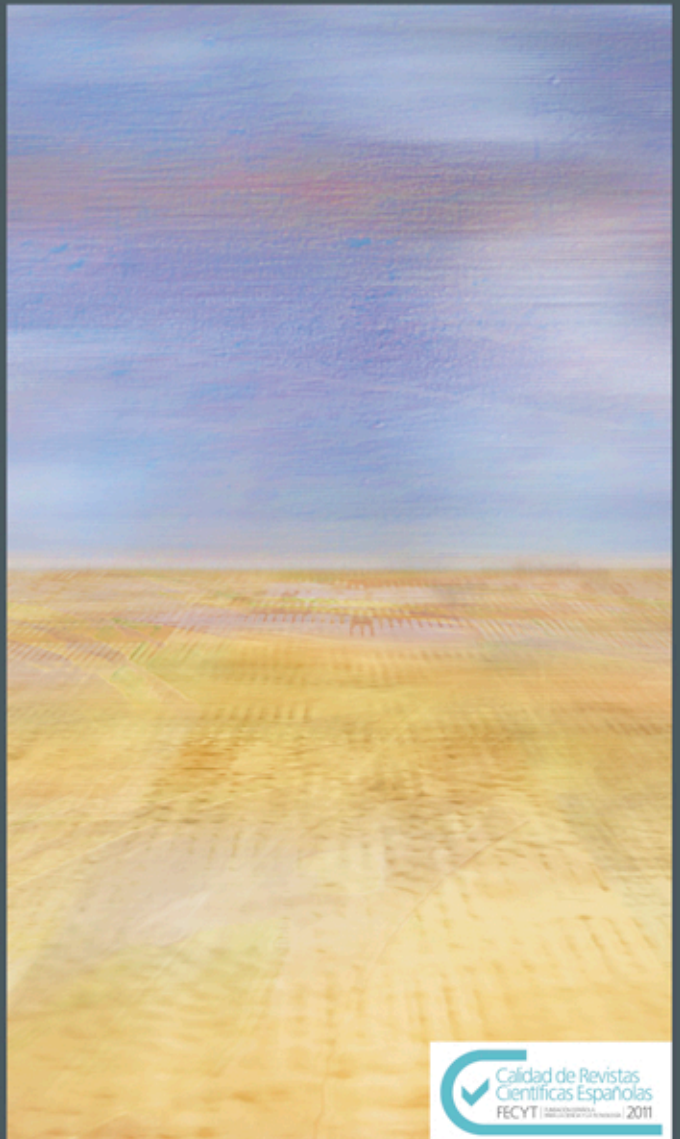# The Importance of Work, Family and Leisure among Girls Finishing Compulsory Education

M.ª Teresa Padilla-Carmona

The Importance of Work, Family and Leisure among Girls Finishing Compulsory Education[1]

Importancia del trabajo, la familia y el ocio para las alumnas al final de la educación obligatoria

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the profiles of attribution of importance to three life-roles (work, family and leisure) of 185 adolescent girls about to finalize their period of compulsory education and, therefore, to face an extremely relevant decision concerning their future. After the data collection (questionnaire, self-image inventory, teachers' and families' appraisals of performance, marks registration), a cluster analysis was conducted in order to identify groups of responses among participants. Results indicated that girls grant a different level of importance to life-roles, or to different combinations between them. Three groups can be identified: one group of girls who grant a great importance to both work and family roles; another who appraise work and leisure highly, giving little importance to the family role; and, finally, a third group of girls that seem to be essentially concerned with taking care of the family and being mothers.

Key words: Profiles of attribution of importance to life-roles, work role, leisure role, family role, women's career planning, cluster analysis.

Resumen

Este artículo examina distintos perfiles de atribución de importancia a tres papeles vitales (familia, trabajo y ocio) de 185 alumnas que están a punto de finalizar la Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria y que, por tanto, se enfrentan a una decisión sobre su futuro educativo y vocacional muy relevante. La recogida de datos se realizó con diferentes métodos, que engloban la aplicación de un inventario para conocer la imagen que las alumnas tienen de sí mismas, así como unas escalas que recaban las valoraciones que sobre su rendimiento hacen sus profesores y su familia. Además, se aplicó un cuestionario semiestructurado a las alumnas y se registraron sus calificaciones a final de curso. Para el análisis de información, se aplicó el análisis *cluster* a fin de identificar grupos entre las alumnas de acuerdo con sus preferencias en cuanto a los tres papeles vitales. Además, se aplicó el análisis de la varianza (ANOVA) y el método de comparaciones múltiples de Scheffé para determinar las principales diferencias entre los grupos identificados con el análisis *cluster*. Los resultados muestran que las alumnas conceden diferentes niveles de importancia a los tres papeles vitales considerados, o a diferentes combinaciones entre ellos. Se concluye con la identificación y descripción de tres grupos de alumnas: las que conceden una gran relevancia tanto al trabajo como a la familia; las que conceden mucha importancia al trabajo y al ocio, considerando menos relevante el papel familiar; y, finalmente, un tercer grupo más reducido de alumnas que parecen estar esencialmente interesadas en el cuidado de la familia y la maternidad.

