

Evolution of Gender Stereotypes in Spain: From 1985 to 2018

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Abstract

Background: Gender stereotypes are the images, beliefs, or expectations that people have about men and women. Have these stereotypes changed in Spain in recent decades? **Method:** In this study we present data on gender stereotypes in Spain in two different time periods (1985, N = 1060; and 2018, N = 802). **Results:** Results indicate that of the four components of the stereotypes analyzed (traits, role behaviors, occupations, and physical characteristics), the stereotypes in three of them have changed. In role behaviors and occupations, people perceive that men have increased their presence in female-linked gender roles and occupations, and that women have increased their presence in roles and occupations that are traditionally male-linked. Women in 2018 are more associated with physical characteristics traditionally associated with men, but men are not perceived as more associated with physical characteristics traditionally linked to women. In personality traits the stereotype has not changed: In agentic traits there were no differences between men and women in 1985 and in 2018; and communal traits were more attributed to women than men in 1985 and in 2018. **Conclusions:** These results show that although gender stereotypes still exist in Spain, they have changed considerably, at least in several dimensions.

Keywords: Gender stereotypes, sex role attitudes, social perception, Spain.

Resumen

Evolución de los Estereotipos de Género en España: de 1985 a 2018.

Antecedentes: los estereotipos de género son las imágenes, creencias o expectativas que las personas tienen sobre hombres y mujeres. ¿Han cambiado estos estereotipos en España en las últimas décadas? **Método:** presentamos datos sobre los estereotipos de género en España en dos periodos (1985, N =1060; y 2018, N = 802). **Resultados:** los resultados indican que de los cuatro componentes de los estereotipos analizados (rasgos, conductas de rol, ocupaciones y características físicas), en tres de ellos los estereotipos han cambiado. Se percibe que los hombres han aumentado su presencia en los roles y ocupaciones de género vinculados a las mujeres, y que las mujeres han aumentado su presencia en los tradicionalmente vinculados a los hombres. Las mujeres en 2018 aparecen más asociadas con características físicas tradicionalmente masculinas, pero los hombres no se perciben más asociados a las características físicas femeninas. En los rasgos de personalidad, el estereotipo no ha cambiado: en los agénticos no hubo diferencias entre hombres y mujeres en 1985 ni en 2018; y los rasgos comunales fueron más atribuidos a las mujeres que a los hombres en 1985 y en 2018. **Conclusiones:** estos resultados muestran que, aunque todavía existen estereotipos de género en España, han cambiado considerablemente, al menos en algunas dimensiones.

Palabras clave: estereotipos de género, roles de género, percepción social, España.

Gender stereotypes are the images, beliefs, or expectations that people have about men and women. Have these stereotypes changed in Spain in recent decades? According to some formulations (e.g., social role theory), stereotypes should change when social reality changes. Since the reality of men and women has changed in Spain in these decades, according to this approach, stereotypes should have changed as well. However, many other facts and perspectives suggest that stereotypes are resistant to change. In this research we assess the extent to which gender stereotypes have changed in Spain by comparing findings collected in 1985, with data collected in 2018. In participants from community samples, we analyze the change on gender stereotypes in four dimensions: physical characteristics, occupations, role-playing behaviors and personality traits.

Gender stereotypes have been defined as “the structured sets of beliefs about the personal attributes of men and women” (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1979, p. 222). Two dimensions have been considered central to gender stereotypes: *instrumentality or agency* and *expressiveness or communion* (Ellemers, 2018). According to the Stereotype Content Model (Cuddy et al., 2008), as with other groups that differ in status, men—the higher status group—tend to be perceived as high in competence (an aspect of agency), while women—the lower status group—are perceived with high warmth and low competence.

Mainly circumscribed to personality characteristics, this view of gender stereotypes has been challenged by some authors who claim the importance of other components in gender stereotypes. Thus, Ellemers (2018)—summarizing gender stereotypes and gendered expectations—considers that the male stereotype is focused on the domain of agency and individual task performance, prioritizes work, attributes the quality of competence to men, and neglects the needs related to interpersonal connection. The female stereotype is focused on the domain of communality and care for others, prioritizes family, attributes the quality of warmth to

women, and neglects the needs of professional achievement. Deaux and Lewis (1983, 1984), considered that in addition to personality traits, gender stereotypes comprised—at the very least—roles (e.g., caring for others, supporting the family), occupations (e.g., truck driver, hairdresser), physical characteristics (e.g., strong, soft voice) and sexual orientation.

