

Achievement Imagery in Women's Lives From Adolescence to Adulthood

Glen H. Elder, Jr.

Departments of Human Development and
Sociology
Cornell University

Deborah J. MacInnis

Graduate School of Business
University of Pittsburgh

Situational influences have long been recognized as a primary source of variation in the relation between achievement imagery and behavior. These situational influences occur within the evolving life course and reflect both the past and the anticipated future. Using a well-known longitudinal archive, this study views situational incentives in the anticipated careers of adolescent girls as a contextual determinant of the relation between their achievement imagery and behavior from adolescence to early adulthood. The analysis identifies two motivational trajectories: the social-marital path of achievement-oriented girls who claimed a domestic or family-centered future and the worklife-career sequence of highly motivated girls (high need for Achievement) who favored family *and* work interests. The first career sequence links achievement motivation with investment in activities that are part of the sequence of dating, courtship, and marriage. Boys and dating ranked high in the adolescence of these young women, and they tended to bear more children in their adult years. In the second career of education and work, the achievement imagery of girls is related to their IQ, grades, and conversational topics that are about other than boy-girl issues. In young adulthood these women tended to finish school, marry, and start a family at a later age. The study highlights the value of a life-course perspective on achievement thoughts and motivation across the life span.

The relation between achievement motivation and behavior warrants greater consideration within the life course. Typically, the behavioral expression of need for Achievement (*n* Ach) has been examined within a situation-specific framework,¹ but the temporal frame of action extends beyond specific situations to the experienced and anticipated life course. Achievement motivation acquires more precise meaning and direction when examined within the context of life goals (e.g., vocational desires). Two goal frameworks (family-centered/domestic and career oriented) specify different lines of action for

women's achievement concerns. The first entails achievement through marriage and parenting, whereas the second involves achievement through education and work life.

Veroff and Feld (1970, p. 117) specified these two goal frameworks with female domestic and career scenes on Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) cards. Using a large nationwide sample (a 1957 survey), they generated separate scores from each type of card and resulting story. Home-centered achievement predicted marital satisfaction and happiness, whereas career motivation predicted feelings that marriage placed heavy restrictions on one's life. For unknown reasons this design was not applied to other role domains in the study, that is, parenting and work roles. French and Lesser (1964) brought life span

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Requests for reprints should be sent to Glen H. Elder, Jr., MVR Rm. NG-28, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14853.

¹ An overview of achievement research and related issues may be gained from Heckhausen's (1980) volume, which covers the literature in Europe and North America; from McClelland's (1980) appraisal of conceptual and measurement issues; and from Atkinson's (1981) theoretical extension in formal terms.

concepts into their study by the use of questionnaire items that distinguished the traditionally oriented from the career oriented. These two groups of women were compared in terms of performance on intellectual and social skills tasks. Achievement-oriented women (high *n* Ach) in the traditional group did best on the social-skills task when it was linked to success as a wife and mother. Career-oriented women who ranked high on *n* Ach performed best on the intellectual task when it was tied to career advancement. The findings from both studies support a life-course hypothesis (Elder, 1975, 1981; Rossi, 1980): The achievement thoughts and motivation of women are positively related to specific lines of action only when these actions conform to a valued life course.

This article reports a study of both adolescent and adult elements of the hypothesis using longitudinal data on women from the Oakland Growth Study (Elder, 1974). These women were born in the early 1920s, grew up in the Great Depression, and launched their families during the Second World War, an event that marked the beginning of an unparalleled era of affluence and domesticity. The Oakland project began during the early 1930s as a study of the physical, social, and intellectual development of normal children. All study females attended elementary school in the northeastern sector of Oakland, California and most completed high school in the same local region. Seventy-six were followed through the 1930s and 1940s to the middle years. Nearly two-thirds came from working-class families. Annual data collections during the 1930s included interviews with the mothers, peer ratings, staff observations in free-play situations, and a variety of self-reports.

An initial study of *n* Ach and behavior among the Oakland females was carried out by Skolnick (1966) in the mid 1960s as part of a larger program of research at the Institute of Human Development, University of California, Berkeley. Skolnick found little evidence that girls with achievement themes in their TAT stories stood out on scholastic performance or on other evidence of achievement striving in their preadult years. However, she did not consider the possibly divergent career lines these girls intended to pursue in their future life course. For ex-

ample, there is good reason to regard high scholastic performance as characteristic only of the achievement orientation of girls who saw their future in terms of educational advancement and a career. Good grades have little direct payoff for enhanced prospects in mate selection.