Palabras clave: perfiles de atribución de importancia a los roles vitales, papel del trabajo, papel del ocio, papel de la familia, planificación de la carrera vital y profesional de las mujeres, análisis *cluster.*

Introduction

Previous research (Ciamon and Rich, 2002*a;* Moya, Expósito and Ruiz, 2000; Perrone, Webb and Blaclock, 2005; Raldúa, 2001) has found differences in the importance that adult men and women attribute to three life-roles: family, work and leisure. The simultaneous development of these roles can sometimes create conflict, where competing demands placed upon individuals lead to increased stress or dissatisfaction (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). The most outstanding and studied instance is the conflict between work and family care (Adams, King and King, 1996; Burley, 1994;

etc.). Initially, this conflict can affect both genders, though it is more frequent in women, for whom socialisation includes an emphasis upon and a greater commitment to childcare (Gilbert, 1993). As a result, women confronted with a need to combine work and family responsibilities experience significant difficulties (Bacik and Drew, 2006; Vincent, Ball and Pietikainen, 2004).

We believe that reconciling the demands of work and family, as well as the basic need to participate in leisure activities, should be an important goal of career guidance programs. In fact, these programs place an excessive emphasis on the work role, failing to consider the durable connection between it and other life-roles. Because life-roles are balanced differently according to gender, identifying such expectations among young people is of great importance if we want them to make responsible and informed decisions and life plans.

In spite of its relevance, few studies address the patterned differences between men and women in assigning importance to these three life-roles (Cinamon and Rich 2002*a*, 2002*b*). Particularly in Spain, there is a lack of research that would deepen our understanding in this area. A few studies (Aguiar, García and Pérez, 2001; Moya, Expósito y Ruiz, 2000) have focused on the different importance that adult men and women attribute to these life-roles. Though previous research in our country (i.e., Donoso, Figuera and Rodríguez-Moreno, 2011; Santana, Feliciano and Jiménez, 2012; Sánchez et ál., 2011) has established the influence of gender in the career decision making process, we know little, however, about young people who are in the midst of making decisions about their future careers.

This lack of information is especially important in Andalusia, where despite the considerable advances in gender equity in recent decades, the woman's role within the family has remained rather traditional. Though in urban areas men and women tend to share responsibility for household chores and child-rearing, in more traditional, rural areas, the gender differences are greater. For this reason, we believe that it is necessary to study the specific importance that young girls attribute to family, work and leisure. This is the starting point from which they make their decisions about the future. The completion of Compulsory Secondary Education (undertaken between 12 and 16 years of age) is a key moment when girls must opt for a specific itinerary (e.g., leaving school, going to high school or going to vocational training). This particular stage, therefore, provides the most suitable focus for our research.

This study is concerned with identifying how individuals, particularly girls between 12 and 16 years of age, attribute importance to various life-roles. We seek to better understand the way in which they pursue their vocations and to know the background against which they make plans for their lives and careers. This study identifies the relative importance of three life-roles (family, work and leisure), as well as other relevant variables (self-image, marks and performance expectations), in a sample of female adolescents facing the completion of their compulsory education and, therefore, facing extremely relevant decisions concerning the future. A cluster-analysis was carried out to identify common patterns in the way life-roles are valued. This analysis will hopefully help female students achieve their goals in education, career and life.

Balancing life-roles and values

Super (1957, 1990) highlighted the need to simultaneously explore the relative importance of different life-roles through his life-span, life-space theory. His work suggested that individuals at any stage in their life-span can explore an increasing multiplicity of roles. Moreover, their involvement in and commitment to these multiple roles will vary over their life-spans. According to Super (1990), each of us balances life differently. Personal factors (e.g., needs, values, interests) and situational factors (e.g., family, neighbourhood, gender or racial bias) interact to shape our life-role self-images and present us with career development tasks. However, role-conflict may result whenever the demands of two or more roles are not compatible or easily manageable. Roles that are central to a person's self-image, for example, will demand greater time and energy and thus leave less time and energy for other roles (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985).

However, deciding which role takes priority is not easy and requires a high degree of self-awareness. In this context, life-role salience becomes a central concept for theory and research. Life-role salience refers to the motivating force for life-role participation (Super, Savickas and Super, 1996). If a life-role is important to us, it is likely that we will engage in the behaviours that prepare us to take on that life-role. As already stated, different people have different life-role salience patterns, and they seek to attain different values. To the extent that these values reflect young people's intentions and goals, these values make sense of their lives and plans.