Stereotypes can be descriptive—what a person is (e.g., “men are tall”)—and/or prescriptive—what a person should be (e.g., “men should have the initiative”) or what a person should not be (e.g., “women should not have the initiative”) (Burgess & Borgida, 1999). In the case of gender stereotypes, it has been found that the prescriptive aspect is especially important (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Thus, gender stereotypes implicitly impact the expectations that we have about the qualities, priorities, and needs of individual men and women, as well as the standards to which we hold them (Ellemers, 2018). In accordance with this, women who behave in line with the stereotype are evaluated more positively than women who seem to challenge gender-stereotypical expectations (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994). Gender stereotypes convey the idea not only that women tend to be less agentic and warmer than men, but also that this is the way they should be (Ramos et al., 2018).

Multiple studies show the existence of gender stereotypes in Spain, especially considering roles, activities or occupations. Thus, Fernández et al. (2014), found that the perception of gendered activities within the domestic sphere (e.g., fix a plug, take care of the baby), measured with explicit and implicit measures, still existed in Spanish society. Spanish students also tended to perceive some careers, as Psychology, related to feminine stereotyped traits, whereas Industrial Engineering profession was associated to masculine traits (Barberá et al., 2008). Gender-role stereotyping (e.g., “It’s natural for men and women to perform different tasks”) was also detected in the study of López-Sáez et al. (2008), although it showed a marked decline between 1993 and 2001—the change was higher in work-related roles than in family roles (López-Sáez et al., 2008). Other studies have also demonstrated the existence of gender trait stereotyping, as the association of attributes related to hardness (e.g., harassing, assaulting, hitting...) to a greater extent to men than to women, and the association of attributes related to tenderness (e.g., caressing, collaborating, caring) more to women than to men (Cantera & Blanch, 2010). Finally, De Lemus et al. (2014) found that an automatic activation of the traditional gender stereotypes (men-competence, women-warmth) emerged when female participants were presented with a man or a woman portrayed in an office context, but not when the protagonist appeared in a domestic one, as is the case of a kitchen.

There are arguments both in favor and against flexibility and change in gender stereotypes. The proposal represented by the Social Role Theory (SRT; Eagly, 1987) supports the vision of gender stereotypes as something changing, as long as the social situation of men and women changes. According to this theory, gender stereotypes stem from people’s direct and indirect observations of women and men in their social roles. To the extent that those roles involve enactments of agentic or communal behaviors, people will assume that the average man and woman will have corresponding traits that enable them to perform the expected role behaviors. Thus, for instance, in a study by Eagly and Steffen (1984), knowing a person’s social role—either as homemaker or employee—was more diagnostic of communal and agentic traits, respectively, than knowing a person’s gender. Several pieces of research using the research paradigm named

dynamic stereotypes (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000) have corroborated the Social Role Theory assumptions. In this paradigm, participants are asked to imagine the average woman or man in the present or in a specific past (e.g., 1950) or future year (e.g., 2050) and to rate the extent to which they imagined that the target person had different (both positive and negative) masculine and feminine personality traits (e.g., adventurous, arrogant, affectionate, whiny), cognitive abilities (e.g., analytic, creative), and physical characteristics (e.g., physically strong, cute). Results showed that people believe that women of the present are more masculine than women of the past and that women of the future will be more masculine than women of the present, especially in personality characteristics. Stereotypes about men portrayed them as relatively unchanging. Using this paradigm, a study comparing the responses of college students from Spain, Germany and the United States (López-Zafra et al., 2008) found that women were perceived as increasing in their masculinity (agency) over time, and that this increase was greater in Spain than in the other two countries; in addition, both men and women increased in communality over time, and this increase in Spain was also greater. Also in Spain, on this occasion with participants from the general population, García-Retamero et al. (2011) found that participants perceived women as more masculine over time, especially in positive personality and cognitive attributes. Men, by contrast, were believed to remain stable in masculine attributes, although there was a tendency for men to increase in masculine cognitive attributes over the years. Results also reveal that men were estimated to increase in feminine attributes on all dimensions; women were expected to decrease in feminine negative personality and physical attributes, but to remain stable in feminine positive personality attributes. Other studies, with different methods, have also supported Social Role Theory ideas. For instance, Eagly et al. (2020), in a meta-analysis integrated by 16 nationally representative U.S. public opinion polls on gender stereotypes ($N = 30,093$ adults), extending from 1946 to 2018, found that women’s relative advantage in communion (e.g., affectionate, emotional) increased over time, but that men’s relative advantage in agency (e.g., ambitious, courageous) showed no change; moreover, belief in competence equality increased over time, although women were perceived as more competent than men (e.g., intelligent, creative).

