

Journal of Rural Social Sciences

Volume 24

Issue 1 *Special Issue: Environmental Issues on the Mexico-U.S. Border*

Article 8

4-30-2009

Occupational Aspirations, Rural to Urban Migration, and Intersectionality: A Comparison of White, Black, and Hispanic Male and Female Group Chances for Leaving Rural Counties

W. Trevor Brooks

South Dakota State University

Meredith Redlin

South Dakota State University

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Recommended Citation

Brooks, W., and Meredith Redlin. 2009. "Occupational Aspirations, Rural to Urban Migration, and Intersectionality: A Comparison of White, Black, and Hispanic Male and Female Group Chances for Leaving Rural Counties." *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*, 24(1): Article 8. Available At: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/jrсс/vol24/iss1/8>

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SOUTHERN RURAL SOCIOLOGY, 24(1), 2009, pp. 130–152.
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**OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS, RURAL TO URBAN MIGRATION,
AND INTERSECTIONALITY: A COMPARISON OF WHITE, BLACK,
AND HISPANIC MALE AND FEMALE GROUP CHANCES FOR
LEAVING RURAL COUNTIES**

W. TREVOR BROOKS and MEREDITH REDLIN

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

It has been documented that not all rural residents are leaving rural counties equally. Social positions may prevent some groups from migrating, while pushing other groups away from rural counties. This paper uses an intersectionality theoretical approach to explain how race/ethnicity, gender, and class shape occupational aspirations and the migration decision. Using the NLSY79, race/ethnicity, gender, and mothers' educational attainment were each combined with the respondent's occupational aspiration to predict migration rates for selected intersectional groups. Results show that females with high occupational aspirations, whites with high occupational aspirations, and individuals with high occupational aspirations whose mothers had high educational attainments were more likely to migrate compared with other intersectional groups.

Since the 1970s, when rural areas experienced more in-migration than out-migration, rural migration has been gaining more attention (Domina 2006; Johnson 1999). Scholars became even more interested when the same urban to rural migration pattern occurred in the 1990s (Cromartie 2002). Recently, rural counties have again experienced an out-migration (Cromartie 2002; Falk, Hunt, and Hunt 2003). Although structural circumstances such as economic opportunities played a role in this migration trend, individual-level forces also contributed to these changes (Yankow 2003). Analysis of the patterns in migration streams between rural and urban areas may increase our understanding of the determinants of migration and help government leaders plan ways to attract and/or retain young, educated individuals to rural areas.

Researchers note that not all people are leaving rural communities equally (Cromartie 2002; Domina 2006; Johnson 1999). In fact, it is well known that young adults (ages 18–29) are more likely to migrate from rural to urban counties than any other age group (Garasky 2002; Long and Hansen 1975). In addition, occupational aspirations are one predictor of migration. The higher one's occupational aspiration, the greater the chance one will leave their rural county possibly because the lack of opportunities in rural communities pushes those wishing to fulfill their high aspirations to a new destination (Brooks 2005; Rieger 1972). Not all groups will have the resources to take advantage of occupational opportunities that require moving to urban areas (Wilson 1996). However, not all demographically identified groups in rural America share equivalent structural opportunities. Rural individuals

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often find themselves limited by structural limitations based upon race, class and gender. The combination of these structural influences, or the intersection of these “identities,” results in unequal opportunity for occupational aspiration fulfillment or migration. Goals and aspirations influence several important decisions, one of which is whether to stay or leave one’s home community (Elder, King, and Conger 1996).

We do not know how race, class, and gender intersect with one another to influence occupational aspirations and migration decisions. To ascertain these influences, intersectionality theory can help develop the theoretical link between occupational aspirations and migration by describing the experience of white, black, and Hispanic males and females of different social classes. At its root, intersectionality theory looks to reflect the multiple and variable influences these social characteristics have on individual experience and therefore in understanding variation in experience within and across groups. For example, whites may view the world differently than blacks and Hispanics because they have had different experiences and opportunities compared with their minority counterparts (Collins 2000). The same holds true for males versus females (Collins 2000; McCall 2005). For example, white males may have been encouraged and exposed to different career options involving physics or math while black females may have been pushed to take different courses such as home economics (O’Connor 2001). These differences in experiences may affect aspirations, including occupational aspirations and the career paths of different demographic groups (Duffy 2007).