In studying role congruence and conflict, the interplay of gender roles with other life-roles must be considered. Research has demonstrated that there are gender differences in young men and women's values, and these differences lead to different choices (Jaeger and Tittle, 1982; Madill et ál., 2000). Identifying these differences is of great importance in order to better accomplish the mission of helping students achieve their educational, career and life goals.

The complex relationship between work, family and leisure roles

As the number of women in paid work (and so the number of dual-career families) has rapidly increased, the work-family conflict has become the most common role conflict for many people. Consequently, it has spawned a great deal of research on how people reconcile the demands of both roles (Cinamon and Rich, 2002*a;* Bacik and Drew, 2006; Craig and Sawrikar, 2009; Grzywacz and Marcks, 2000; Perrone, Webb, and Blaclock, 2005).

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined the work-family conflict as a form of friction wherein pressures from work compete with those from the family domain. More precisely, role pressure incompatibility exists when participation in one role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in another role. They proposed that this conflict is intensified when one role is salient and central to the person's self-image.

Cinamon and Rich (2002*a*) examined simultaneous attributions of importance to work and family roles in a sample of employees. They identified three distinct groups of participants exhibiting a patterned difference in the way they attributed importance to work and family roles. The three groups may be summarised as follows: the *Work* profile (employees who attribute the highest importance to the work domain), the *Family* profile (employees with the highest scores in family), and the *Dual* profile (people who attribute importance to both family and work). The researchers demonstrated that incompatible pressures from work and family domains influence individuals in predictable ways and may be grouped according to the importance that individuals attribute to life-roles.

With regards to gender influence on work-family conflict, higher levels of conflict among women have been predicted (e.g., Burley, 1994; Frone, Russel and Cooper, 1992). However, results have not sufficiently confirmed such predictions. Some authors (e.g., Cinamon and Rich 2002*a,* 2002*b*) have suggested that these diverse findings highlight a need to carefully

attend to the variations in men and women's beliefs about role importance rather than to generalise a specific set of beliefs and attitudes for each of these groups.

Ciamon and Rich (2002*a*) found that women scored higher than men in both parenting and work values, and there were also gender differences in the distribution between the profiles. Whereas more men than women fit the *Work* profile, more women than men fit the *Family* profile. There were no differences in the *Dual* profile. In the study among Andalusian couples developed by Moya et ál. (2000), men and women attributed the same importance to their careers, though career salience among men was more independent of personal factors and relationships than women's career salience.

Despite the lack of complete agreement in the findings, clearly many women continue to make an either-or choice (Shapiro, Ingels and Blake-Beard, 2008), and the work-family choice can adopt different forms: staying at home, self-employment, part-time jobs, etc. In any case, there is evidence that gender plays an important part in the role-salience patterns and the values reflected in them.

Because, in general, women continue to provide care to children and dependents while simultaneously juggling the demands of their workforce participation, their career development issues, concerns, tasks and responsibilities, moulded by the work-family pressures they experience, may be distinctly different from those of men (O'Neil and Bilimoria, 2005). Thus, on account of family responsibilities, women's careers may take on forms, continuity and advancement patterns, and directions substantially different from those of men.

With regards to leisure and its connections with family and work, leisure is best considered as another life domain, and sometimes a life-span perspective is missing when approaching this concept (Cassidy, 2005). The relative importance can be accounted for by a wide range of combining reasons reflecting perhaps individual differences in motives and needs (Trenberth and Dewe, 2005).

The international, comparative analysis of Raldúa (2001) has demonstrated that there are differences in the function of leisure among women and men. This work highlights the greater difficulty women have in incorporating leisure activities into their life-schemes. In general, women devote less time than men to basic needs, personal care, work and leisure, and more time to maintaining the household. Men, in contrast, participated more in career and leisure activities (Perrone et ál., 2005). It

is important to note that, according to this study, there are differences in how men and women spend their time but not in how they wish they could spend it or in what they value. This suggests that if men and women were able to structure their lives in accordance with what they felt was most important, there would be no gender differences in role participation (e.g., parenting, leisure, career). Hence, there were no significant differences in what men and women considered their ideal role participation.

Similar results have been obtained in our geographical context (the Andalusian region). The study by Aguiar et ál. (2001) analysed the investment of time and attribution of importance to life-roles among men and women. Though women assigned higher importance to family, work and leisure, there were not significant differences with men. However, the differences *were* significant when, instead of appraising the importance of these roles, the participants scored the time actually devoted to them. In this case, compared with men, women judged leisure to be an important activity, but they had little time to devote to it and little flexibility in how they used their time.