Other approaches and research support the idea that gender stereotypes are resistant to change and are not necessarily a reflection of reality. Such resistance is linked to the different roles that stereotypes can perform and the motivations that underlie their origin and persistence (Huici, 1984). A principle function is cognitive, closely linked to the process of categorization, that is the process by which categories become coherently separable and clear through the detection and accentuation of relevant similarities and differences (Tajfel, 1981); these similarities and differences constitute group stereotypes. People need to categorize and stereotype other people because they need to save time and effort; in an environment that contains too much information, it is very adaptive for the perceiver to attempt to reduce this information overload. Secondly, stereotypes can serve to explain social reality (Huici, 1984; Tajfel, 1981). For instance, the lower presence of women in leadership positions can be explained by believing that women have fewer qualities for these roles. Likewise, what some people regard as the ills of society (e.g., unemployment, loss of values) can be attributed by such people to women’s liberation. Thirdly, stereotypes can

serve to justify or rationalize discrimination against women or certain actions directed toward them. Thus, for example, the idea expressed in benevolent sexist beliefs that women are wonderful but weak creatures (Glick & Fiske, 1996), or the more general idea of complementarity between men and women, can serve to justify actions (e.g., aggression) toward women when they leave their traditional roles (Abrams et al., 2003). Fourth, stereotypes are anchored in intergroup relationships, and consequently they serve the individual achievement of a positive social identity; one way to achieve this is by favoring ingroups or discriminating against outgroups (Tajfel, 1981). Finally, stereotypes can play a social adjustment function, reflecting that people are sensitive to normative concerns when it comes to experiencing and, of course, expressing their stereotypes (McGarty et al., 2002).

Some authors have empirically examined the persistence or change of gender stereotypes in the United States, but results are not matching. Thus, Haines et al. (2016), using Deaux’s approach that includes personality traits, role behaviors, physical characteristics and occupations in gender stereotypes, found that between 1983 and 2014 gender stereotypes had changed little. However, Eagly et al. (2020), analyzing national surveys conducted in the United States from the 1946 to 2018, which included stereotypical perception measures in terms of competence and communion, found a major change in such stereotypes. Nevertheless, the different methodologies used in both studies, as well as the different stereotypical content analyzed, are inhibitive to drawing conclusions in favor of stability or change in gender stereotypes.

The situation of women in Spain has changed in many respects over the past four decades. The Franco dictatorial regime in Spain (1939-1975) supported the traditional division of labor between men and women, expecting the latter to take care of the household and have children exclusively. A woman was not allowed to work, to open a bank account or to apply for a passport without her husband’s or father’s permission, and women were even prohibited from holding some jobs. The 1978 democratic Constitution opened a door for Spanish law to guarantee the same treatment of women and men. At the same time, Spain’s economic and social development contributed significantly to the advance of real equality between men and women. Thus, for instance, the activity rate for Spanish women aged between 16 and 64 rose from 27.6% in 1985 (Rodríguez Osuna, 1997) to 53.08% in 2018 (Instituto de la Mujer, 2020a). In secondary school, women represented the 54% of the students in 1981-82 academic year (Alberdi & Alberdi, 1984) and at university level, women represented 49.5% of alumni in 1985-86 and the 54.87% in 2016-17 (Instituto de la Mujer, 2020b). In relation to the incorporation of women into certain professions, the first promotion of women national police inspectors occurred in 1979, and women’s access to the role of police officers and to the army happened in 1985 and 1989, respectively.

However, although the social situation of women and men in Spain has been progressively converging, some important differences remain. For instance, in the university field, in the 2016-17 academic year, women accounted for 69.71% of students in health sciences, but only 25.56% in engineering and architecture (Instituto de la Mujer, 2020b). In terms of work, in 2019 the employment rate for women was 44.8% and 56.3% for men (INE, 2020a), while the unemployment rate was 16.24% for women and 12.79% for men (INE, 2020b). Also, in respect of the sectors in which they worked in 2018 (Instituto de la Mujer, 2020a), the most feminized economic activities are the activities of households as domestic employers

and as producers of goods and services for their own use, health and social services activities, and education; in all these branches, women accounted for more than 60% of activity.