The study of how race, class, and gender intersect and lead to migration decisions is an important issue because it affects both individuals and rural communities. Structural forces are built into the social system and are of a deterministic nature in shaping life chances such as occupational aspirations and whether one will migrate or not. The forces become ideological as individuals unconsciously act in ways that perpetuate beliefs about who can and cannot participate in various activities, such as migration (Campbell, Bell, and Finney 2006). For example, rural areas typically provide more occupational opportunities for middle and lower class males because of the gendered work ideology that restricts females from working in many rural occupations (Campbell 2006). Females may wish to stay in their rural community, but may feel pushed to leave because of the limited career options (Elder et al. 1996).

In addition, the intersection of race/ethnicity, gender, and class can help aid the migration literature (McCall 2005; Steinburger, Press, and Dias 2006). Traditional migration research has generally observed gender and race/ethnicity separately. Individuals experience the world through their race/ethnicity, class, and gender together. Individuals do not make a migration decision based only on gender or race/ethnicity. Examining the interconnection of race/ethnicity, class, and gender

can show how society's ideological forces, and the praxis associated with those forces, affect the migration decision (Collins 2005).

This research will address the issue of rural out-migration and occupational aspirations among white, black, and Hispanic males and females utilizing the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79), a panel study that asked youth about their long-term occupational aspirations beginning in 1979. This study is an examination of how race/ethnicity, gender, and class work together to form long-term migration decisions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

This section begins with a brief overview of intersectionality theory. Next, the concepts and factors of migration will be addressed, especially as they relate to race/ethnicity, gender, and class. Finally, the relationship between occupational aspirations and migration will be discussed.

Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality theory proposes several assumptions. First, intersectionality theory posits that traditional variables such as race/ethnicity, gender, and class are experienced concurrently. Therefore, sociological study emphasizing examination of these factors as separate variables paints only a partial picture of reality (Browne and Migra 2003; Collins 2000; Steinburger et al. 2006). For example, low-income Hispanic women may be less likely to migrate due to their low occupational aspirations. The combination of these intersectional scripts shapes lives. Such a conclusion could not be seen by examination of gender alone.

Secondly, intersectionality theory assumes that "race/ethnicity, class, and gender are socially defined" (Steinburger et al. 2006:808). People act according to the social scripts society has provided for them (Campbell et al. 2006). The combination of these intersectional scripts shapes occupational aspirations and the decision to stay or leave a rural community and, in combination with structural limits, do encourage out-migration for particular groups such as women (Campbell 2006).

Third, power and privilege are determined by racial/ethnic, sex, and class social positions within society (Browne and Migra 2003; Collins 2000, 2005). In American society, because white males control many resources, such as access to labor markets and education, they have power to exclude certain groups based on ascribed statuses (Collins 2000, 2005; Steinburger et al. 2006). The structure of economic systems supports themes of subordination applied to particular groups that can lead to external and internal constraints on opportunities (Wilson 1996). The overwhelmingly high distribution of low-income black women in service sector jobs provides evidence that the structure of the economy reinforces stereotypes that

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are spread by the media and other sources that reinforce dominant racial/gendered themes (Collins 2000).

Race/ethnicity, Gender, and Migration

Traditional migration research assumes economic factors are the strongest predictors for migration (Lee 1965; Ritchey 1976). Accordingly, individuals decide to migrate where the economic pulls or benefits appear the strongest. These assumptions do not explain all migration behavior. Some individuals migrate for reasons that are not economic in nature (Massey et al. 1993). For example, children typically migrate to follow their parents to a new destination. Other individuals do not migrate for better economic opportunities because they value remaining in their current location more than furthering their economic advantages (Irwin, Tolbert and Lyson 1999). Additionally, other individuals may be more likely to migrate because they find their current location culturally and/or socially confining, due to their race, class and/or gender status.