Adopting a life-span approach, gender differences in the leisure role start at the childhood stage (McHale, Kim, Whiteman y Crouter, 2004) and persist during adolescence and into adulthood (Lloyd, Grant and Ritchie, 2008; Raymore, Barber and Eccles, 2001). For this reason, the topic of how adolescents use their leisure time has recently received increasing attention in the literature (e.g., Jacobs, Vernon and Eccles, 2004). As Raymore et ál. (2001) pointed out, participation in certain activities during adolescence may influence a number of pathways into adulthood and contribute to the increased heterogeneity observed across one's lifespan. Adolescents who do not participate in certain forms of leisure may potentially have fewer pathways into and across adulthood. However, research suggests that the pattern of these changes differs for males and females: young women are more likely than males to either drop or decrease time spent on leisure activities with the onset of marriage and parenthood (Crawford and Huston, 1993). For females, being married or living with a partner for at least six months appears to result in a shift from being highly involved in organisations, volunteer activities, religion and sports to spending time with family, watching TV, and reading. These findings are consistent with literature that suggests that being in a long-term relationship has different effects on the leisure of males and females and that the principal impact is a decrease in leisure outside the home for females.

In spite of the fact that the research findings and the investigated topics are diverse, there seem to be gender differences in the importance that both males and females attribute to the three life-roles analysed. This background leads us to think that boys and girls plan their futures through different approaches. We are especially interested in young women's plans and, more specifically, in the values they seek and the importance they attribute to three main roles in their lives: work, family, and leisure. These patterns of role salience can be the basis upon which young women make their decisions and plan their future lives.

This paper is focused on identifying their attribution of importance to three life-roles, while taking into account other outstanding variables, such as personal and academic self-image and their parents' and teachers' expectations for academic achievement.

Following the suggestion made by Cinamon and Rich (2002*b*), we deem it important to identify not only differences between males and females, but also the possible variations in women's beliefs about role importance. We also agree with O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) that the differential impact of family responsibilities on men's and women's careers is one of the critical factors in making a compelling case for treating women's careers in and of themselves as entities worthy of focused investigation.

Method

Participants

The sample is made up of 185 pupils in their final year of Compulsory Secondary Education (aged 15-16) belonging to six public, rural education centres in the Huelva county of Andalusia, in southwest Spain. These centres are located in geographical areas in which various socio-economic activities predominate (e.g., livestock, fishing, tourism, industry, mining, and the agrarian sector).

Selection was carried out in conformity with the quota sampling procedure. A minimum of 30 girls were planned to be interviewed in each of the economical areas. As this is a non-probabilistic sampling, we are

prevented from knowing the margin of error with which we make generalisations in the population. However, this decision is justified by our dependence on the interest of schools (and management and teaching teams) in this study and their willingness to facilitate the information-gathering process. Informed consent was obtained after holding a meeting in each of the schools in which parents were informed about all the steps and requirements of the study.

As shown in Table I, most of the participants belong to families in which fathers have a low-qualification job and mothers do not work. This is a very common pattern in rural settings in Andalusia; the father is the *breadwinner,* and the mother is responsible for the domestic work, including raising the children. There are a considerable percentage of fathers (33,6%) who work in semi-skilled jobs, along with 13,4% of mothers.

TABLE I. Fathers' and mothers' occupation

Occupation	Mothers	Fathers
Low qualification jobs	18,5%	41,1%
Medium qualifications jobs	13,4%	33,6%
High qualification jobs	4,6%	9,3%
Unemployed	2,1%	3,7%
Retired or unable to work	2,1%	12,1%
Housewife/househusband	59,2%	0,00%

Data collection

Information was gathered via the following procedures. First, pupils were given a self-image inventory to complete. This inventory was designed ad hoc but partially based on the test of García and Musitu (2001). The inventory has two different scales. One is made up of 16 items that allow for the appraisal of different facets of socio-personal self-image (physical, emotional, social and family). The other has nine items that address how pupils understand their own performances in different subjects

(Mathematics, Language, Science, Technology, etc.). A study of the test's reliability shows an alpha coefficient of 0,74 for the first scale and 0,75 for the second. At the end of this instrument, pupils are asked to rate, from *Very negative* to *Very positive* (five degrees), their trajectory through Secondary Education.

A semi-structured questionnaire gathered information concerning various aspects of female students' career decisions (the type of studies they would like to pursue, their preferred professional areas, etc.) and the relative importance they attributed to aspects such as motherhood, education, work, leisure and being in a relationship. From this, information about the following variables was extracted:

- *Global importance assigned to the roles of work, family and leisure.* In seven questions, two terms of reference are presented that comprise activities related to each of the roles considered (e.g., *Having free time to do the activities that I like vs. getting career advance*). Finally, the choices of the three areas are added up and we obtain a global score of the importance granted to each role, which ranges from 0 to 5 for work and family roles and from 0 to 4 for the leisure role.
- *Relative importance of family, work and leisure.* This consists of five terms of reference related to these roles that the participants have to order according to their importance in their lives.

Likewise, teachers were asked to grade the performance level of each of these students in each subject using a scale ranging from 1 (low performance) to 6 (high performance). The alpha coefficient for the scale is 0,87. Thus, a global score is generated for each pupil. The result is an appraisal of average student performance.