The Oakland study extends the time frame of the Veroff and Feld (1970) study by adding the years from early adolescence to middle age. With only cross-sectional data, Veroff and Feld could not trace a sense of marital restrictiveness among women who reported achievement behavior in a career setting to achievement themes much earlier in life, such as adolescence. From a developmental standpoint, the critical issue is whether achievement imagery during the adolescent years matters for adolescent and adult choices. Is it true, as Veroff and Feld (1970, p. 135) assert, that "having children" was a "major accomplishment for a woman" in postwar America, an action that "by its very essence can gratify her achievement strivings." They refer to this event as "the most unconflicted achievement she can experience in our society," but the study offers no empirical documentation of the causal relation between achievement imagery among young women of this era and their childbearing activity. Did ambitious girls with homemaking goals end up with more children than other girls? As products of the same historical age as the Veroff and Feld women, the Oakland women may provide valuable clues to this connection.

Method

Research Design and Measurement

We relied on two sets of adolescent data to examine the relation between achievement imagery and life goals. As a measure of achievement motivation, we employed a series of TAT stories administered to girls at ages 17 and 18 years. The 18 TAT pictures include 9 from the standard Henry Murray set.² By comparison with con-

² The girls' set of pictures included eight from the Murray set (Cards 1, 5, 36F, 18GF, 10, 11, 14, 15); four of which were designed for the study (the nave of a large church, a Madonna and child, a dramatic mountain view, a boy gazing at a cross wreathed in clouds), and six from the set generally used in 1938 (a man and woman seated on a park bench; a bearded old man writing in a large book; a disheveled young man standing

temporary standards, the TAT administration was clearly less than ideal. The overall length of stories proved to be quite short, with some amounting to no more than a sentence or two. This limitation is countered in part by the sheer number of TAT cards (well above the usual set). Skolnick (1966), a clinical psychologist at the Institute of Human Development, carried out the coding operations with an additional rater and statistically adjusted all scores for differential length of the story. The rank order agreement (ρ) on achievement imagery was .85.

In evaluating the TAT stories and coding decisions, it is important to keep in mind the historical setting of the original measurements, which was nearly 50 years ago during the very early stage of this technique. The brevity of stories required use of a larger and more heterogeneous set of TAT cards than would be used under more ideal circumstances. Skolnick and her research team concluded that they did not have sufficient story data to enable reliable codings beyond the general category of whether achievement imagery was present or absent. Despite these measurement limitations, Skolnick's correlational analyses of TAT-based expressions of motivation and behavioral data were well received at the time (Lazarus, 1966; McClelland, 1966).

The quality of the TAT data in the Oakland archive ruled out the possibility of having reliable codes of achievement imagery from sets of cards that were relevant to homemaking and an occupational career. In lieu of controlling arousal cues from the TAT, we chose an alternative approach, one that assumed that the meaning of each picture varied according to the life concepts girls brought to the situation. Consider the picture of the bearded old man writing in a large book. We assumed this picture would tend to generate family associations for girls who were primarily committed to a life centered on marriage and parenthood. Occupational associations would be more likely among the girls with career inclinations at the time.

To obtain vocational preferences in the 1930s, we relied on Strong Vocational Interest Blanks (SVIB), which were administered in 1937-1938. The archive included a four-category measure of interest profile relative to family and career domains. With many years of developmental work and application involving the SVIB, Barbara Kirk (former director of the Counseling Center at the University of California, Berkeley) sorted the female cases into (a) strongly domestic, (b) probably domestic, (c) domestic and career, and (d) strongly career. Approximately two out of five girls ended up in the first two categories, with most of the remaining cases falling into the "mixed" (domestic and career) category. The extreme "career" group included less than 10% of the

cases. For our purposes, we defined the first two groups as domestic or family centered in orientation and the other two groups as career centered, even though most of the girls expressed family interests as well. The essential contrast, then, is between young women whose interest patterns were either wholly domestic (Categories 1 and 2) or partly career focused (Categories 3 and 4). The partly-career-focused category includes approximately two thirds of the cases.

A detailed account of the classification procedures was not preserved in the archive. As an alternative, we investigated the discriminating power of the two groups by comparing them on highly relevant items in this analysis (see Tables 1-3). The achievement literature (Kaufman & Richardson, 1982) links intellectual ability and academic performance to a career preference and heterosexual preferences and investments with a family-centered vision of the future. This general contrast does emerge from selected comparisons between girls in the domestic and career groups. The career oriented were distinguished by a higher IQ ($p < .01$) and by slightly higher academic ratings from teachers (*ns*). They were also much less oriented toward "going steady in high school" than the domestically inclined ($p < .01$). A conversational interest in politics and a desire for social power were more prominent in their lives than in the lives of girls who saw their future in terms of the family ($p < .05$). Mothers of the careerists were better educated than mothers of the other girls, although the difference is not reliable. The simple presence of the mother in or out of the labor force, regardless of type of work, did not distinguish between the two groups of girls. Neither group emerged as more unhappy with their social status or more inclined toward wanting to be a boy, according to self-reports. Staff observers did not rank the groups differently on attractiveness to the opposite sex, and the girls expressed a common interest in talking about social topics, such as boyfriends, clothes, teachers, and being glamorous. Overall, the group differences are meaningful relative to the life pathways of family and career. The critical test, however, must come from the subsequent analysis. Do ambitious girls in the two groups differ in adolescent behavior and in subsequent career patterns?