Migration is not new for black residents in the United States. Black migration from the South boomed after slavery was abolished. Black slaves did not want to be involved in agriculture because it continued to oppress them via a new form of the same power relationship in a legal way (Tolnay 1998; White 2005). Others left because the oppressive conditions and prejudices toward blacks became intolerable (White 2005). Those who migrated were often younger and had higher socioeconomic status (SES) than those who remained behind (Falk et al. 2004; Lichter, McLaughlin, and Cornwell 1995). On a continuum, blacks who migrated to the North were placed in higher paid occupations than those that remained in the South, yet made less money than the well-established white workers in the North (Falk et al. 2004; Tolnay 1998).

Much of the past research has been on black male migration. However, a recent study examined poor and middle-class white and black female migration trends in the South (White 2005). Both white and black women migrated because of the limited opportunities for women in the South. White women of all classes were seen as caregivers and were limited in their opportunities to enter the labor force while black women were forced into the role of laborers who were willing to work for low wages (Duffy 2007; White 2005). Both black and white women viewed migration as necessary for increasing their social standing (Bacon 1973; White 2005).

Although migrants generally move from lower income regions to higher income regions, not all migrants immediately increase their economic standing (Schwartz 1976). In the 1920s and 1940s, white women migrants were less likely to be employed because their male partners earned enough income to maintain middle-class status, but those who were employed made more money than black women (White 2005). Black women migrants were generally limited to domestic labor.

Research on Hispanic migration within the rural United States is limited, especially regarding women. It is known that higher educated Hispanic males are more likely to migrate to urban areas than lower educated Hispanic males (Millard and Chapa 2001). Tienda and Wilson (1992) found those Hispanic migrants who move to culturally similar areas lower their earnings while those who migrate to culturally dissimilar areas may increase their earnings.

Females of all racial/ethnic groups migrate at higher rates from rural to urban areas more than their male counterparts (Elder et al. 1996). Women are socialized or encouraged to fill different occupations than men. Structural forces such as the media or schools place women in “female” careers (O’Connor 2001). However, rural areas are more likely to be dominated by socially defined “male” careers (Elder et al. 1996; Glendinning et al. 2003; O’Connor 2001). For example, rural careers are often associated with strong, rural, masculine men engaged in handling large equipment (Campbell et al. 2006). Rural women intending to enter the labor force know that migration is often necessary. Besides the limited opportunities in rural communities, Corbett (2007) found that women’s successful formal educational attainment have pushed females to migrate beyond their rural boundaries. Women who remain in rural counties are often less educated and more attached to their home community than those who migrate to urban counties (Elder et al. 1996; Glendinning et al. 2003).

Occupational Aspirations and Migration

Educational attainment and mothers’ educational attainment contribute to the measure of class because economic success is related to mothers’ educational attainment (Elder and Conger 2000; Quinn and Rubb 2005). Rural males and females of all racial/ethnic groups are more likely to migrate if their mother’s educational attainment is high (Quinn and Rubb 2005). Although educational attainment is a strong predictor of migration for all individuals, females in particular are likely to migrate from rural counties if they have high educational attainments because of a lack of appropriate high-level jobs (Yoensing and Bohlen 1968).

Occupational aspirations differ from expectations in that aspirations are ideals, whereas expectations are what one perceives to be realistic. Social positions such as race/ethnicity, gender, and mother’s educational attainment may help certain groups develop occupational aspirations differently. Both social positions and occupational aspirations guide and/or limit choices (e.g., receiving an education, enrolling in school, entering the labor market, marrying, and/or residing in the same county of residence). These factors are at least in part structural because of the different opportunities individuals have dependant upon their race, class, and gender (Collins 2000, 2005). These structural factors concurrently influence both

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occupational aspirations and the decision to migrate (Anesef et al. 2000; Kau and Tienda 1998).