Similarly, the pupils' mothers or fathers were asked to appraise their daughters' trajectories in Secondary Education, from *Very negative* to *Very positive* (five grades).

Finally, once the school year had finished, we were provided access to the marks obtained by pupils (ranging from 1 to 5)[2]. Given that the subjects

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[2] These are the values assigned to numerical marks in the Spanish educational system: *Suspenso (fail):* 1; *Aprobado (pass):* 2; *Bien (good):* 3; *Notable (very good):* 4; and *Sobresaliente (excellent):* 5. *Fail* indicates that a pupil has not achieved the necessary learning to pass a subject. The other levels indicate the learning acquired.

studied by each pupil differ according to their educational itinerary, those five subjects common to all of the itineraries were selected: Mathematics, Language and Literature, Foreign Language, Social Sciences and Physical Education.

Procedure

The aim of this work is to identify patterns among young girls in relation to their answers to the study's most relevant variables. This task requires applying a cluster statistical technique. The cluster method used is a hierarchical procedure based on the criterion of the average intergroup distance.

Though the instruments mentioned above supply information about other variables as well, the variables finally chosen for the cluster analysis included the following: the general importance granted to work, family and leisure time; the average marks; the average performance expectations in various subjects according to teachers; the global score in global self-image and the average score in the self-appraisal of performance in school subjects. We have paid particular attention to variables that summarise or average other, more specific ones (as, for example, the average marks, which summarises in a single score the marks a pupil obtained in all the subjects she studied).

Once the groups were identified, differences between their averages in a set of variables were analysed. These are, on the one hand, the same variables that were used for forming the groups and, on the other hand, the variables that turned out to be most relevant. These variables include the following: the relative importance of the five roles or vital values (being part of a relationship, having qualifications, getting a job, being a mother and using free time), the self-appraisal of the trajectory through Secondary Education, the appraisal of this trajectory by their parents and the various facets of self-image (physical, emotional, social and family).

The averages and standard deviations in all these variables were obtained for each of the three groups of pupils and ANOVA, unidirectional analysis of the variance, was used to estimate whether the differences in the averages were statistically significant. Likewise, the Scheffé procedure of multiple comparison was applied to identify the groups whose differences were significant ($\alpha = ,05$).

Results

The cluster analysis (see Figure i) showed that five groups can be identified, two of which are composed of a small number of subjects (one and three pupils). Thus, in the following analysis, we worked with three groups with a total of 181 pupils: Group 1 with 91 girls (50,3%), Group 2 with 73 (40,3%) and Group 3 with 17 (9,4%). This is the final composition of the groups whose differences are analysed by ANOVA. This analysis allowed us to go deeper into the characteristics and peculiarities of each group of pupils identified via the cluster analysis.

In Table II, we present the ANOVA results, specifically the F values and their respective p values. As was to be expected, the highest F values –and therefore the most significant ones– correspond to the variables used in the cluster analysis, with the exception of the global self-image. However, there were other significant F values with p values below ,01. These include the relative importance of motherhood and getting a good job, the students' self-appraisal of the academic trajectory in secondary education and the family's appraisal of this course and the academic self-image.

TABLE II. Anova results to compare the averages of the three groups of pupils

Variables	F / p values	Scheffé p values
Relative importance of being in a relationship	1,416/0,245	
Relative importance of having university studies	2,238/0,110	
Relative importance of being a mother	9,404/0,000	Groups 1-3 = ,003 Groups 2-3 = ,000
Relative importance of getting a good job	6,162/0,003	Groups 1-3 = ,004
Relative importance of disposing of free time	0,804/0,449	
General importance of work	34,120/0,000	Groups 1-3 = ,000 Groups 2-3 = ,000 Groups 1-2 = ,000
General importance of the family	69,734/0,000	Groups 1-3 = ,000 Groups 2-3 = ,000
General importance of free time	26,197/0,000	Groups 1-2 = ,000 Groups 1-3 = ,026

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Family appraisal of the trajectory in Secondary School	12,488/0,000	Groups 1-2 = ,000
Self-appraisal of the trajectory in Secondary School	9,850/0,000	Groups 1-2 = ,000
Average of marks	77,112/0,000	Groups 1-2 = ,000 Groups 1-3 = ,000
Average of teaching appraisals	80,355/0,000	Groups 1-2 = ,000
Global personal self-image	2,778/0,065	
Physical self-iamge	1,803/0,168	
Emotional self-image	0,390/0,678	
Social self-image	1,806/0,167	
Family self-image	3,029/0,051	
General academic self-image	17,953/0,000	Groups 1-2 = ,000 Groups 2-3 = ,004

The three groups of students differed from each other in the aforementioned aspects and were similar in their scores for global, physical, emotional, social and family self-images as well as in the relative importance they granted to being in a relationship, obtaining a college degree and enjoying leisure.