Regarding domestic work, the burden continues to fall with much greater intensity among women than among men. Thus, according to the INE (2020c), 47.4% of working women and 31.5% of working men carry out daily care and education activities with their children or grandchildren, and 77.5% of working women and 32.9% of working men carry out daily cooking and domestic work. And when it comes to hours, women often double men.

Method

We assessed the extent to which gender stereotypes have changed in Spain by comparing the earlier findings collected in 1985, with data collected in 2018. In both the 1985 and the current study participants were asked to estimate the likelihood that a man or a woman had a set of male-typed and female-typed characteristics.

Participants

One thousand and sixty people participated in 1985, 581 of whom responded to the questionnaire in which they were asked to rate the “average man” (54.8%), and 479 of whom responded to the “average woman” questionnaire (45.2%). Participation on a voluntary basis was requested by a group of researchers’ collaborators. Table 1 presents the sociodemographic information of the participants in 1985 and 2018. Participants were quite diverse in terms of their age, marital status and educational level.

Eight hundred and three people participated voluntarily in 2018 at the request of a group of researchers’ collaborators. The men’s questionnaire was answered by 398 participants (49.6%) and the women’s questionnaire by 405 (50.4%).

Table 1
Frequencies related to participants’ gender, age, marital status and educational level in 1985 and 2018 samples

Variable		1985		2018	
		n	%	n	%
Gender	Men	525	49.5	356	44.3
	Women	535	50.5	446	55.6
	Not reported	0	0	1	0.1
Age	15-24	448	42.3	470	58.5
	25-34	308	29.1	92	11.5
	35-44	98	9.2	49	6.1
	45-54	116	10.9	126	15.7
	≥ 55	73	6.9	65	8.1
	Not reported	17	1.6	1	0.1
Marital status	Single	454	42.8	524	65.2
	Married/cohabiting	422	39.8	216	26.9
	Divorced	26	2.5	52	6.5
	Other/Not reported	158	14.9	11	1.4
Educational level	Primary school	413	39	197	24.5
	Secondary school/ vocational training	379	35.7	315	39.2
	University (completed or not)	201	19	267	33.3
	Not reported	67	6.3	24	3

Instruments

To select a wide and diverse repertoire of items that would represent the gender stereotypes, we looked at the main scales and questionnaires that have been used for the study of such stereotypes (e.g., Williams & Best, 1982). As such questionnaires only contain personality characteristics and we were interested in selecting other types of sex-stereotyped attributes, we investigated scales concerning sex role stereotypes, which mainly contain role-playing behaviors and activities (e.g., Deaux & Lewis, 1983; Helmreich et al., 1982). Finally, we selected 98 items, attempting to ensure that those that appear repeatedly on the aforementioned scales and questionnaires were present and that there might be equal proportions of items traditionally associated with men and women (Moya & Pérez, 1990). It was necessary to introduce some items on our part, especially in the case of work occupations, since such items were not included in other pieces of research, and many of those included in Deaux and Lewis (1983)'s study were not considered applicable to the Spanish population at that time. The 2018 study eliminated some of the items included in 1985 and included other new items.

In this paper we include only 74 items that were used in the 1985 and 2018 studies. All items, including the means, standard deviations, and *p* values for man and woman targets can be found at https://osf.io/gs9ym/?view_only=17b008c0fdf1479cad3ca34d6d3f64ea

These items can be divided into four subgroups: eleven physical characteristics (5 traditionally associated with men—e.g., broad-shouldered, and 6 with women—e.g., soft voice), 11 occupations (6 traditionally associated with men—e.g., automobile mechanic, and 5 with women—e.g., hairdresser), 11 role-playing behaviors (6 traditionally associated with men—e.g., repairs and maintains the car, and 5 with women—e.g., cooks the meals), and 41 personality characteristics (18 traditionally associated with men—e.g., competitive, and 23 with women—e.g., emotional). The inclusion of the largest number of items in the latter category is because it is among these characteristics that the differences between men and women have traditionally been emphasized.