Because of the poor opportunities, pay, and benefits in rural areas, rural individuals with high occupational aspirations may be more likely to migrate than rural individuals with lower occupational aspirations (Blau 1994; Glendinning et al. 2003). Yet, black and Hispanic males and females with high occupational aspirations may be less likely to migrate than white males and females with high occupational aspirations because of society's oppression that limits their opportunities (Brewster 1994; Falk et al. 2005). Minority males and females with high occupational aspirations may have low expectations for achieving their occupational aspiration because of the reinforced gender and racial scripts provided by the ideological forces that seek to limit the resources for certain groups (Behnke, Piercy, and Divers 2004; Collins 2005).

Some report that all ethnic groups appear to have similar aspirations (Chang et al. 2006). Yet, because social structures limit the opportunities for some groups, blacks and Hispanics may lower their expectations for achieving their occupational aspirations (Chang et al. 2006). Even minorities with high SES who have high occupational aspirations may have not fulfilled their occupational aspirations because they have difficulty overcoming the racial barriers reinforced by those in power (Kau and Tienda 1998). Also, when blacks and Hispanics aspire to careers deemed white, some blacks may view them as trading their race/ethnicity and thus giving up the oppositional ideological structures these minority groups have constructed as a form of resistance (Collins 2005; Kau and Tienda 1998). Additionally, because blacks and Hispanics are more likely to experience issues such as racial segregation, blacks and Hispanics from higher SES families are less likely to separate themselves from other blacks and Hispanics possibly because discriminatory ideologies create barriers that limit the access to resources (Brewster 1994; Collins 2005; Massey and Eggers 1990). Thus, blacks and Hispanics with high occupational aspirations may be less likely to experience long-term migration than their white counterparts (Falk et al. 2004).

Rural males and females may differ in their occupational aspirations because of the opportunities available in rural communities (Campbell 2006; Ni'Laoire and Fielding 2006). Rural females are more likely to aspire to careers that require moving out of their home community, possibly because socially defined female careers are absent from rural communities (Little 2006). Consequently, they are likely to be more prepared for college (Elder et al. 1996). Females who struggle with lowering their aspirations due to community attachment are more likely to report feelings of depression and anxiety compared with males who plan to stay in their home community (Glendinning et al. 2003).

In summary, race/ethnicity, gender, and class together shape an individual's opportunities and attitudes that lead to migration. Occupational aspirations are usually formed from our experiences (Ansef et al. 2003). Different racial/ethnic, gender, and class groups may aspire to different careers because of the structural limitations and opportunities provided due to their positions within society. Blacks with high occupational aspirations may be less likely to migrate because negative stereotypes influence them to lower their expectations for achieving their occupational aspirations (Brewster 1994; Falk et al. 2004; Tolnay 1998). This may also be true for other minority groups.

Hypotheses

The literature on race/ethnicity, gender, occupational aspirations, and migration guides several hypotheses listed below.

1. Whites with high occupational aspirations are more likely to reside in an urban county in 2002 than black and Hispanics with high occupational aspirations and whites, blacks, and Hispanics with medium or low occupational aspirations.
2. Females with high occupational aspirations are more likely to reside in an urban county in 2002 than males with high occupational aspirations and males and females with medium or low occupational aspirations.
3. Respondents with high occupational aspirations whose mothers had high educational attainments are more likely to reside in an urban county in 2002 than those with high occupational aspirations whose mothers had lower educational attainments and those with medium or low occupational aspirations whose mothers' had high or low educational attainments.
4. Respondent's race/ethnicity, gender, and class each have direct and indirect effects on whether a respondent will reside in an urban county in 2002 via occupational aspirations.