Achievement imagery from TAT stories and the two vocational orientations represent different facets of achievement and belong to general measurement classes that ought to show little empirical relation. As McClelland (1980) observes, both types of motivational variables are useful in accounting for behavior variation, and "nothing but confusion results from insisting these two kinds of measures are assaying the same motive disposition and therefore should correlate highly" (p. 13). Indeed, we find no difference at all between the domestic and career groups on mean level of achievement motivation.³ The means are virtually identical and so are the standard deviations. We assume that the Oakland females with achievement themes in their adolescent stories pursued activities from adolescence to adulthood that reflected their vocational interests: the marriage

behind a well-dressed older one; a tea table and two chairs; a picture of a man and women standing in a doorway, the man clutching the woman's shoulders; and a man looking out through a window). Following procedures established by McClelland and Atkinson, Skolnick (1966) generally restricted the scoring operation to the "imagery category"—to the presence or absence of the motive in question. The presence of achievement motivation entailed evidence of competition with a standard of excellence.

³ The means on achievement imagery (standard scores) for the domestic and career groups are 54.0 and 54.2, respectively, with standard deviations of 8.6 and 7.5, respectively.

route of the domestically inclined and the education-work-life pattern of the career oriented. The vocational measure brings a directional component to achievement imagery by linking self and role in a young woman's preferred future or life course. To what extent does early achievement motivation enable women to realize their desired life goals?

The design strategy of the study is to compare domestically inclined and career-oriented females on relations between achievement imagery and indicators of achievement within three domains: (a) maternal and family influence, (b) the social world of school and peers in adolescence, and (c) select adult events and accomplishments.

Maternal and family influence. Studies of sex role socialization (Crawford, 1978; Hoffman, 1977; Lipman-Blumen, 1972) depict the mother as the crucial influence on the direction of daughters' achievement orientations toward traditional and career lines (Orcutt & Walsh, 1979).⁴ The family-centered female has internalized the mother's conventional expectations on sex roles. In this case, the mother subscribes to the "two spheres" concept of women's roles (women in the family, men in the work place), and her daughter tends to follow this model with relatively weak commitments to work-life achievement. For the career-oriented daughter, the mother's participation in the labor force is thought to influence the direction and extent of her daughter's career achievement ambitions (Spenner & Featherman, 1978). The attitudes and work expectations of employed mothers, as well as their skill in managing both work and family life, frequently convey a sense of female competence in a future that includes both family and work (Elder, 1980, chapter 5). In this study, we assume the meaning of mothers' employment varied according to their daughter's vocational goal. This work role has special significance for the daughter's achievement when her vocational future includes market work, as in the case of the Oakland girls who expressed career interests.

Aside from maternal employment, maternal education represents a plausible source of deviation from the traditional role of women. Highly educated mothers communicate not only a sense of their own personal competence but also the value of educational accomplishments. Furthermore, they generally espouse a breadth of perspective that extends beyond traditional family concerns. We hypothesized that achievement imagery of the Oakland females would be more strongly correlated with mothers' employment status, education, self-competence, and regard by daughter among the career oriented than among the domestic or family-centered group.

The social world of school and peers in adolescence. The different futures that express domestic and domestic-career interests bring to mind equally contrasting social trajectories through childhood and adolescence. Achievement on the domestic pathway occurs through social success and popularity, especially through dating, a line of activity that could enhance the influence of peers relative to that of family. As a hypothesis, social skills, preferences, and status among age-mates should be especially salient among the ambitious with domestic interests, more so than among the highly motivated with career aspirations. The other side of this hypothesis involves girls in the career group. Academic achievement,

teacher and school activities, and events on the broader stage of politics and technology should have a greater place in the life of ambitious girls who hold at least some interest in a job or career.

