

When the survey findings were compared to macro-data, it emerged that there was cognitive dissonance. This resulted from the fact that there was a discrepancy between the way the respondents answered and what happens in reality. This might be due to a number of reasons – systemic structural and institutional barriers may be preventing people from acting out on what they believe.

## Recommendations

- From the research, it was made clear that more needs to be done to address misogyny and toxic masculinity through education, training of professionals and awareness raising.
- To ensure a change in attitudes and values, different institutions in Maltese society need to work in tandem.
- State-led initiatives need to tackle underlying ideologies about gender roles, unpaid care work, and the respective roles the state, market, and family need to play in providing care for young children and other vulnerable family members.
- Promoting women's employment on a national basis is not enough. Unpaid work undertaken in the private sphere needs to be shared, while the earner-caregiver model needs to be facilitated with generous and coordinated statutory work-family policy schemes made available in both the private and public sectors.

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# The Prevalent Gender Role Perceptions and Attitudes among Adults Living in Malta



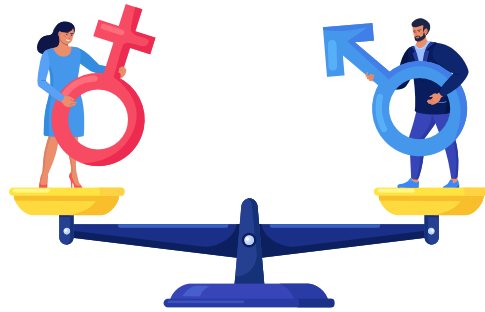
June 2023



## Executive Summary

Gender stereotyping and inequality in everyday life and in the workplace continue to strongly inhibit society as they limit people's freedom of choices and actions. Traits associated with women and men keep the traditional stereotypes alive, resulting in different levels of abuse and domestic violence. However, women and men should have a level playing field with the same opportunities for growth both on a personal, social and professional level.

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) has a long history of ongoing efforts to promote and strengthen gender equality, and, in challenging the traditional roles of women and men in society. To strengthen the competence of its research work, the Commission, in collaboration with the Faculty for Social Well-Being at the University of Malta, embarked on a research study to shed light on the extent to which the patriarchal mentality is still present in society and the impacts it has on the opinions and attitudes of the population in Malta.



## The Purpose of the Research Study

The aim of the research study was to investigate the prevalence of traditional gender roles and attitudes among adults living in Malta and to find out whether sexual stereotypes prevail within the different strata of the population, taking gender, age, education, employment, civil status and district into account.

## Method of Data Gathering and Analysis

Data was collected through a survey which included questions focusing on the perceived attitudes towards gender role expectations regarding women and men, girls and boys. Participants were contacted by telephone in January of 2023. These included 645 adults aged 18 years and over living in Malta.



## Overview of Findings

Overall, participants tended to uphold progressive gender role perceptions, especially regarding gender roles in the public sphere. On the other hand, some traditional gender role expectations emerged:

- Taking care of young children and elderly dependents was seen as something women do, a view espoused mainly by female participants.
- Most of the participants were less likely to agree that playing with dolls is alright for boys.
- Participants held gender-typical assumptions about how they assumed men and women express themselves emotionally. They believed that women burst into tears and men turned aggressive when it comes to expressing themselves emotionally.
- They also retained traditional assumptions that men are more rational by nature.



Overall, when taking the percentage variables, it emerged that:

- Female participants had more progressive gender role perceptions than their male counterparts.
- Those aged between 18 and 35 years held more progressive gender role perceptions.
- Those with a post-secondary level of education and higher held more progressive gender role perceptions.
- When it came to civil status, those with no children were more likely to have progressive gender role perceptions.
- With regards to the district, Northern Harbour and Northern-based residents had more progressive gender role perceptions.
- When it came to occupation, students held the more progressive gender role perceptions.