METHODS AND DATA

The data for this research came from the NLSY79, which is funded by the Department of Labor. The NLSY79 is a national panel study of men and women who were between the ages of 14 and 22 as of December 31, 1978. Starting with 12,868 youth in 1979, the NLSY79 was conducted annually using face-to-face interviews until 1994. Interviews then took place every two years and will continue at this interval in the future. The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) and the Center for Human Resource Research (CHRR) design the survey instruments, provide user services, and manage the collected data (Center for Human Resource Research 2001).

The NLSY79 consists of a nationally representative sample and various subsamples to insure adequate numbers of Hispanics, blacks, and poor whites. A

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subsample of military youth was part of the initial overall sample. The military ($n = 490$) and poor white subsamples ($n = 75$) were dropped from the survey in 1984 and 1991 respectively and were thus dropped from this study. This study utilized the rural youth who were interviewed in 1980 through 2002. Only those who were living in rural areas at the beginning of 1980 were included in the analysis. In 1980 2,437 respondents lived in a rural county and 2,101 were still being interviewed as of 2002. Besides excluding the military sample and those living in an urban county ($n = 8,194$) in 1980, Asians and American Indians were dropped from the study because too few respondents reported these ethnic groups ($n = 396$). Out of 2,101 remaining rural respondents still interviewed in 2002, 1,181 were included in the analysis for this study. Each of the 920 residents excluded from the study had missing data for one or more of the variables, usually the occupational aspirations or mother's educational attainment variable. When t-tests were performed for each of these variables, there were no statistically significant differences between those excluded from the study. Still, the results should be cautiously interpreted because of the high percentage of excluded cases.

Description of Variables

The dependent variable for this analysis was migration. This variable was used to observe whether the respondent lived in a rural or urban county in 2002. The NLSY79 uses "rural" and "nonmetropolitan" interchangeably (Center for Human Resource Research 2001). Nonmetropolitan, consist of counties with no town that has a population of 10,000 or more (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2004). To be a migrant, the respondent had to be living in a rural county in 1980 and an urban county in 2002. This allows a snapshot picture of two periods. Thus, a respondent may have migrated between 1980 and 2002, but will not be counted as a migrant unless their county of residence was urban in 2002. Many people migrate, especially while they are young, but eventually return to their place of origin. The literature suggests this may be especially true for black respondents (Brewster 1994; Falk et al. 2004).

This unique treatment of migration poses some possible concerns. First, migration patterns between 1980 and 2002 will be missed. Secondly, return migration is not taken into account. This leads to a loose definition of migration. Nonetheless, this measure of migration allows for an examination of long-term migration, which is appropriate because individuals who migrate, but later return to their place of origin, can potentially be a benefit to their communities. This may be especially true for those who migrate to obtain an education, but later return to their home community. Rural individuals who migrate and never return benefit urban counties rather than their home rural community.

Independent Variable

The main independent variable is occupational aspiration. Occupational Aspiration was measured by asking the occupational aspirations of respondents at the time of their first interview in 1979. Using the Duncan Index, each occupation was assigned a score ranging from 0 to 100, with 100 being the highest possible score. The Duncan's socioeconomic index (SEI) was used to measure occupational aspirations for this research. Duncan used prestige, income, and education to compute a prestige score for each occupation (Miller 1977). The prestige ranking allows sociologists to capture the values and beliefs of an American society (Zhou 2005). The Duncan Index has been criticized for feeding into the American ideological belief that ranks high-paying careers as prestigious, as these careers are generally dominated by males. This discriminates against females who are more likely to work in lower paying occupations (Zhou 2005). These limitations to the Duncan Index are acknowledged. Nonetheless, the index was used because it continues to be considered as one of the most appropriate measures of occupational prestige and stratification in sociological literature (Blau 1994; Powers and Wojtkiewicz 2004). Occupational aspirations were grouped into either high, medium, or low categories based on distribution. Roughly 25% of the cases were grouped into high occupational aspirations with scores ranging from 70 to 96. Fifty percent of the cases were grouped into medium aspiration categories with scores ranging from 36 to 69. Finally 25% of the cases were grouped into low aspirations with scores ranging from 0 to 34. Because no other study that we are aware of has categorized occupational aspirations in this manner, we tried to make conservative splits based on percentiles. As in any categorical process, the limitation to this method falls with the borderline cases. An occupation that has a score of 70 ranks only slightly higher than an occupation with a score of 69, but will be grouped in different occupational aspiration categories.