Regarding the results of the Scheffé test, the following can be noted:

- In the general importance granted to the work role, a significant difference existed between Group 3 and the other two (p = ,000).
- In the general importance given to the family, the differences were significant between all the pairs of possible groups (p = ,000).
- In the general importance given to leisure, differences existed between Groups 1 and 2 (p = ,000), and 1 and 3 (p = ,026).
- In the relative importance of motherhood, significant differences were present between Group 3 and the other two (p = ,003 for Group 1; p = ,000 for Group 2).
- In the relative importance of work, the only significant difference was between Group 1 and Group 3 (p = ,004).
- With respect to the self-appraisal of the trajectory in Secondary Education, a significant difference existed between Groups 1 and 2 (p = ,000).

- Between the Groups (1 and 2), the only significant difference was in the variable *Appraisal by the family of the trajectory of the pupil in secondary education* (p = ,000).
- In the marks and the average of the performance expectations according to the teachers, significant differences existed between Group 1 and the other two (p = ,000 in all cases), but not between 2 and 3.
- In the academic self-image, significant differences existed between Groups 1 and 2 (p = ,000) and Groups 2 and 3 (p = ,004).

FIGURE I. Dendrogram after cluster analysis

Grupo 1 (n=91)

Grupo 2 (n=73)

Grupo 3 (n=17)
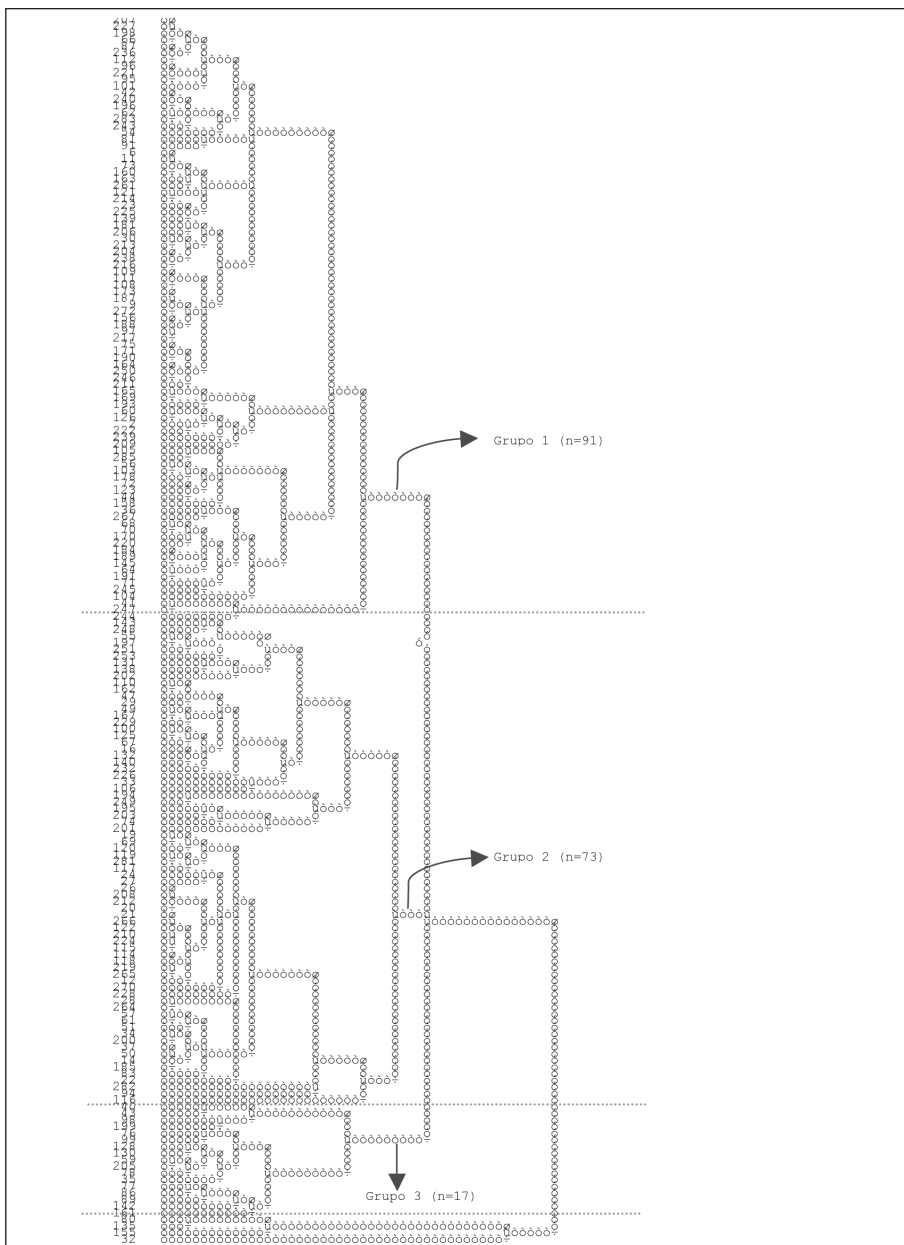
To synthesise all of this information and to show more clearly the common and differential characteristics of the three groups of pupils that came out of the cluster analysis, we have collected the information in Table III. Here, the averages of the three groups in all the variables are presented, along with symbols visually indicating whether the average is lower or higher. This estimate is only intuitive and approximate and is always relative to each variable: the interval in which it can oscillate and the averages reached by the three groups. Despite their intuitive and almost subjective character, we hope that the symbols help clarify which aspects best characterise each group. In any case, the average that emerged as the objective estimator is always indicated.

