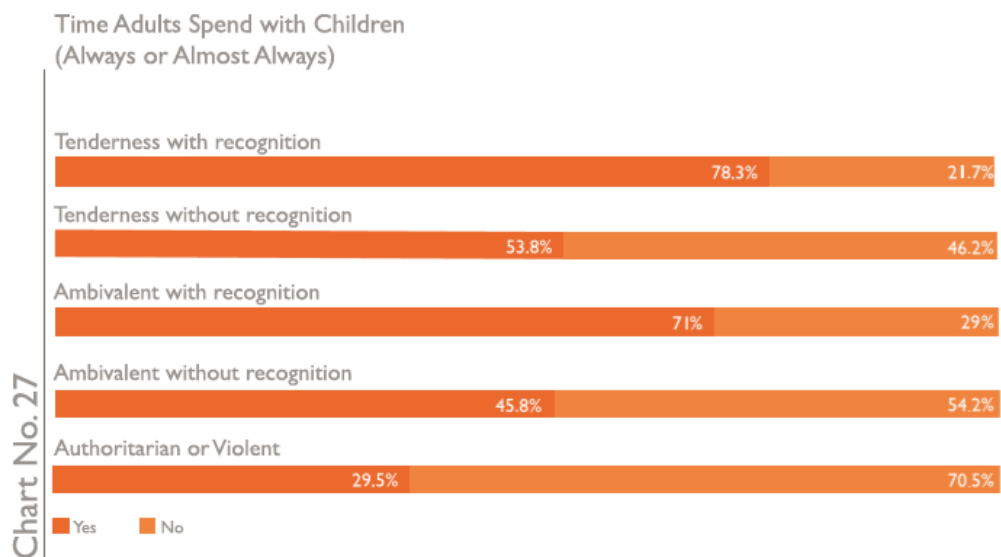
Despite the high value adults say time sharing has, they recognize the difficulties they face to spend time with their children. One of the factors they mention is the incompatibility between the time dedicated to work and the time needed by their children. The lack of time is expressed as an expectation of more and better time sharing. Although it is often difficult for adults to spend significant time with their children, the 'efforts' parents make to share time with their kids are understood as reciprocal affective expressions. In other words, to arrange and spend time with their children is to express them love.

*'I have a work whose shifts are complicated, due to the time I have to be working at. I start working at 5 A.M. and then I arrive to my house at 2 P.M. After 3 P.M. I fall asleep because I'm tired, so it's not very nice to be hugged or bein' asked to go out to play with the kids, but even if you don't wanna do it, they give you the strength to keep going' (Man, 33 years old, County of Cerro Navia).*

As in any structure of reciprocity, time can be seen as a part of the goods that are exchanged, which in this case its value is 'to give affection'. The lack of time can be required, misunderstood, or misinterpreted, which imposes a group of requirements on the practices and bonds that parents must establish with their children.

Like adults, children are able to clearly identify the situations in which they share time with their parents and grandparents. Recreational activities, playing, and doing household chores together are the main focus. An emerging element is related with the day of the week when there is more time to do these activities. About this, surveyed children reported that on weekends they spend most time with their parents and grandparents.

Chart No. 27 shows that there are important differences in the amount of time children think that adults spend with them in their daily lives.



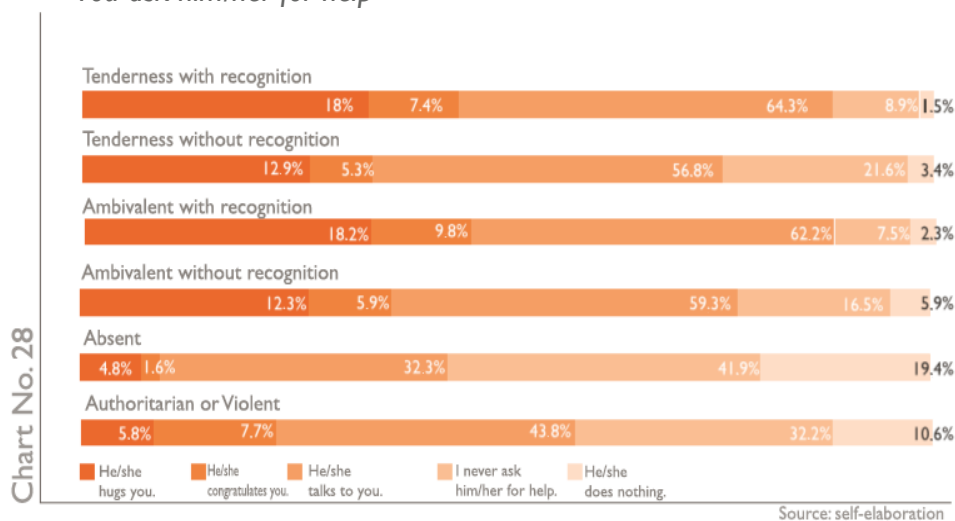
Source: self-elaboration

As in previous analyses, the models based on recognition present the most positive behaviours in this variable. In fact, in the tenderness with recognition model, 78.3% of the surveyed children reported that their parents spend time with them always or almost always; 71% in the ambivalent with recognition model; and only 29.5% in the authoritarian model.