In the 2018 study, inter-item reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was .89 for male-linked traits and .9 for female-linked traits; .76 for male role behaviors and .86 for female role behaviors; .9 for

male occupations and .87 for female occupations; and .74 for male physical characteristics and .7 for female physical characteristics.

Procedure

Both studies were described as social perception research in which there were no right or wrong answers. Participants rated each of the 74 characteristics in terms of how they applied to a man or a woman in a between-subjects design. Responses ranged from 0 (extremely unlikely) to 100 (extremely likely). Before the gender rating tasks, the participants completed warm-up items to familiarize themselves with the task. Component items were randomly ordered within the booklets.

Data analysis

Our objective was to analyze the strength of perceived differences between the man and woman's categories, as well as the level of stability or change, by comparing the data obtained in 1985 with those obtained in 2018. In both studies, mean probability judgments were computed for each of the items by condition (man or woman). Mean probability judgments were computed for each male- and female-typed component: agentic traits, communal traits, female gender roles, male gender roles, female-typed occupations, male-typed occupations, female-linked physical characteristics, and male-linked physical characteristics.

Results

Table 2 provides the means, *r* effect size values, and standard deviations for female and male components from both the 1985 and the 2018 analyses. The effect size *r* was used to determine the strength of the stereotype. We used an *r* to *z* transformation, recommended by Preacher (2002), to determine if there was evidence of stereotype change across the two time periods.

Gender Stereotypes in 1985

As seen in the 1985 data in Table 2, participants clearly stereotyped men and women on the majority of gendered

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, Difference, and *r* Values in 1985 and 2018 Data Sets

	1985				2018				R-Change 1985-2018	pValue (two-tailed)
	Man	Woman	M-W	1985 R	Man	Woman	M-W	2018-R		
Agentic traits	56.63 (20.75)	56.46 (20.43)	0.03	.00	61.00 (21.73)	61.71 (22.71)	-0.75	-.03	-0.03	.52
Communal traits	52.35 (20.37)	62.42 (19.52)	-10.53	-.24	53.78 (22.10)	62.06 (21.04)	-8.66	-.19	-0.05	.26
Male gender roles	60.76 (20.65)	43.19 (21.53)	17.56	.38	61.90 (23.78)	56.46 (22.97)	5.43	.11	-0.27	0***
Female gender roles	37.65 (21.69)	77.39 (17.57)	-39.74	-.71	50.11 (24.45)	67.46 (20.72)	-17.36	-.33	-1.29	0***
Male-typed occupations	39.77 (24.36)	20.90 (18.93)	18.87	.40	49.78 (33.83)	39.69 (21.03)	10.09	.16	-0.25	0***
Female-typed occupations	30.74 (22.16)	47.76 (25.79)	-17.02	-.33	43.39 (24.09)	60.86 (25.12)	-17.48	-.33	0	1
Male physical characteristics	57.24 (18.37)	45.23 (17.36)	12.02	.32	64.08 (20.35)	58.28 (21.25)	5.8	.14	0.18	0***
Female physical characteristics	46.65 (17.52)	57.72 (18.4)	-11.07	-.30	49.91 (20.94)	60.47 (20.67)	-10.57	-.25	-0.05	.25

Note: The *p* values that represent the *r* to *z* transformation (Preacher, 2002) are two-tailed. *Ns* for 1985 M-W comparisons are 1060. *Ns* for 2018 M-W comparisons are 802. M-W = man–woman.
****p* < .001, two tailed

components, with the exception of agentic traits. More associated with man than woman targets were found to be male-linked physical characteristics, male-typed occupations, and male gender role behaviors; but agentic traits were no more associated with man than woman target. More associated with women than men were female-linked physical characteristics, female-typed occupations, female gender role behaviors and communal traits.

Gender Stereotypes in 2018

In order to analyze whether participants in 2018 perceived gender stereotypes, we conducted a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to compare judgments of man and woman targets on each component in the 2018 data. Participants' gender was also included as independent variable. There were overall man–woman target differences on the components, $F(8, 791) = 65.21, p < .001$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .60$, partial $\omega^2 = .40$. The man–woman differences were statistically significant on each of the individual components except on agentic traits, $F(1, 798) = .4, p = .53$, partial $\omega^2 = .001$; communal traits, $F(1, 798) = 93.63, p < .001$, partial $\omega^2 = .1$; male gender roles, $F(1, 798) = 21.14, p < .001$, partial $\omega^2 = .03$; female gender roles, $F(1, 798) = 195.4, p < .001$, partial $\omega^2 = .2$; male-typed occupations, $F(1, 798) = 45.8, p < .001$, partial $\omega^2 = .05$; female-typed occupations, $F(1, 798) = 163.49, p < .001$, partial $\omega^2 = .17$; male-typed physical characteristics, $F(1, 798) = 35.36, p < .001$, partial $\omega^2 = .04$; and female-typed physical characteristics, $F(1, 798) = 113.71, p < .001$, partial $\omega^2 = .12$.