Adult life events. The long-term consequences of achievement imagery in this study entail achievement in three domains of adult life: education, employment, and family. Educational training has meaning for both marital and career achievement. On the conventional path, the college campus has significance for mate selection. College entry brings exposure to a more select population of prospective husbands, increasing chances for mobility through marriage and escape from the constraints of the hard times of the Depression, especially in the working class. Higher education also provides skills and credentials that enhance prospects for occupational placement and advancement in the particular field of aspirations for young women with career preferences. We expected education to be linked to adult employment among ambitious females who endorsed career goals and thus to a delay in the timing of family events, especially marriage and the first birth. By contrast, the achievement oriented with domestic interests should be found on a path marked by early marriage, a limited work life, and higher fertility.

We use an ordinal measure of association (Tau_b with correction for ties) to compare the strength of the relation between achievement imagery and behavior or events in the two vocational groups. This measure has special value for small groups because it is minimally sensitive to extreme values. The results of two statistical tests are reported in the tables: (1) a test of the difference between coefficients in the two groups; and (2) a test of the differences between each coefficient and zero. With small sample sizes, reliable intergroup comparisons are difficult to detect. Hence, we focus on the *pattern* of results across tests as well as statistical reliability. Because group differences in degree of association may reflect differences in item variance, we have examined group variances for all item comparisons. In all cases item variances are virtually identical. Furthermore, no group differences are due to the class origins of the girls' class origin.

Results

Linking Achievement Imagery, Behavior, and Attributes

As the Oakland girls left high school, they faced a rapidly changing world for women. Frank (1944) noted at the time "the confusion and conflict over the feminine roles . . . the uncertainty about what one does to be a woman is acute for adolescent girls" (p. 245). Young women cannot find the guidance

⁴ Cross-sex relations in socialization suggest that fathers are generally salient in the lives of achievement-oriented girls, whatever their vocational preference. The father may exemplify work-life achievement as well as the qualities of an attractive male in the marriage market or family.

"they need by following the examples of their mothers, since homemaking is changing so rapidly and women's activities and interests have shifted from the older traditional practices" (p. 245). Across the early lives of the Oakland females, mother, schooling, and age-mates played a very different role in the experience of the ambitious who preferred work-family interests and in the lives of women who formed a world exclusively centered on the family.

Maternal and family influences. The new world for women included greater support for higher education and employment. Both status attributes of the mother are related to the achievement motivation of Oakland girls who preferred career interests (Table 1). Career-oriented girls with strong achievement orientations were generally daughters of well-educated mothers and of women who held a job during the 1930s. Though the mother's work status did not differ between the vocational groups, her employment does appear to have achievement implications for career-oriented daughters. Mothers' work and ed-

ucation did not make any difference in the achievement imagery of girls with domestic interests.

A positive image of the father generally correlates with girls' achievement imagery in both vocational groups. A similar image of the mother is merely suggestive in the attitudes of highly motivated girls whose interests range beyond the family to employment or a career. However, the perception of the mother as a respected woman by these girls has much in common with interviewer ratings of their mothers as intelligent, self-assured, and open-minded. However, the picture is not all positive. Indeed, a more troubled portrait of the girls' relations with their mother comes from interviews with the mothers themselves. In the career group, the ambitious girls were more often described as talking back and arguing with parents. Compliance with parental wishes appears to have come slowly or only begrudgingly, unlike the more submissive characteristics of girls with achievement concerns in the domestic group. This observation applies to both the middle

Table 1

Achievement Imagery of Oakland Girls by Vocational Interests in Relation to Characteristics of Mother, Perceptions of Parents, and Parent-Daughter Relations: Tau_b coefficients

Factor	Vocational orientations (late 1930s)				Intergroup comparison <i>p</i> value ^a
	Domestic tau _b	<i>n</i>	Career tau _b	<i>n</i>	
Mother's status					
Educational level	-.13	20	.30**	41	.05
Employed (1933-1934)	-.21	20	.26**	41	.05
Interviewer ratings of mother ^b					
Self-assured	-.13	21	.31**	40	.10
High self-esteem	.12	21	.30**	40	
Open-minded	-.14	21	.21	40	.05
Parent perceptions and relations (Q ratings) ^c					
Feels mother is a respected person	.04	14	.20	28	
Feels father is a respected person	.37*	14	.33**	28	
Mother's reports (1936) ^d					
Daughter questions parents' judgment	.09	17	.37**	34	
Daughter talks back	-.28*	17	.20*	34	.05
Argues with mother	-.08	17	.28**	34	
Slow in minding	-.33	17	.28**	34	.01

^a The standard test of the difference between independent tau_bs.

^b These 7-point ratings (1 = low, 7 = high) were made by the interviewer in three interviews: 1932, 1934, and 1936. The ratings were averaged to form a single index.