Chart No. 28 analyses the behaviour that children perceive from their parents when they ask for help to solve a problem. Again, as highlighted in other cases, the models based on recognition encourage conversation as an endorsement or emotional support strategy. In fact, in the tenderness with recognition model, 64.3% of the surveyed children reported that their parents talk to them; while in the ambivalent with recognition model, it is 62.2%. Furthermore, the absent and authoritarian models present the highest percentages in the option 'he/she does nothing', whose are 19.4% and 10.6% respectively. Finally, it is worth to mention the high percentage detected in the option 'I never ask him/her for help' within these two parenting styles, especially in the absent model, whose percentage is around 42%. In addition, it is worth noting that in the tenderness without recognition model, one out of five children do not usually ask their parents for help to solve a problem.

## How Does the Adult Response to the Following Situation? *You ask him/her for help*





## The replication of the practices of violence and tenderness

From the perspective of this analysis, the previous information allows us to triangulate the data that the surveyed people provide regarding their own practices, because it indicates that the use of violence is a generalized and daily practice performed by the families. Because of this, it is not surprising that the perception of daily violence in social and family environments experienced by the interviewed people, particularly those from lower and lower-middle social classes, is mentioned as an additional reason to understand and justify the use of violence in the relationships established between adults and children. Children are embedded in community and family environments where everyday violence is very common, so it is natural to expect children get used to it.

*'This situation is complicated, it's very hard to be a child in the county of Cerro Navia as here as in La Pintana it's hard to be a child, that's because the level of violence towards them, and the swear words' (Woman, 44 years old, County of Cerro Navia).*

*'It's too much, shouts, swear words, it's too much, the people just ignore when they see the parents scoldin' and hittin' the kid, and is something you see a lot here in La Pintana (...)' (Man, 24 years old, County of La Pintana).*

*'The children are now beaten, slapped, thrown out, here, and in the houses over there and they do it swearin' them' (Woman, 80 years old, grandmother, County of Cerro Navia).*

In the framework of this discourse, the use of violence ceases to be an exceptional and last resource, and it is now recognized as a widespread, thoughtless, and daily practice performed by parents.

*'Because [adults] don't have the time to ask or go to schools to see what's happening. Something similar happens in the homes. For example, the mother, the aunt, or the grandmother - "Geez, this kid is getting on my nerves" and they go see him and the first thing they do is beat him. I mean, they don't even try to look why what happened. So, it is often adults' fault because they punish their kids without a right reason, and there are several ways to punish' (Man, 40 years old, County of La Pintana).*

Based on the previous information, two levels of analysis were determined. Both reinforce a normalized view of the violence and its dynamics in social and family life. The first one refers to the habit children develop to get used to violence, which reduces its effectiveness as a disciplinary resource.

*'Kids are awfully punished here, because their parents slap'em, curse them, kick and punch'em, so it's terrible. And we might think that's intimidating, but in reality, sometimes kids still misbehave. Look, it's just like - "ah, my mom's going to tell me swear words, however, it's not big deal" - they get used to that, so kids still have the same behaviour and they don't change, then it's like... the swear words, and the hits are ok with them because it's normal, but for us, it's awful that a child or a mother yells swear words each other, but kids think it's normal' (Woman, 44 years old, County of Cerro Navia).*

*'Because - as I'm telling you- the kid is used to being hit anyway. So, if you slap him today, tomorrow you are going to do the same again, and you'll keep doing the same thing because the kid knows that you can keep on doing the same thing and it'll hurt them for a while and that's it' (Man, 40 years old, County of La Pintana).*

Along with the naturalization of violence, this situation suggests that it generates a vicious cycle. This is because of the use of violent practices by adults is closely related to violent characteristics within their own parenting process. Consequently, the surveyed adults affirmed that they can be replicating a normalized parenting practice applied on them when they were children.

*'I think it's what I tell you; they naturalize it... because if my mom did it on me, and all generations did it backwards, it's okay. So, there're no other resources that tell you "hold your horses, it's not right. How am I going to..." I mean, I feel that I have to put myself in the other person's place, and remember; for example, if my father or my mother hit me, how it hurt me then. So, how could I do that to my son?' (Woman, 44 years old, County of Cerro Navia).*

*'Because we've been taught to be like that, we've been taught to hit and that's very normal to me and my son, but who have taught us? Our parents? Our grandparents, because they treated our parents in one way our parents replied with us, now us with our kids and it's really the same way, because it depends on the way your parents raised you how you are gonna raise your kid' (Woman, 26 years old, County of La Pintana).*

In this regard, specialized research has established that violence against children during the parenting process not only has an important impact on their psychological development being able to cause 'anxiety, depression, or low self-esteem, but also it encourages violent behaviour to the extent that it determines a human and social relationships pattern in which the use of force is acceptable' (Salazar, 2006: 15), and it also constitutes a model which is replicated in daily life and among generations.

It has multiple effects<sup>22</sup>, however, in the case of this research, we focus on the modelling effect that this type of practice can produce, observing a close relationship between physical punishment and the aggressive behaviour of children. Research has provided enough evidence to establish a connection between abuse or lack of affection in childhood and subsequent abuse of the own children (Kempe 1961; Morales and Costa 1997), which shows that **violence is replicated** from generation to generation (Kaufman and Zigler 1987, Egeland et al. 1988, Crittenden 1992). Moreover, regarding the influence on the **transgenerationality** of parenting styles, Larraín and Bascuñán (2008) conclude that the ones who have been suffered physical violence are those who most defend and justify this discipline strategy as a formative practice, because it is noted a replication of the domestic violence patterns from one generation to the next one.