As seen in the 2018 data in Table 2, participants stereotyped men and women on the majority of gendered components, with the exception of agentic traits. Thus, more associated with man than woman targets were male-typed physical characteristics, male-typed occupations, and male gender role behaviors; but just like 1985, agentic traits were not more associated with man than woman target. More associated with women than men were female-typed physical characteristics, female-typed occupations, female gender roles, and communal traits. As can be seen, the differences were greater when it came to traditional female attributes (vs. male ones).

Regarding participants' gender, there were overall man–woman target differences on the components, $F(8, 791) = 2.9, p = .003$, Wilks's $L = .97, \eta_p^2 = .028$. Differences were only significant in the case of male-typed occupations, $F(1, 798) = 6.93, p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .009$ and female-typed occupations, $F(1, 798) = 10.37, p = .009$, $\eta_p^2 = .013$. In both cases, female participants gave higher scores than male participants. The interaction between the type of questionnaire (man/woman target) by participants' gender was not significant, $F(81, 791) = 1.12, p = .34$, partial $\eta_p^2 = .011$.

Gender Stereotypes in Spain in 1985 and 2018

To compare the gender stereotypes of 1985 with those of 2018 we used the r to z transformation recommended by Preacher (2002) to compare the two data sets.

Traits

As seen in Table 2, perceptions of gender trait differences remained consistent between the two time periods. In the case of agentic traits, there were no differences between men and women in 1985 nor in 2018. A comparison of these effect sizes for agentic traits ($r = .0$ in 1985 and $r = -.03$ in 2018) indicates no evidence

of stereotype change across the two time periods ($p = .52$). With regard to communal traits, women continued to be rated as more communal than men ($r = -.24$ in 1985 and $r = -.19$ in 2018) and there was no significant change between the two time periods for communal traits ($p = .26$). It can also be observed that in the case of agentic traits, they were more associated with men in 2018 than in 1985 ($r = -.1$); these agentic traits were also more associated with women in 2018 than in 1985 ($r = -.12$). In the case of communal traits, scores were quite similar in 1985 and 2018, both for man target ($r = -.03$) and for woman target ($r = -.01$).

Role Behaviors

Ratings of female gender role behaviors showed greater differentiation in 1985 ($r = -.71$) than in 2018 ($r = -.66$); the r to z transformation indicates that this constitutes a significant decrease in gender stereotyping on female gender role behaviors ($p < .001$). Ratings of male gender role behaviors also showed greater differentiation in 1985 ($r = .38$) than in 2018 ($r = .11$); the r to z transformation indicates that this constitutes a significant decrease in gender stereotyping on male gender role behaviors ($p < .001$).

Occupations

Male-typed occupations showed greater differentiation in 1985 ($r = .4$) than in 2018 ($r = .16$); the r to z transformation indicates that this constitutes a significant decrease in gender stereotyping on male gender role behaviors ($p < .001$). Nevertheless, in female-typed occupations, the same large differences between stereotypes of men and women found in 1985 ($r = -.33$) remained in 2018 ($r = -.33$); a comparison of this effect size for female occupations indicated no evidence of change over time ($p = 1$).

Physical characteristics

Estimates of female and male physical characteristics remained distinct across the two time periods. In 1985, the judgments of male physical characteristics yielded an effect size of $r = .32$, while the effect size was $r = .14$ in 2018; the r to z transformation indicates that this constitutes a significant decrease in gender stereotyping on male physical characteristics ($p < .001$). In female-linked physical characteristics, effect sizes were $-.30$ in 1985 and $-.25$ in 2018, and there appears to be no change in stereotyping across the two time periods on female physical characteristics ($p = .25$).

Discussion

The results show that gender stereotypes have changed in Spain from 1985 to 2018, though with nuances and depending on the components of stereotypes.