^c The Q-sort ratings are drawn from the senior high school interpersonal set that was developed by Jack Block at the University of California, Berkeley. Each case was sorted by at least two judges in a forced bell-shaped distribution, with scores ranging from 1 (uncharacteristic) to 9 (most characteristic).

^d These four items were included in the 1936 interview with the mothers. Scores range from 1 (never) to 3 (often).

* *p* < .10. ** *p* < .05.

and the working class and is not a reflection of differential item variance.

These differences bring to mind two variations in parent-daughter relations on level or degree of parental control: amount of social independence and the girls' response to parental guidance and limitations. Parental control is clearly not the basic factor, as shown by the following statements from an attitude survey during the junior high school years. The girls were asked whether they were like a girl who is "allowed to stay out at night as late as she likes," who "gets to go places without permission," and who is "allowed to go out with a crowd of boys and girls without any grown-ups along." All responses, made on 5-point scales, were averaged across 2 years. Independence shows a slightly positive correlation with achievement imagery for girls in the career category and is negatively related to achievement imagery for girls who were domestically inclined ($\tau_{\text{b}} = .19$ vs. $-.29$, $p < .05$). The latter appear to feel overly restricted by parents, according to scattered evidence, although their social life was not lacking by any reasonable standard. Indeed, parental restriction seems very much a consequence of this lively social activity and its perceived dangers.

School and social life. The achievement thoughts of girls with family-centered interests have little to do with their measured intelligence or with how teachers assessed their progress in school, but they were very much related to matters of socially defined femininity (e.g., desire to be attractive and popular with boys; see Table 2). Indeed, the family-centered girls who expressed such thoughts ranked high on popularity, perceived and actual. Classmates and staff observers generally agreed with the girls' own reports on peer standing. Age-mates saw them as more grown-up, assured, and humorous when compared to the less ambitious girls. In senior high school, achievement motivation and domesticity converge on a predictable set of activities. These girls were rated higher on involvement with the opposite sex and on the quality of grooming. From all angles, they were headed toward courtship and mate selection. Their assets were qualities or resources that enhanced desirability among men and possibly "a good match" through marriage.

A different social trajectory appears for girls in the career group. The ambitious girls had fewer of the qualities that ensure popularity among boys. Brightness and academic achievement are correlates of their motivational striving, not good humor and friendliness, attractive dress and a well-groomed appearance, or a feminine physique. Masculine qualities partially define their life style, when compared to the less achievement motivated, and they were more likely to value the life of a boy. As correlational outcomes, these patterns may reflect both peer socialization and social selection. For the careerists, the social costs of being less feminine in physique and behavior may have led to the avoidance of peers and a renewed desire to excel in a male-oriented world. If focused exclusively on career aims, this desire would also invite social exclusion and isolation from classmates.

The two groups of achievement-oriented girls are perhaps more clearly distinguished on life course by the differential salience of "going steady with boys" and the desire for power. Family-centered girls were more apt to pursue achievement through men and dependency,⁵ especially if achievement motivated, and they displayed little unique interest in the pursuit of power. By contrast, highly motivated girls in the career group placed power well ahead of heterosexual considerations. Dilemmas posed by the conflict between intimacy and agency are implied by these contrasting adolescent careers.

Another view of this difference comes from an inventory of conversational topics administered to girls during their high school years (late 1930s). The girls were simply asked how often they talked about the topics with friends. We selected topics in three domains that distinguished between the marital and career

⁵ One strategy by which such achievement might be attained is through the creation and the exploitation of dependency in others. Willard Waller's "principle of least interest" (1938, p. 275) is appropriate here. Control over a relationship varies inversely with one's interest in it. From available evidence, this achievement path is clearly most common among achievement-oriented girls who have domestic interests. For example, a 9-point rating in the California Q set ("creates and exploits dependency in others") is positively correlated with the achievement concerns of the domestically inclined ($\tau_{\text{b}} = .36$). The relation is negative in the career group ($\tau_{\text{b}} = -.25$).

Table 2

Achievement Imagery of Oakland Girls by Vocational Interests in Relation to Their Social Status and Peer Relations in Adolescence: Tau_b coefficients