In this regard, the quantitative instrument included a question that addressed the behaviour or reaction that children would have as an adult correcting a child's behaviour in different situations. For example, 'if your children disrespected you, how would you react?', the possible reactions were: I hug him/her, I congratulate him/her, I reward him/her, I talk to him/her, I scold him/her, I punish him/her, I hit him/her, and I do nothing. The answers were crossed with the reactions of the adult in order to investigate the way in which the violent, tenderness, and/or recognition practices are replicated.

22 - Regarding the effects of physical punishment and an authoritarian parenting style, Save the Children (2013) determines that these effects are manifested in different development areas: emotional development, children experiencing deep feelings of sadness and helplessness that can later be expressed by behavioural problems, anxiety, low self-esteem, and child depression; cognitive development, there are frequent stress and fear which in early stages can have a detrimental impact on brain development; and finally, moral development, 'it can negatively affect the internalization of moral values and the relationship with their parents, in addition to assuming that love goes hand in hand with violence. This is a harmful relational pattern that can be extended to other areas of their lives' (Save the Children, 2013: 16).

The situation ‘when you disrespect him/her’ indicated in Table 7 shows that 66.2% of the surveyed children who are scolded by an adult would do the same to their children in the future. In the case of punishment and hitting: 41.7% of the surveyed children that reported to have been punished would punish their children in the future; while 40% of those who have been hit would hit their children if they would disrespect them.

Table 7

He/she disrespects you (children answer as if they were parents)	You disrespect him/her (children regarding significant adult)			
	He/she scolds you	He/she punishes you	He/she hits you	He/she talks to you
You talk to him/her	46.9%	12.4%	7.1%	30.1%
You scold him/her	66.2%	18%	5.7%	8.8%
You punish him/her	39.4%	41.7%	9.7%	6.9%
You hit him/her	32.9%	19.2%	39.7%	4.1%

Source: self-elaboration





Table 8 shows similar answers given regarding the situation 'you yell at him/her'. Two thirds of the surveyed children who are scolded would also scold their children; near 46% of the surveyed children who have been beaten would beat their children if they yell at them; in the case of the punished children, this percentage is 38.4%.

Table 8

He/she yells at you (children answer as if they were parents)	You yell at him/her (children regarding significant adult)			
	He/she scolds you	He/she punishes you	He/she hits you	He/she talks to you
You talk to him/her	50%	13.5%	5.7%	25.7%
You scold him/her	66.7%	18%	8.2%	4.5%
You punish him/her	39.4%	38.4%	10.8%	7.9%
You hit him/her	31.6%	14.5%	46.2%	1.7%

Source: self-elaboration





Finally, Table 9 shows the replication of tenderness and recognition practices regarding the situation ‘you respect him/her’. 48% of the surveyed children that are congratulated would congratulate their children. 42.7% of the surveyed children that are hugged by their parents would hug their children. It is noteworthy that indifference or lack of reinforcement is also replicated if we observe the cases in which the children or the adult does nothing when they are treated with respect, which causes that children would replicate that reaction if they become parents.

Table 9

He/she respects you (children answer as if they were parents)	You respect him/her (children regarding significant adult)			
	He/she hugs you	He/she congratulates you	He/she rewards you	He/she does anything
You hug him/her	42.7%	23.6%	3.4%	29.3%
You congratulate him/her	18.7%	47.9%	4.8%	26.8%
You reward him/her	20.2%	35.7%	19.8%	22.1%
You do nothing	3.1%	6.3%	1.3%	87.5%

Source: self-elaboration

# 4

## Children's Progressive Engagement and Autonomy within the Family Circle

As mentioned in the first chapter, the Convention determined that children are subjects of rights with full capacity to exercise them, with their own will and voice (Lobos and González 2015; Santibáñez, Délano, and Reyes 2015). Under this condition, children are recognized as active subjects, actors in their own development and in the society to which they belong. This implies to understand that, despite being in a position of subordination to adults, 'they are able to negotiate some aspects of their lives and take on responsibility roles as 'differently equal' in the adult world' (Vergara and Chávez, 2017: 46). This is clearly expressed in the family context, since it is the environment in which the main intergenerational encounter takes place, which is usually defined by the parental relationships power asymmetry.