TABLE III. Comparison of the averages of the three groups of pupils in some of the most relevant variables

	GROUP 1 $n_1 = 91$	GROUP 2 $n_2 = 73$	GROUP 4 $n_3 = 17$
LIFE VALUES			
General importance of work	3,44 ↑↑	3,10 ↑	1,47 ↓
General importance of the family	3,06 ↑	2,32 ↓	4,35 ↑↑
General importance of leisure	0,51 ↓	1,47 ↑↑	1,12 ↑
Relative importance of motherhood	1,92 ↑	1,64 ↓	2,94 ↑↑
Relative importance of work	4,40 ↑↑	4,21 ↑	3,77 ↓
SCHOOL TRAJECTORY			
Self-appraisal of the trajectory in Secondary Education	3,47 ↓	4,01 ↑↑	3,71 ↑
Family appraisal of the trajectory in Secondary Education	3,42 ↓	4,18 ↑↑	3,88 ↑
AVERAGE OF MARKS	2,40 ↓	3,85 ↑↑	3,42 ↑
AVERAGE OF TEACHERS' APPRAISALS	3,00 ↓	4,51 ↑↑	4,24 ↑
ACADEMIC SELF-IMAGE	3,94 ↔	4,60 ↑↑	3,94 ↔

Note: The symbols used are: ↓, if the group average is the lowest of the three; a ↑, if the average is the second in amount; a ↑↑, if it is the highest average of the three; finally, a ↔, indicates that the averages are similar.

Conclusions and discussion

The results show that the work role was very important for most of the girls about to decide on their future career and life plans. This is especially important if we take into account that, in most cases, they come from families in which the mothers were housewives and thus did not work outside the home. Certainly, it implies a generational shift, from a model in which woman are completely devoted to family and home life (their mothers' model) to one in which woman are economically independent (their own). Lupton and Schmied (2002) explained this trend as a growing acceptance of the notion that women's identities, like men's, are closely related to their involvement in paid work. As feminist ideas have gained dominance and women's participation in paid work has increased, the ideal of the autonomous, independent self who gains fulfilment and self-actualisation through paid work now applies to both women and men.

Regarding the patterns of attributing importance to life-roles, we have identified three groups of adolescents. The first of these (Group 1), in which almost half of the participants in the cluster analysis are included, is made up of girls who place great importance on both the roles of work and family. Work is more important for them, but it is followed closely by the family role. There is a low value given to leisure and having free time in this group. This last role seems, for them, to be the most expendable of the three. If they continue in this vital schema, they may become more prone to experience a conflict of roles in adulthood, in that the demands of both roles are mutually incompatible (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1983) and can interfere with each other (Adams et ál., 1996). Another feature that characterises Group 1 is a lower performance in school. This is apparent in all the variables that, in one way or another, evaluate performance (marks, personal and family appraisal of trajectory and teachers' expectations about performance). However, these pupils do not present a lower level of academic self-image than those in Group 3. The average in each case, therefore, is exactly the same. Nevertheless, the differences between both groups and Group 2, whose girls have a higher academic self-image, are significant.

A second group (Group 2) of adolescents characteristically appraises work and leisure highly, giving little importance to the family role. In the two variables relating to leisure, they have the highest average of all the girls (though their differences are only significant with respect to Group 1).

Their appraisal of the role of mother and housewife is the lowest of the three groups. For these girls, this role seems to be less important than the others. The girls of Group 2 are also characterised by high scores in all the variables related to performance, having the highest average marks.

The third and smallest group (Group 3) comprises girls essentially concerned with taking care of the family and being mothers. Their averages in these two variables are significantly higher than those of the other groups. Their averages in the two variables centred on the importance given to work are also significantly lower. Their appraisal of leisure, on the other hand, is at an intermediate level with respect to the other two groups. On the whole, these girls wish, above all, to be mothers and to establish a family. Leisure is as important for them as work, and their appraisal of other life-roles are at a lower level relative to family and motherhood. Likewise, the appraisal of their performance tends to be always in an intermediate position among the three groups.