Factors	Vocational orientations (late 1930s)				Intergroup comparison <i>p</i> value ^a
	Domestic tau _b	<i>n</i>	Career tau _b	<i>n</i>	
Ability and achievement					
IQ (1938)	.12	20	.34*	41	
Academic achievement (teacher's ratings)	.03	20	.19	41	
Self-report, Junior High School ^b					
Wishes to be attractive, popular	.50***	20	.02	38	.05
Unhappy, lacks friends	-.54***	20	.43**	38	.01
Wants to be a boy	.01	20	.29*	38	
Perceives self as well-dressed	-.03	20	-.28*	38	
Peer ratings (1934) ^c					
Friendly	.18	20	-.12	40	
Acts grown-up	.39	20	.03	40	
Humorous	.35	20	-.23	40	.05
Feminine in behavior	-.06	20	-.29*	40	
Assured in class	.43**	20	.19	40	
Staff observations (free-play ratings): Senior high appearance ^c					
Good physique	.10	20	.09	41	
Sex appeal	.21	20	.01	41	
Masculine-feminine physique	.03	20	.29*	41	
Well-groomed	.31	20	.14	41	
Staff observations (free-play ratings): Senior high social status ^c					
Popular	.39	20	-.07	41	.05
Prestige, leadership	.05	20	.09	41	
Submissive	.15	20	-.15	41	
Senior high Q ratings					
Oriented toward going steady	.31	20	-.31	41	.05
Power oriented	-.09	20	.35	41	.10

^a The standard test of the difference between independent tau_bs.

^b Each of the four measures includes two interrelated items from a junior high inventory: (a) *wishes to be attractive, popular*—subject was asked whether she would like to be like "Y" who is the "prettiest girl in the school" and like "X" who has "lots of boyfriends"; (b) *unhappy, lacks friends*—subject was asked if she was like "C" who seems to have a lot of fun" and like "N" who is "unhappy a good deal of the time because she thinks no one likes her" (first item was scored in reverse); (c) *wants to be a boy*—subject was asked whether she is like "B" who "would like to be a boy," who "wishes to be a boy," and who "always plays with a gang of boys." All items are based on a 5-point gradient. The items in each index were averaged to obtain a single score.

^c The set of peer ratings represents the collective nominations of classmates during junior high school (see Elder, 1974). The free-play ratings represent an average of at least two observers who assessed the subjects during unstructured time at the Institute of Human Development. Both senior high Q ratings are based on the California Q sort developed by Jack Block at the University of California, Berkeley.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

paths: (a) society, including government and inventions; (b) school, such as teachers and school activities; and (c) social interests, from clothes to dates and being glamorous. For the family-centered girl, achievement thoughts are linked to the boy-girl world of conversation. Being glamorous ranks among the most popular topics of conversation in their life, followed at a distance by friends and clothes. These social topics have little signif-

icance in the conversational preferences of ambitious girls who had career interests at the time. Politics, inventions, sports, and teachers assumed greater prominence in their talk with peers (see Table 3).⁶

⁶ The adolescent correlates of achievement imagery among the two vocationally oriented groups of girls generally correspond with correlates of achievement imagery among two vocationally oriented groups of boys in

The domestic group's achievement themes—social and individual—bring to mind Parsons' (1942/1965) observation on sex role change at the beginning of World War II. Young women, he noted, had two alternatives to the rigid distinction between a life confined to domestic concerns and a full-fledged career: (a) the glamour pattern in youth culture and (b) the humanistic theme of a good companion. The glamour life style entailed an explicit feminine mode of attractiveness that typically involved direct sexual elements of appeal. Emancipation along the glamour pathway meant breaking with "traditional and conventional restrictions on the free expression of sexual attraction and impulses" (p. 369). The humanistic option includes voluntaristic elements of the good citizen: the woman who displays cultural interests and educated tastes, who cultivates serious interests and pursues humanistic responsibilities in community welfare. This analysis portrays the glamour life style as a central expression of the domestic impulse during adolescence in the 1930s. The cultivation of knowledge and a broader understanding of the world has much in common with the activities of girls who combined career interests with ambition.

Adult events and achievement. Achievement thoughts in the two vocational groups are embedded in different life trajectories. One pathway in adolescence centers on achievement through mate selection, marriage, and family building; the other through personal accomplishments in work and community. On the marital path, desire to excel

the same Oakland Growth Study (Elder, 1974, chapter 7): those with crystallized, mature vocational goals in adolescence and those with diffuse or less well-developed adolescent vocational goals. Achievement imagery in the crystallized group is positively correlated with high school teacher ratings of academic interest, staff ratings of industriousness, and IQ (τ_{b} = .46, .45, .29, respectively), whereas these associations are negligible for boys in the uncrystallized group (τ_{b} 's = .04, .01, .08, respectively). Conversational interests also parallel correlates of achievement imagery for the girls. Two topics document the general pattern of results: talking about inventions (.38 vs. -.20 for the mature vs. other group) and about parties (-.21 vs. .33). Early vocational crystallization turned out to be an important route by which some Depression youth rose above the disadvantage of family hardship.