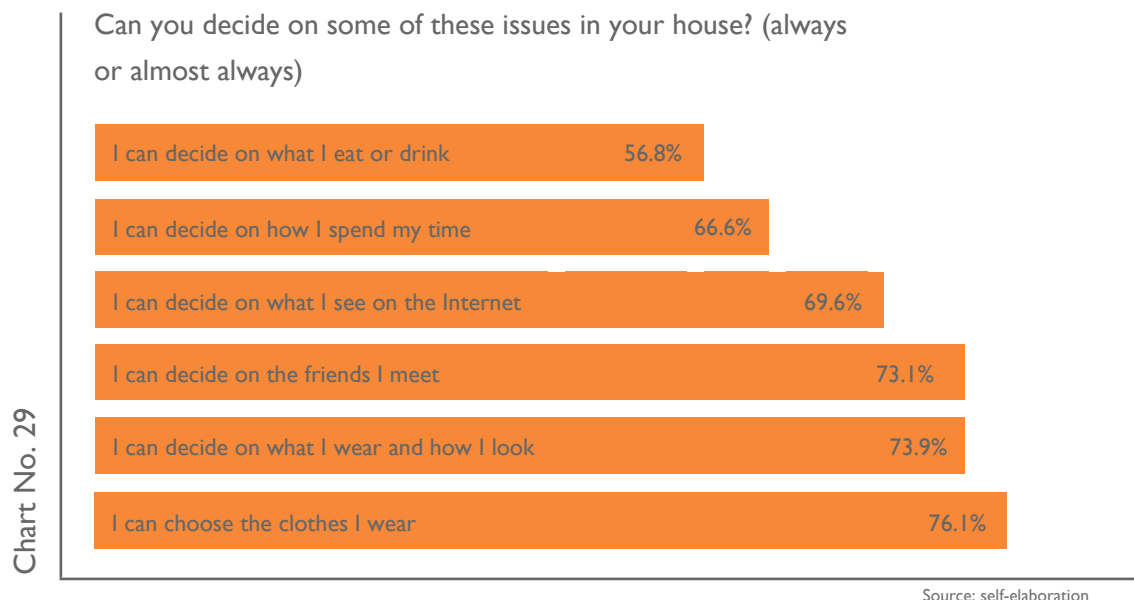
The principles of **autonomy and participation of the children in the parenting processes** imply a **great challenge to power and authority** that parents have tended to unlawfully hold, 'most of the parents are used to exercising total control over their children's lives, while recognizing children as subjects of rights and therefore the right to participate brings with it the necessity of insisting on negotiate, involve, and exchange information in the family life' (Lansdown, 2005: 19). Thus, the traditional ways of exercising control and authority over children are questioned, requiring the creation of new styles of a more horizontal and democratic nature, among them the bidirectional socialization model<sup>23</sup>. Venegas (2010) maintains that, while **adults have the right and responsibility to educate the children in their care, the objective of the parenting process must be to achieve children autonomy**, giving them 'legitimate participation in their development processes through participation and filial respect' (Lobos and González, 2015: 12).

**The promotion of the progressive participation and autonomy principle**, along with the transformation of the traditional childhood conception promoted by the CRC, **require new ways of relationship between adults and children**. These elements have an importance impact on conventional parenting models, particularly in the authoritarian ones in which adults are the only protagonists of the parenting. Within the framework of the challenges to give new meaning and update the relationships between adults and children, this research included questions aimed to investigate the autonomy degree children have in their families to decide on everyday matters that involve them.

23 - Children have a constant influence on their parents lives and they can be important influencers of change in their lives (Musitu and Cava, 2001). Children influence their parents through other socializing agents such as school, media, trends, friends, their experiences, the Internet, and the use of new technologies (González, 2007). The concept of bidirectional socialization means that parents sociality can be influenced by their children throughout their lives (Ceballos and Rodrigo 1998; Palacios 1999; Musitu, Buelga, Lila, and Cava 2001; Musitu, and Cava 2001; Oliva, Parra, and Arranz 2008) and that parenting should be understood as a process of joint creation between adults and children (Bornstein, 2002).

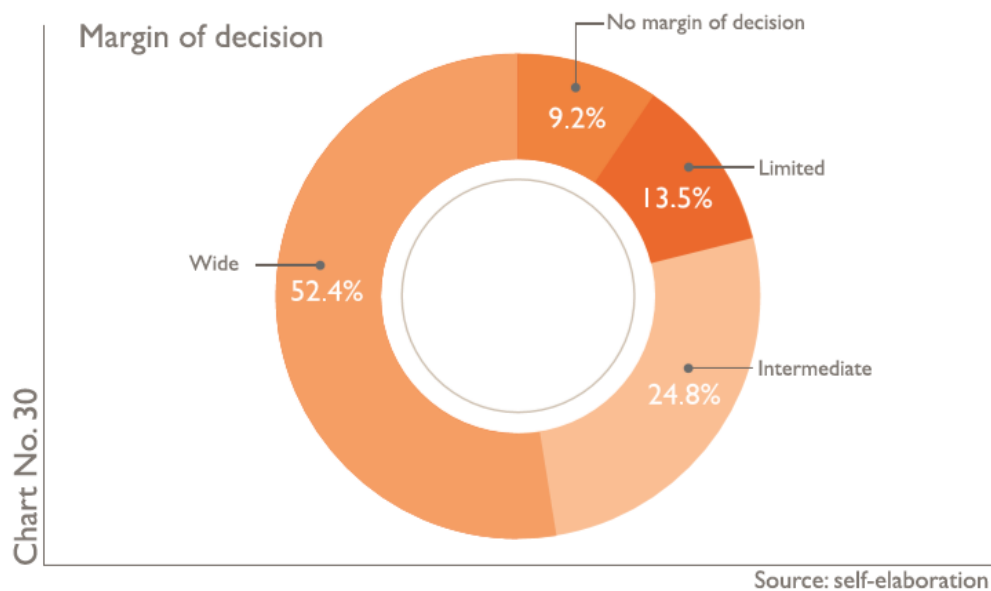


In order to analyse this dimension, an index was developed to estimate the margin of decision that children perceive in the context of everyday family life. This index was based on the six variables included in Chart No. 29. If the child reported that he/she can always or almost always decide on all or five of these variables, it is considered that he/she has a wide margin of decision. If he/she decides on three or four, he/she has an intermediate margin of decision. If he/she can only decide on one and two, he/she has a limited margin of decision. If he/she cannot decide on any of the variables, there is no margin of decision.