Regarding the differences in the evaluation of man and woman targets across the different types of items, our results show that in four types of items differences in the perception of man and woman targets have not changed: agentic traits (there were no differences in 1985 and the same occurred in 2018); communal traits (these were more attributed to women than men in 1985 and the pattern was similar in 2018); female-linked occupations (more attributed to women than men in both time periods); and female physical characteristics (more attributed to women than men in both time periods). In the other four types of items, differences

in the perception of man and woman targets have changed, in all the cases in the same direction—differences were weaker in 2018 in comparison with 1985: the association of male-linked gender role behaviors, male-linked occupations and male-linked physical characteristics more greatly with men than with women; and the association of female-linked gender role behaviors more greatly with women than with men.

Our findings do not match those found by Haines et al., (2016). The authors, who used U.S. samples and a similar methodology, compared gender stereotypes in 1983 and 2014 and found that these stereotypes had not changed. Our results largely support the postulates of the Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987), according to which gender stereotypes can change as long as the social situation of men and women changes. As we have indicated, the situation of women in Spain has changed over recent decades and, clearly, the stereotypes of men and women in two specific fields have changed: gender role behaviors and gender-typed occupations, allowing a reduction in the differences between stereotypes of men and women that existed 1985. In the case of male gender roles, men were perceived quite similarly in 1985 and 2018, but women were perceived as increasing in their performance through the time. Regarding female gender roles, the perception is that men have increased their execution through the years and women have decreased it from 1985 to 2018. Therefore, it can be said that there has been a convergence in the stereotype of men and women within gender roles: men have increased in female roles and women have increase in male roles, a result that seems to reflect what has happened in Spanish society during this time and that has been also found by López-Sáez et al. (2008). The same pattern can be observed in the case of occupations: Men are more perceived in female-typed occupations in 2018 than in 1985 and women are more perceived in male-typed occupations in 2018 than in 1985.

In personality traits, we also observe that women are perceived as having more agentic traits in 2018 than in 1985 (although perceptions of men have changed in the same direction). This pattern is similar to the findings of Diekmann and Eagly (2000), with US samples and López-Zafra et al. (2008) and García-Retamero et al. (2011) with Spanish samples, but differs from the results of López-Sáez et al. (2008) who did not find any change in stereotypical personality traits in the period from 1993 to 2001. In the case of communality, although López-Zafra et al. (2008) and García-Retamero et al. (2011) found that both men and women increased in communality over time, our results indicate that

levels of communality for man and woman targets were perceived similarly in 1985 and 2018.

However, the fact that part of gender stereotypes has changed should not allow us to forget that gender stereotypes still exist in 2018. In all the components analyzed, except in agentic traits, participants attributed them differentially to men and women. Thus, women were seen as more communal than men, playing traditionally masculine roles to a lesser degree and traditionally feminine roles to a greater degree, occupying less male-linked occupations and more female-linked occupations, and having fewer male-linked physical characteristics and more female-linked physical characteristics. These differences in the attribution of roles, occupations and activities to men and women have also been found in other studies conducted in Spain (Barberá et al., 2008; Cantera & Blanch, 2010; De Lemus et al., 2014; Fernández et al., 2014). Given these considerations, one can argue that there may be many cognitive and motivational reasons for stereotypes not changing to the same degree as does reality.

The research presented has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the best way to analyze the temporal change of a phenomenon is through a longitudinal study, in order to see how the phenomenon changes within the same group of people. This study is cross-sectional, and although the two samples studied may be similar, we cannot be sure that the results are not due to differences in the people studied. A second limitation is that we do not have the individual data from the first study (1985), although we do have the average and SD scores of each item. This limitation prevents us, for example, from performing a MANOVA including the year of conducting the study as an independent variable. However, to have two samples of the general population collected in Spain in a time span of 33 years is, we believe, an important attribute of this study that can provide us with information on the changes that have occurred in Spain regarding gender. In addition, there are statistical tools to compare both periods, even if you do not have the individual data of the first.

The observed changes in gender stereotypes—parallel to the social changes in the situation of men and women in Spain—support the importance of further changes in economic and social reality, because, to the extent that these changes deepen, stereotypes are likely to change. Changes in stereotypes are very important because there is consistent evidence of their influence on judgments, assessments and decision-making, as much in everyday life as in specific contexts (e.g., the workplace).

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