Table 3
Achievement Imagery of Oakland Girls by Vocational Interests in Relation to Conversational Topics in Adolescence: Tau_b coefficients

Conversational topics ^a	Vocational orientations (late 1930s)		Intergroup comparison <i>p</i> value ^b
	Domestic τ_{b} (<i>n</i> = 20)	Career τ_{b} (<i>n</i> = 35)	
Society			
Government/ politics	.17	.35**	
Inventions	-.06	.31	
School			
Sports	-.12	.32**	.05
Teachers	-.13	.31**	.05
School activities	-.09	.23	
Social interests			
Clothes	.26	-.29	.01
Girlfriends	.32	.13	
Boyfriends	.19	-.15	.10
Having dates	.14	-.24	.10
Being glamorous	.50***	.02	.05

^a This inventory of 27 conversational topics was administered during 1937–1938. Response categories range from 1 (never) to 5 (very often).

^b The standard test of the difference between independent τ_{b} 's.

** *p* < .05. *** *p* < .01.

seems to anticipate social advancement through a good match and is consistent with an early transition to adulthood through education, employment, and family events. The desire assigns special value to marriage and parenthood. College had meaning in relation to the marriage market and mate selection during the postwar years. Childbearing qualifies as a family definition of success. By contrast, educational advancement, late entry into parenthood, and employment after the birth of children have more in common with the vocational future of ambitious girls who chose career options that were not commonly available at the time.

The adult events of career and family-oriented women, apart from achievement motivation, show that the careerists were more likely to obtain some education after high school: 73% in relation to 54% for the domestic group. However, the most ambitious in each group were just as likely to rank

higher than other girls on educational level (mean $\tau_b = .26$). We regard these outcomes as suggestive of the different functional role of higher education for ambitious girls in the two vocational tracks: the mate-selection role of college for the courtship-marriage path and its occupational-placement function relative to women's careers. Beyond education, the adult transition shows little variation by vocational interests. At least half the women entered the labor force on a full-time basis before the age of 20, half were married for the first time by the age of 21, and half were mothers by the age of 24.5 years. The two groups also had the same number of children by middle age, an average of 2.5. All but three married at some point in their life.

With motivation in the picture, we find a general pattern that conforms to our initial expectations (see Table 4). Achievement-oriented girls with a career trajectory passed through early adult events at a later age as compared to the less motivated and the domestically inclined. Even with adjustments for class origins and IQ, the ambitious tended to complete school, marry, and bear children at a later age. However, the ambitious females in adolescence did not differ in adulthood from the less motivated careerists on marital gratification or on fertility patterns.

Family-centered girls with ambition were

not more upwardly mobile through marriage than other women, but personal satisfaction with their husband and their larger number of children tend to support the proposition of a good match. Indeed their satisfaction in marriage, reproductive achievement, and minimal employment following the first birth generally document the successful attainment of early domestic goals. In the adult sample, Veroff and Feld (1970) observed a similar association between achievement motivation in a domestic setting and reported marital satisfaction. By comparison, "the woman who describes achievement-related behavior in a career setting is more likely to feel that marriage restricts her life and to have doubts about the adequacy of her functioning in the marital role" (p. 117). We see no anticipation of such conflict between home and work in the adolescent perspective of highly motivated careerists in the Oakland sample. Marital satisfaction in adulthood is simply unrelated to their achievement orientation as adolescents.

When the Oakland women married and gave birth to their children in the 1940s, family time was primary in a woman's world and children occupied a central place in their lives. Childbearing was surely a valued activity in this context, but as a widely available activity it falls short of meeting standards of

Table 4
Achievement Imagery of Oakland Girls by Vocational Interests During Adolescence in Relation to Education, Work, and Family Events: τ_b coefficients

Adult events and achievement	Vocational orientations (late 1930s)		Intergroup comparison <i>p</i> values ^a
	Domestic τ_b (<i>n</i> = 20)	Career τ_b (<i>n</i> = 41)	
Education			
Age at completion of education	-.09	.20	
Educational level	.30	.22	
Employment			
Age at first job (full time)	-.18	.18	.05
Postchild employment (1 = yes, 0 = no)	-.25	.05	
Family			
Age at first marriage	.13	.35**	
Subject's marital satisfaction (1964)	.37*	.08	
Age at first child	-.01	.39***	.05
Number of children	.35*	.00	.10

^a The standard test of the difference between independent τ_b s.

* *p* < .10. ** *p* < .05. *** *p* < .01.

excellence. Quality of child rearing is another matter, a point made by Slater (1970) in "The Spockian Challenge": "Most middle-class, Spock-oriented mothers believe, deep in their hearts, that if they did their job well enough all of their children would be creative, intelligent, kind, generous, happy, brave, spontaneous, and good—each, of course, in his or her own way" (p. 64). One aspect of child-bearing that comes fairly close to a standard of parental excellence is size of family, and it is this reproductive achievement that correlates with the adolescent motivation of females in the domestic group.