As noted in Chart 29, the surveyed children have more participation in the decisions related to their physical appearance and the friends they can meet. In fact, 76.1% of the surveyed children can always or almost always choose the clothes they wear; 73.9% of the surveyed children can decide about the way they want to look; and 73.1% of the surveyed children can always or almost always decide about the friends they meet. Additionally, the issues on which children have least chances to decide are the ones regarding food and the way they spend their time. 66.6% of the surveyed children can always or almost always decide how to spend their time; and 56.8% of the surveyed children can decide about what to eat or drink.

Chart No. 30 shows that 52.4% of the surveyed children have a wide margin of decision in everyday family life; 24.8% of the surveyed children have an intermediate margin of decision; and 13.5% have a limited one. It is worth noting that just over 9% of the surveyed children have no margin of decision, which indicates that almost one out of ten children do not have the chance to make decisions on issues that concern them.



Analysing the previous information based on children's sex, we can notice in Chart 31 that 55.8% of the surveyed girls and 48.9% of the surveyed boys have wide margin of decision. It should also be noted that slightly more than 10% of the surveyed boys and 7.2% of the girls have no margin of decision.

### Margin of decision according children's sex

Chart No. 31

Girls



Boys



■ No margin of decision
 ■ Limited margin of decision
 ■ Intermediate margin of decision
 ■ Wide margin of decision

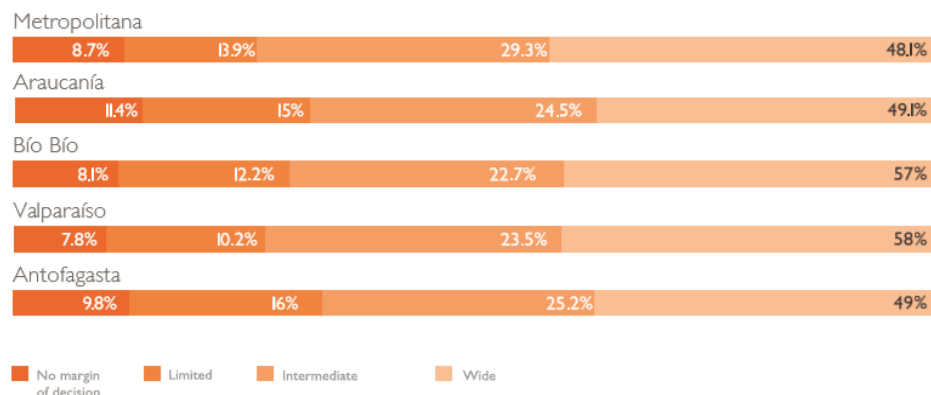
Source: self-elaboration

Specifically, these results indicate that girls have slightly higher percentages than boys in all categories, being significant in the following answers: 'The clothes I wear' (78.5% girls and 73.4% boys) and 'I can decide on the friends I meet' (75.7% girls and 70.4% boys). This also happens in the answers where boys and girls have less participation in the decision they can make, because 61% of the surveyed girls and 52.2% of the surveyed boys can always or almost always decide what they want to eat or drink.



The following chart shows the information of the developed index regarding the different Chilean states analysed in this research. The highest percentages are found in *Región de Valparaíso* and *Región del Bío Bío*. 58.5% of the surveyed children from *Región de Valparaíso* and 57% of the surveyed children from *Región del Bío Bío* have a wide margin of decision. It is worth noting that 11% of the surveyed children from *Region de La Araucanía* have no margin of decision.

### Margin of Decision in Chilean States

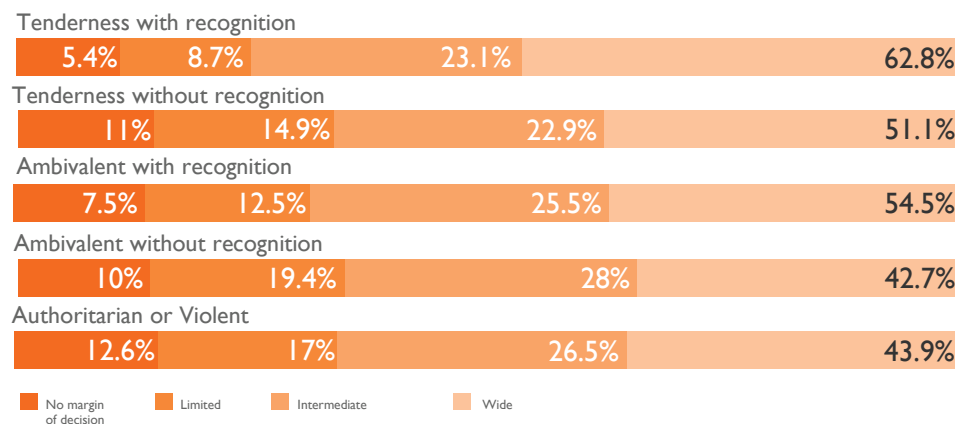


Source: self-elaboration

Chart No. 32

Regarding the way in which children's autonomy to make decisions varies according to the parenting style adopted by parents or other caregivers, the results indicate that children have more autonomy in those parenting styles in which boys and girls are recognized as subjects of rights. As can be seen in Chart No. 33, the 'tenderness with recognition' model has the highest percentage. Almost 63 % of the surveyed children that belong to this model reported that they have a wide margin of decision.