The results of this study suggest that there are different patterns of attributing importance to the three life-roles of work, family and leisure among adolescent girls who are finishing compulsory schooling. Girls grant different levels of importance to these roles or to different combinations of them. This finding suggests that there are differences in how they value the performance of these roles, which in the medium- and long-term may have important consequences for their life and career plans. As Super (1990) suggested, these value expectations reflect the importance given to each role and the degree to which performance can satisfy an individual's needs.

In general, the results of our study confirm the findings of the study of Cinamon and Rich (2002*b*). It should be noted that the samples and procedures for information gathering were different in the two studies. These authors obtained three profiles: *Work, Family* and *Dual.* The girls taking part in our study reflect these profiles grosso modo. Those of Group 1 show a *Dual* profile (the same importance given to work and to the family). Those of Group 2 have similar answers to the *Work* profile (though in our case they also appraise leisure, a variable that was not included in the study of Cinamon and Rich, 2002*b*). Those of Group 3 have a profile similar to that of *Family* (having given a higher appraisal of this role).

We must note that a large portion of the pupils (Groups 1 and 3) attributed great importance to the family role, perhaps as a consequence of the gender socialisation process. Especially in the case of Group 3, the

family is given priority over career advancement and leisure activities, as Gilbert (1993) and Moya et ál. (2000) suggested.

The secondary position given to the leisure role should also be noted. Only the girls in Group 2 give leisure the same level of relevance as work. For the rest, leisure is on a lower level. This indicates that it is an area in which they are willing to make sacrifices. Perhaps this is the origin of gender differences found in other studies among those taking part in leisure (Aguiar et ál., 2001; Perrone et ál., 2005).

If, as Raymore et ál. (2001) suggest, taking part in leisure activities in adolescence can contribute to a greater heterogeneity of leisure activities in adulthood, the low value that the participants attribute to leisure possibly derives from a lower participation in leisure when the demands of other life-roles appear in adulthood. Certainly, in a society that grants increasing importance to work at the expense of other life-roles, a reflection that empowers a greater articulation between them is required (Haworth and Lewis, 2005).

Educational and career counsellors should consider career choice in relation to other life spheres, especially one's dedication to family and enjoyment of leisure activities. Programs like that of Cinamon (2006) should prepare students for blending life-roles. Our study clearly shows that adolescents have various patterns of attributing importance to life-roles. This is why their starting points for decision-making and career planning are different. Likewise, and especially in the case of females, it is important for counselling programs to emphasise the interest of leisure as a life-role. As we have shown, girls seem most disposed toward sacrificing this role.

As Perrone et ál. (2005) suggest, there are many forms of combining life-roles, and the subjects vary in the time they dedicate to each role. There is not a 'correct' answer as to the amount of time that people should devote to different roles. They themselves are the ones who must find their own correct answer. That is why career counsellors should help students –especially females– examine their ideal role structure and work towards greater congruence between what they value and how they allocate their time within and between roles (Perrone, Wright and Jackson, 2009). Only in this way is a balance between roles and satisfaction with one's life achieved.

The results cannot be widely generalized, as we do not work with a representative sample. As a result, this work can only be considered as

a preliminary, exploratory approach to the interconnection of life-roles in the career development of girls. Likewise, this research has some limitations due to the use of measures designed ad hoc. This has prevented us from analysing their psychometric properties with samples other than the one used in the current study. In addition, the cluster analysis has limitations related to the need to assign each subject to one and only one cluster. Girls sharing features of two clusters may only be assigned to one of them. Other data-collection techniques, as in-depth interviews or focus group, could have provided an additional, complementary insight into this topic, deepening our knowledge about girls' plans and decisions.

Future research should explore differences between adolescent girls and boys in their patterns of assigning importance to life-roles. The aim of this study was to explore the background against which girls make their decisions and plan their personal and professional projects. Boys' opinions about the importance of work, family and leisure were not taken into account. Both sexes may have common patterns, or these patterns may differ. In any case, it is important to describe what values are central to them and how they plan their futures.

Future research would also benefit from employing time-use measures as an alternative way of operationalising life-roles. As pointed out by Perrone et ál. (2005) and Aguiar et ál. (2001), what men and women value in relation to life-roles does not differ, but there *are* differences in how they spend their time. Hence, it is not only a question of what is important for both men and women, but also a matter of devoting time to each activity.

Finally, special attention should be paid by researchers and theorists to girls like those in Group 3 who placed the greatest value on family and motherhood. The labour of caring for children largely goes without acknowledgment and respect in contemporary Western societies. It is not associated with economic productivity and is seen as unskilled, mundane and non-intellectual (Lupton and Schmied, 2002). As our study suggests, as well as that of Palladino (2009), many women have defined and will continue to define motherhood as a career, yet none of our career development theories do so. Consequently, the career development challenges of women who mother remain invisible in contemporary research. Understanding their decisions and their experiences is an unresolved matter for research.

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