Are achievement concerns in adolescence a sign of distinctive adult priorities or values in women? Do women with domestic interests and achievement concerns generally favor more family-centered values or play down the meaning of gainful employment apart from its economic contribution to family support? The conditions under which women are willing to seek employment and the features of work that are gratifying should, it seems, reflect the level and direction of desire to achieve during the adolescent years. The different family correlates of achievement imagery by vocational group give reason to expect such continuities, but we have not explicitly focused on adult values. Such analysis from adolescence to adulthood requires the two-group design on vocational interest, given the contrasting correlates of achievement imagery, but this design is not feasible because of the small adult sample. Barely half of the women in the domestic group were interviewed or questioned in an adult follow-up at the age of 38–40 years. The resulting groups are too small to yield reliable outcomes.⁷

Summary

Work by David McClelland and others over the past 20 years suggests that achievement imagery in TAT stories is best interpreted as achievement concerns that lack explicit goal direction. In addition, studies have shown that the relation between motives and behavior depends on incentives and structured constraints, among other variables. Both of these conceptual specifications have special relevance to women's expanding range of options and achievement strivings. This

study employed correlational analysis to examine the relation between achievement imagery and behavior among females who held contrasting vocational goals in adolescence: family centered and family-career. As members of the well-known Oakland Growth Study, they were born during the early 1920s, experienced adolescence in the Great Depression, and launched their adult lives in the midst of World War II. Using the longitudinal-data archive, the analysis focused on three sets of potential correlates: (a) maternal and family influences; (b) peer, social, and academic behavior in adolescence; and (c) adult life outcomes. The strongest correlates emerge in the second domain, but the adult outcomes are most noteworthy.

The principal result on family influence is the prominence of the mother and her competence in the achievement motivation of girls who expressed some career interest. These girls were most likely to have well-educated, employed mothers who possessed a sense of personal worth. However, their relation to the mother was characterized more by conflict and tension than the mother-daughter relation of less ambitious girls.

School and peer relations document the social-marital trajectory of achievement-oriented girls with domestic interests. By contrast, school investment and distance from boys highlight a contrasting pathway for motivated girls with career interests. According

⁷ A limited extension of this analysis is possible by using TAT measures assessed at mid life and by categorizing women's actual vocational position as domestically centered or working after the birth of children. In 1964, a majority of the women completed a questionnaire on adult life history and values such as preference for family, work, and leisure activities. For each domain, they were asked to indicate which activity they enjoyed the most, which provided them with the greatest sense of satisfaction, and which they would like to devote more time to. Scores for each activity domain range from 0 to 6. Family preference was more negatively correlated with achievement imagery in the group of working mothers (-.40 vs. -.15), whereas the value of work showed the opposite pattern for achievement-oriented working women (.38 vs. -.09). Leisure was valued more by ambitious women in the homemaking group than by work-family-centered women (.25 vs. .06). In addition, we find that the memory of being certain about one's vocational future is more a part of the achievement thinking of working women than it is among pure homemakers (.37 vs. -.23). These topics were assessed during a mid-life interview.

to age-mates and staff observers, achievement-oriented girls with domestic interests were distinguished by social maturity, an attractive appearance, a good sense of humor, and popularity. A similar picture emerges from the adolescents' own reports. Unlike the ambitious from the career group, intellectual ability and school performance had little to do with the motivation of these girls. The former fared better on academic matters than on making and sustaining friendships. Conversational topics among friends also typically reflect the very different world of achievement-oriented girls in the two vocational groups. Politics, inventions, and school proved to be more common to the conversation of motivated girls with career-type interests. Conversations about glamour and boyfriends are distinctive of family-oriented girls with achievement motivation.

The adult life course of the two vocational groups offers suggestive evidence of anticipated outcomes. The achievement motivation of women with domestic interests in adolescence are predictive of their childbearing or family size, marital gratification, and minimal labor-force participation following the birth of children. Though none of these adult indicators turned out to be reliable attributes of women in the career group, the latter did tend to delay the transition to adulthood, especially through marriage and parenthood. At a time of rapid change in women's roles, behavioral expressions of achievement motivation among the Oakland girls had much to do with the vocational future they envisioned. Social and marital events correlated with the achievement themes of girls who favored the domestic world of family, whereas political affairs, school activities, and late family building were most characteristic of the achievement-oriented who preferred work or a career as well as a family. In these contrasting pathways, we see both tradition bearers and pioneers among young women of postwar America.

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