### Margin of decision according to parenting styles



Source: self-elaboration

Additionally, it is observed that in the parenting styles with no recognition of the children's condition as subject of rights, their margins of decision are lower than the models that recognize children. For instance, the percentage of the children who have a wide margin of decision in the 'tenderness without recognition' model decreases to 51%. It is worth noting that in this parenting style, one out of ten children has no margin of decision in their family. This is like the 'authoritarian or violent' model, whose no margin of decision is 12.6%. A similar situation happens in the 'ambivalent without recognition' and the 'authoritarian or violent' models. Both models have the lowest percentages regarding the wide margin of decision, whose are 42.7% and 43.9% respectively.



This is seen in more detail in two particular items of the survey. Chart No. 34 shows that 83.7% of the surveyed children almost always or always can choose what they wear, compared to 66.7% of the children who experience an authoritarian or violent model. It should be noted that in this same parenting style, more than 9% of the surveyed children cannot decide on this issue.

Chart No. 34

#### The Clothes I wear

##### Tenderness with recognition



##### Tenderness without recognition



##### Ambivalent with recognition



##### Ambivalent without recognition



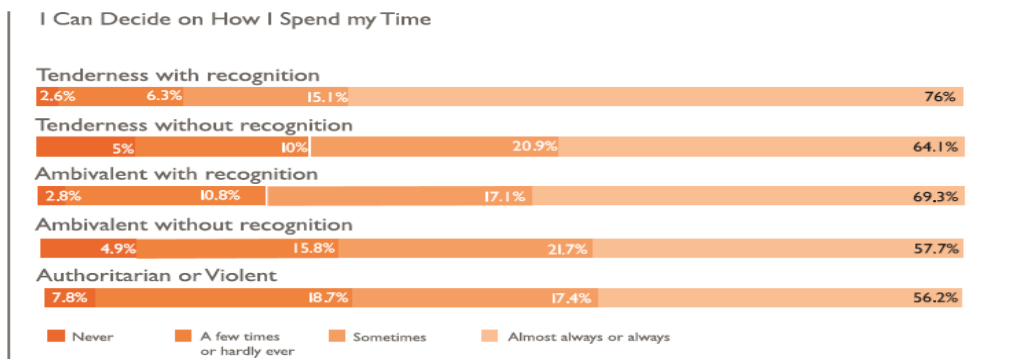
##### Authoritarian or Violent



Source: self-elaboration

The same tendency is observed in the case of the way children spend their time, because the 'tenderness with recognition' and the 'ambivalent with recognition' models have the highest percentages of autonomy. In both styles, 76% and 69.3% of the surveyed children almost always or always can decide how to spend their time. On the contrary, the 'ambivalent without recognition' and the 'authoritarian or violent' models have the lowest percentages on this issue, being 57.7% and 56.2% respectively.

Chart No. 35



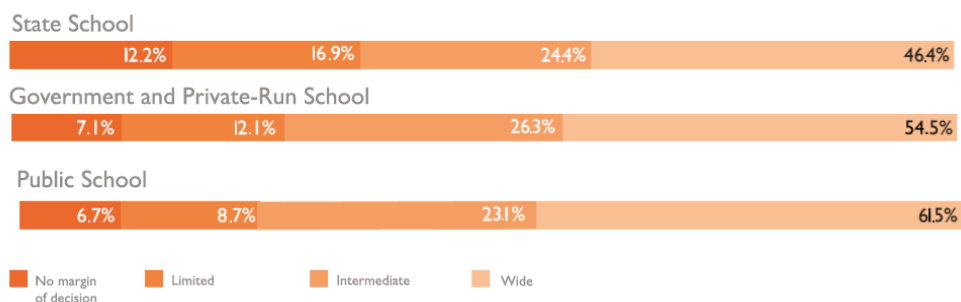
Source: self-elaboration

Finally, it should be noted that there are important differences between the type of school and the dimension under analysis. An analysis of all cases shows that children from state schools have lower margin of decision than the ones from government private-run schools, whose margin of decision is lower than the ones from public schools.

As shown in Chart No. 36, less than half of the surveyed children from state schools have a wide margin of decision; and 61.5% of those from public schools have a wide margin of decision. Inversely, the number of surveyed children from state schools who have no margin of decision at home is 12.2%; and 6.7% of the surveyed children from public schools have no margin of decision in their house.

Chart No. 36

### Margin of Decision According to Type of School



Source: self-elaboration





### I can decide on what I see on the Internet

Type of school	Never	A few times or hardly ever	Sometimes	Almost always or always
Public school	4.7%	5.7%	10.1%	79.5%
Government and private-run schools	4.4%	8.9%	14.9%	71.8%
State schools	8.8%	11.7%	16.5%	63.1%

### I can decide on the friends I meet

Type of school	Never	A few times or hardly ever	Sometimes	Almost always or always
Public school	3.9%	4.5%	9.5%	82.1%
Government and private-run schools	4.2%	8.4%	12%	75.4%
State schools	6.5%	11.5%	15.2%	66.9%

Table 10

Source: self-elaboration

As an example, Table 10 shows that 63% of the surveyed children from state schools can decide what they see on the Internet; almost 80% of the surveyed children from public schools can decide about the same issue. This is a difference of more than 15 percentage points between them.

A similar case can be seen in the second example. Almost 67% of the surveyed children from state schools can always or almost always decide about the friends they can meet; while in the case of public schools, the percentage is 82%. As a result, children from state schools have fewer opportunities to make decisions on everyday matters that involve them. This generates less chances to develop their progressive autonomy process.



# 5

## Topics for Urgent Discussion and Development of Recommendations

### Topics to debate urgently

The impact of the CRC, and the socio-cultural changes that Chilean society is experiencing explain, in an important way, the type of moral discourse that significant adults express regarding the expected behaviours in their parenting styles and in the type of relationships they should establish with their children.

Understanding the fact that the family continues to be a fundamental type of social organization in our culture, this research shows that the **mother figure's structure and centrality** is already present in almost all homes and it is part of children parenting. This research also highlights **the father figure's absence in the disciplinary models** and even more in the fields regarding the emotional support they can give to their children, mainly because they are not among the relatives who spend more time with the children.

It is not possible to understand adults' conceptions and opinions regarding affective expressions towards children, as well as the use of violence, without mentioning that modern moral discourse determines what they believe about the topic. Despite this, it is possible to recognize that **a discourse justifying the use of physical violence against children in disciplinary processes** persists. The **physical abuse symbolic minimization** is the main argument to justify or legitimize some types of physical punishment, and to detect its use at specific times. This is an explicit consequence of the long-term cultural structures that persist in this area because they support its naturalization and justification.

However, it is important not to ignore the fact that, within the framework of the current processes of changes, the contradictory conceptions explained in this area create polemics and ambivalences that explain the development of arguments and points of view that **oscillate between to penalizing, recognizing, and/or justifying the use of violence** against children in formative and disciplinary processes. The analysis of this discursive field is also consistent with the type of strategies, practices and resources that parents use in the parenting process.

The quantitative results of the research make it possible to identify and analyse the different practices and resources used by significant adults in their relationships with children and in the parenting and disciplinary processes. One of the analysed distinctive aspects is the contradictory and ambivalent nature of these processes. This has made it possible to affirm that Chilean families parenting processes works using what has been called the **disciplinary complex**. This is understood as a system that includes in a diffuse and ambivalent way, parenting styles based on tenderness and affection with others related to punishment and, in some cases, the use of violence.

From the perspectives of the children surveyed in this research, there are two parenting styles that have no violence: tenderness with recognition and tenderness without recognition. This research **concludes that tenderness is the style that should be encouraged in the parenting processes**, because in addition to being aligned with the principles established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it constitutes a possible alternative to transform interpersonal and structural relationships that negatively affect children in general and family environments<sup>24</sup>.

It is also evident that, when investigating children's family environments where violence is replicated, **there is a relation between the violence a percentage of children experience nowadays and the replication of those experiences, in the hypothetical case that these children become parents in the future**. The same happens with affective environments. Children who directly live in this kind of environments nowadays may be able to replicate them with their own children in the future.

Additionally, the new conception of childhood promoted by CRC requires an in-depth restructuring of the conceptions that are culturally and institutionally rooted in our society. In the current state of the situation, these changes provoke uneasiness and discomfort in the 'adult world', which not only is challenged, but also disconcerted. This can be seen in the opposite views which are developed about the children's autonomy and importance.

24 - As Schibotto states, a tenderness parenting 'is not something "cute" or "lovely"'. "Tenderness" is the emotional expression of a disposition to "listen", the willingness to empower the social and pedagogical skills used by the "marginalized social classes", especially used by low social class children. In this case, there is not only a willingness to listen, but also a conversational and diatopic availability, that is, the availability to place myself in the other's "logos", "place", or "territory" (2013: 18).

Beyond the ambivalences generated by children's autonomy and importance, it is possible to recognize that **middle social class adults value and assume autonomy as one of the normative criteria to carry out the parenting and formative processes**. This is a trait that should be encouraged in order to improve children's personal abilities, and particularly their development of their freedom. For other group of parents, children autonomy and empowerment become new types of difficulties that affect traditional ways of exercising parental authority.

According to children's self-perceptions, **boys and girls' autonomy is expressed with a wide margin of decision in various matters that concern them**. By the way, these margins of decision do not cease to be problematic and require the development of new capacities and resources for the current parenting models.

No contradictions are evident between the encouragement of children's autonomy and their right to be protected, when contrasting this research's perspective and the principles established by the CRC. In fact, **children's full care and protection also includes to protect their rights of participation and support during the processes of the development of their progressive autonomy**. Aligned with this, it is possible to highlight the guided participation concept (Rogoff, 1993) which is intrinsically linked to the learning and the development of socio-emotional skills relevant to the socio-cultural environments in which children live.

**The family should be considered as an ideal environment for children to learn and practice their right of participation**, encouraging 'reciprocal socialization among its members, the enrichment of their points of view, and the implicit respect for the other's individuality' (Save the Children, 2013:16). Interaction with relatives nourishes their development by creating imitative and collaborative relationships. This participation makes children progressively assume responsibilities, which helps to reinforce their self-esteem, because it makes them feel valuable and capable (Bornstein 2002) strengthening their defensive resources in case they have to face possible situations of violence.

The results show that there are no significant differences in parenting styles when they are analysed based on family configuration, household composition, type of school, or the children's sex. Consequently, the debate on children's parenting must give priority to an analysis of the factors that replicate those parenting styles that prefer or use punishment and maltreatment including their impacts on children and community life. In the face of this, any transformation effort must involve the encouragement of parenting styles based on tenderness and the recognition of children as subjects of rights.

## Areas for the Development of Recommendations

**The persistence of the use of violence and abuse against children in parenting** requires to redouble the efforts applied on social action and intervention areas in order to contribute to processes of socio-cultural change in institutional, community and family environments where children live (UNICEF 2012, Save the Children 2015, World Vision 2017).

Supporting processes of socio-cultural changes implies promoting important transformations in at least the following areas:

- a) The conception regarding childhood in order to recognize children as members of the society capable of establishing a constructive and responsible relationship with their significant environments.
- b) The type of relationships that the adult world prefers to establish with children to forge mutual respect bonds based on the recognition of the quality of each other's individuality.
- c) The parenting models that society must legitimize to ensure protective and enhancing environments for children capacities.
- d) Community links at local level so that the social surroundings where children live become protective environments for their development and well-being.

In order to advance in the processes of socio-cultural changes such as those mentioned, it is possible to distinguish 3 lines of action:

**Communication, preventive, and promotional strategies** which intend to raise the awareness of different types of actors, population and guarantors of rights, whose purpose is to help to promote a culture of rights and good treatment that protects children from possible violations of their rights and that assist the elimination of any type of violence or abuse against children.

This type of efforts should make it possible to report on the negative and adverse effects generated by the violation of the rights of the children and the use of violence in daily life.

Similarly, efforts must be redoubled to promote parenting models based on tenderness and good treatment.

**Formative strategies** fundamentally oriented towards adult world, fathers, mothers, and significant adults to develop and strengthen positive parental skills and capacities, including an approach based on tenderness and gender equity.

These formative strategies must include a specific effort to teach information and spread knowledge regarding the children's cognitive, affective, and social development.

Aligned with this, to develop a local socio-cultural education programme addressed to mothers, fathers, and significant adults that will allow to orientated towards issues relating to parental skills, self-care, assertive communication, the importance of games, and the problem of violence's naturalization.

To develop formative programmes for local monitors in human and children's rights so that they can promote cultural changes, educational agents in social and community environments, and a circle of care for the prevention of violence against children and the protection of their rights in case of violation<sup>25</sup>.

To develop skills at local level to generate and consolidate networks to prevent the use of violence against children, to protect them against situations of violation, and to promote respect for the full exercise of their rights. In the same way, to develop skills that allow to include and to strengthen the participation and importance of children as a protective factor of violation of their rights.

25 - According to Lansdown, 'children who are frequently motivated to express their points of views are less vulnerable to abuse and are able to contribute to their own protection in a better way. The access to the information they need to protect themselves, the opportunity to participate in key decision-making processes and the encouragement they perceive to express themselves can increase their own autonomy' (2005: 9)

**Institutional strategies**, oriented to develop and strengthen comprehensive protection systems at local level, in order to develop early warning capacities; specialized systems in order to intercede and support families in complex social situations; and provide accommodation, support, and recovery services for children who have suffered abuse, violence or other types of violations of their rights. This implies, among other types of actions:

Strengthening specialized outpatient and residential interventions with children who have suffered violence caused by their parents or caregivers, with emphasis on emotional, integral, recovery, and referral support.

Implementation of specific interventions with parents who have used violence against children.

In many cases, they are people who also experienced violence in their childhood, so they require a specialized follow-up process to recover, determine a new meaning, and qualify to exercise a positive parenting.

Strengthen social protection systems through an integral, systemic, coordinated, and timely intervention that ensures a network of protection and tracking of the well-being of the children and their families.

While the CRC assigns the responsibility for the children's parenting to the parents, the country as the primary guarantor of children's rights must provide the necessary assistance for the proper performance of their functions and protection of boys and girls. This requires actions such as the following ones:

To ensure adequate social, economic, and formative support so that families can carry out their functions and guarantee the children's integral development. This is understood as a basic and indispensable factor which ensures the exercise of positive parenting (Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, 2006).

To have a rights of the children Integral Protection Law and a system of guarantees that allows to progress in the definition of institutional tools and administrative, regulatory, and judicial mechanisms that make effective the promotion, defence, and protection of all children's rights.

Lastly, it is important to develop and strengthen monitoring and watchfulness capacities at national and local levels to ensure a systematic follow-up of the situation of the rights of the children, and permanent observation of the conditions and factors that assist maltreatment and violation of their rights. This type of system should be able to develop:

Researches about specific realities that allow to identify, analyse, and understand the factors that intercede and facilitate the use of all kinds of violence against children.

Evaluations that allow us to know the effectiveness of the strategies and actions developed to prevent situations of violation to protect children from breaches of their rights, and to promote their full exercise.



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