There is one key limitation with the occupational aspiration variable used for this study. The NLSY79 asked about occupational aspirations at the beginning of the study in 1979. Because the question was not asked at each interview, the occupational aspirations variable was treated as fixed. This may be problematic because individuals are prone to change their occupational aspirations over time. This may be especially true for the youngest respondents who were 14 to 16 during the 1979 survey. Younger individuals may not have knowledge about specific occupations they would have known about if they were 20 or 22 years of age, or their learning experiences may have been limited by their young age.

Respondents were grouped according to the racial/ethnic group with which they identified. Categories included white, black, and Hispanic. Gender was measured according to whether the respondent identified as a male or a female. The respondent's educational attainment in 2002 and mother's educational attainment

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were used to measure class. Four categories were created to measure the respondent's educational attainment in 1980 and his/her mother's educational attainment in 1979 (less than high school, high school, some college, and college graduate).

To capture the intersection of race/ethnicity, gender, and class as thoroughly as possible using quantitative data, different multigroup categories were created (McCall 2005). This approach allows a comparison between and within selected groups, and "takes as its point of departure that these categories came from more detailed social groups" (McCall 2005:1787). Racial/ethnic, gender, and mother's education were each combined separately with occupational aspirations to try to capture the effects each had on occupational aspirations and migration. When race/ethnicity, gender, and mother's educational attainment levels were not combined with occupational aspirations, they were included as control variables.

To test hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, several occupational aspiration combinations were created. Logistic regression models were used to test these hypotheses. Model 1 combined occupational aspirations with race/ethnicity. Nine categories were created combining whites, blacks, and Hispanics with their appropriate occupational aspiration (high, medium, or low). Whites with high occupational aspirations were used as the reference group because it was expected that they would have the highest rural to urban migration rate. Model 2 combines occupational aspirations and gender. Females with high occupational aspirations were used as the reference group.

Finally, Model 3 combines occupational aspirations and mothers' educational attainment. For this model only, mothers' educational attainment was collapsed into high and low. Those whose mothers' had some college or a college degree were grouped into the "high" category. Those whose mothers' had a high school degree or less were grouped into the "low" category. This was done to reduce the number of comparison groups from 12 to 6. Individuals with high occupational aspirations whose mothers' had high educational attainment levels were used as the reference group.

A path analysis model was created to test the direct and indirect effects of race/ethnicity (coded 0=black, 1=Hispanic, 2=white), gender (coded 0=female, 1=male), and mothers education (coded 0=less than high school, 3=college graduate) on residing in an urban area in 2002 (coded 0=resided in rural in 2002, 1=resided in urban in 2002) via occupational aspirations (coded 0=low, 2=high). Our analytical strategy included creating a causal path model to estimate the path coefficients and examine the indirect effects the intersectionality variables have toward occupational aspirations and residing in an urban county in 2002. We multiplied each of the path coefficients to calculate the indirect effects (Starrels et al. 1997).

RESULTS

Descriptive Results

Table 1 shows the occupational aspiration differences for each of the three intersectionality variables, with mother's education attainment signifying class level. Chi-square tests were used to examine the independence of each of the intersectionality variables on occupational aspirations. Males had statistically significantly higher occupational aspirations than females ($X^2=55.04$, $p<.001$). Respondents whose mother's had high educational attainments were statistically significantly more likely to have high occupational aspirations ($X^2=73.77$, $p<.001$). Race/ethnicity seems independent of occupational aspirations, as no statistically significant results were reported.

Table 1. OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS BY INTERSECTIONALITY VARIABLES (N = 1,181).

OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS	LOW (<i>n</i>)	MEDIUM(<i>n</i>)	HIGH(<i>n</i>)
Race/ethnicity ($X^2 = 6.33$)			
White.	29.2 (228)	48.5 (379)	22.4 (175)
Black.	34.7 (114)	46.5 (153)	18.8 (62)
Hispanic.	38.6 (27)	38.6 (27)	22.9 (16)
Sex ($X^2 = 55.04^{***}$)			
Female.	41.2 (243)	39.5 (233)	19.3 (114)
Male.	21.3 (126)	55.2 (326)	23.5 (139)
Mother's Education ($X^2 = 89.42^{***}$)			
Less than High School.	38.3 (210)	47.1 (258)	14.6 (80)
High School.	30.0 (147)	48.2 (236)	21.8 (107)
Some College.	11.7 (9)	48.1 (37)	40.3 (31)
College.	4.5 (3)	42.4 (28)	53.0 (35)

*** $p < .001$

Results for this study were computed using logistic regression analyses. Logistic regression analysis computes the odds ratios for the independent variables on the dependent variable (residing in an urban county in 2002). Results may be interpreted by observing whether the odds ratios are less than or greater than one. The closer the odds ratio is to zero, the less likely individuals in that category

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resided in an urban county in 2002 compared with those in the reference group. Results discussed in text were statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level unless otherwise stated. For each analysis, all variables were used as control variables when they were not the main independent variable.

Table 2 presents the logistic regression results used to test hypothesis 1 to observe whether whites with high occupational aspirations were more likely to migrate compared with the other racial/ethnic/occupational aspiration combinations. Whites with high occupational aspirations were more likely to migrate and reside in an urban county in 2002 compared with most other groups. This is particularly true when comparing whites with high occupational aspirations with whites, blacks, and Hispanics with low occupational aspirations (see table 2 for details). For example, blacks with low occupational aspirations resided in an urban county in 2002 at a rate of .34 of whites with high occupational aspirations.

When comparing whites with other whites, those with low occupational aspirations migrated at a rate of .38 of those with high occupational aspirations. All occupational aspirations/racial/ethnic groups were statistically significant except Hispanics with high and blacks with medium occupational aspirations. This may be due to too few Hispanic respondents who fit these categories.

Table 3 shows the results for occupational aspirations combined with gender. Results were statistically significant that females with high occupational aspirations were more likely to reside in an urban county in 2002 compared with most other gender and occupational aspiration groups, except males with high occupational aspirations. Males with medium occupational aspirations resided in an urban county in 2002 at a rate of .47 of females with high occupational aspirations. Likewise, males with low occupational aspirations resided in an urban county in 2002 at a rate of .28 compared with females with high occupational aspirations. All categories but males with high occupational aspirations were statistically significant. Race/ethnicity and age were not statistically significantly related to migration. Mother's education (less than high school, $Exp(B) = .38$, $p < .001$; high school, $Exp(B) r = .48$, $p < .01$; some college, n.s.) and educational attainment of the respondent (less than high school, $Exp(B) = .29$, $p < .05$; high school and some college, n.s.) were statistically significantly related to migration.

When race/ethnicity was used as a control variable there was not a statistically significant difference between whites, blacks, and Hispanic migration patterns. Both mother's educational attainment and respondent's educational attainment were strong predictors of migration. Individuals whose mother received less than a high school education resided in an urban county in 2002 at a rate of .38 of those whose mothers received a college degree.

Table 2. LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR MIGRATION TO AN URBAN COUNTY IN 2002 BY OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND RACE/ETHNICITY (N = 1,181).

OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND RACE (<i>n</i>)	ODDS RATIOS	SE
Comparison Group (High white; 175)		
High black (62). . . . .	.65*	.32
High Hispanic (16). . . . .	.62	.56
Medium white (379). . . . .	.51***	.21
Medium black (153). . . . .	.72	.25
Medium Hispanic (27). . . . .	.47*	.44
Low white (228). . . . .	.38***	.23
Low black (114). . . . .	.34***	.28
Low Hispanic (27). . . . .	.31**	.45
Sex (Females; 591)		
Males (590). . . . .	.74	.13
Mother's Education (College Grad; 66)		
Less than High School (548). . . . .	.39**	.33
High School (490). . . . .	.49*	.32
Some College (77). . . . .	.89	.72
Educational Attainment (College Grad; 13)		
Less than High School (548). . . . .	.32	.71
High School (490). . . . .	.41	.70
Some College (77). . . . .	.89	.72
Age (21-24; 228)		
Under 18 (447).61	.23
18-20 (506).78	.18
Chi-Square (df).	97.46 (17)	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

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Table 3. LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR MIGRATION TO AN URBAN COUNTY IN 2002 BY OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND SEX (N = 1,181)

OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND SEX (<i>n</i>)	ODDS RATIOS	SE
Comparison Group (High females; 114)		
High males (139).....	.64	.28
Medium females (233).....	.53**	.26
Medium males (326).....	.47**	.25
Low females (243).....	.39***	.26
Low males (126).....	.28***	.29
Race/Ethnicity (Whites; 175)		
Blacks (62).....	.82	.27
Hispanics (16).....	1.06	.15
Mother's Education (College Grad; 66)		
Less than High School (548).....	.38***	.32
High School (490).....	.48*	.32
Some College (77).....	.80	.39
Educational Attainment (College Grad; 13)		
Less than High School (548).....	.29*	.71
High School (490).....	.37	.70
Some College (77).....	.84	.71
Age (21-24; 228)		
Under 18 (447).....	.61	.23
18-20 (506).....	.78	.18
Chi-Square (df)	93.45 (15)	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4 shows the results for the occupational aspirations combined with mother's educational attainment. This was done to more thoroughly measure the effect of class on occupational aspirations and migration. Individuals who had high occupational aspirations whose mothers had high educational attainment levels were much more likely to reside in an urban county in 2002 than any other group. Those who had high occupational aspirations, but whose mothers had lower educational attainments resided in an urban county in 2002 at a rate at .21 of those with high occupational aspirations whose mother's had high occupational aspirations. Similarly, respondents with low occupational aspirations whose mothers had lower educational attainments resided in an urban county in 2002 and a rate of .108 of those with high occupational aspirations whose mothers had high occupational attainments. Again when controlling for sex and race/ethnicity, females were more likely to migrate than males ($Exp(B) = .76, p < .05$). Race/Ethnicity, educational attainment of the respondent, and age were not statistically significant.

Figure 1 demonstrates the direct effects race/ethnicity, gender, and mother's educational attainment had on residing in an urban county in 2002. For two of the variables (gender and mother's educational attainment), the coefficients were statistically significantly related to migration ($R^2 = .09, p < .001$). Gender had a coefficient of ($\beta = -.06, p < .05$), indicating that females were more likely to reside in an urban area in 2002. Also, those whose mothers had higher educational attainments were more likely reside in an urban area in 2002 ($\beta = .11, p < .01$). We also find that all three variables had more limited direct effects on migration than did occupational aspirations ($\beta = .18, p < .01$). The indirect paths from mothers educational attainment-occupational aspirations-residing in an urban area in 2002 had the highest numerical value ($\beta = .05$) followed by gender-occupational aspirations-residing in an urban area in 2002 ($\beta = .03$). Only race/ethnicity-occupational aspirations-residing in an urban county in 2002 showed a weak pathway ($\beta = .01$). This partially supports hypothesis 4, which predicted that each of the three intersectionality variables would affect long-term migration. We can state that gender and class have clear direct impacts on long-term migration patterns, while race/ethnicity appears less influential.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the concurrent impact of race/ethnicity, gender, and class on occupational aspirations and rural to urban migration. Much of the current literature compares different race and sex group's migration patterns, but none have examined how race/ethnicity, gender, and class together shape migration decisions (Falk et al. 2004; White 2005). Intersectionality theory is useful in explaining migration patterns, especially when considering that

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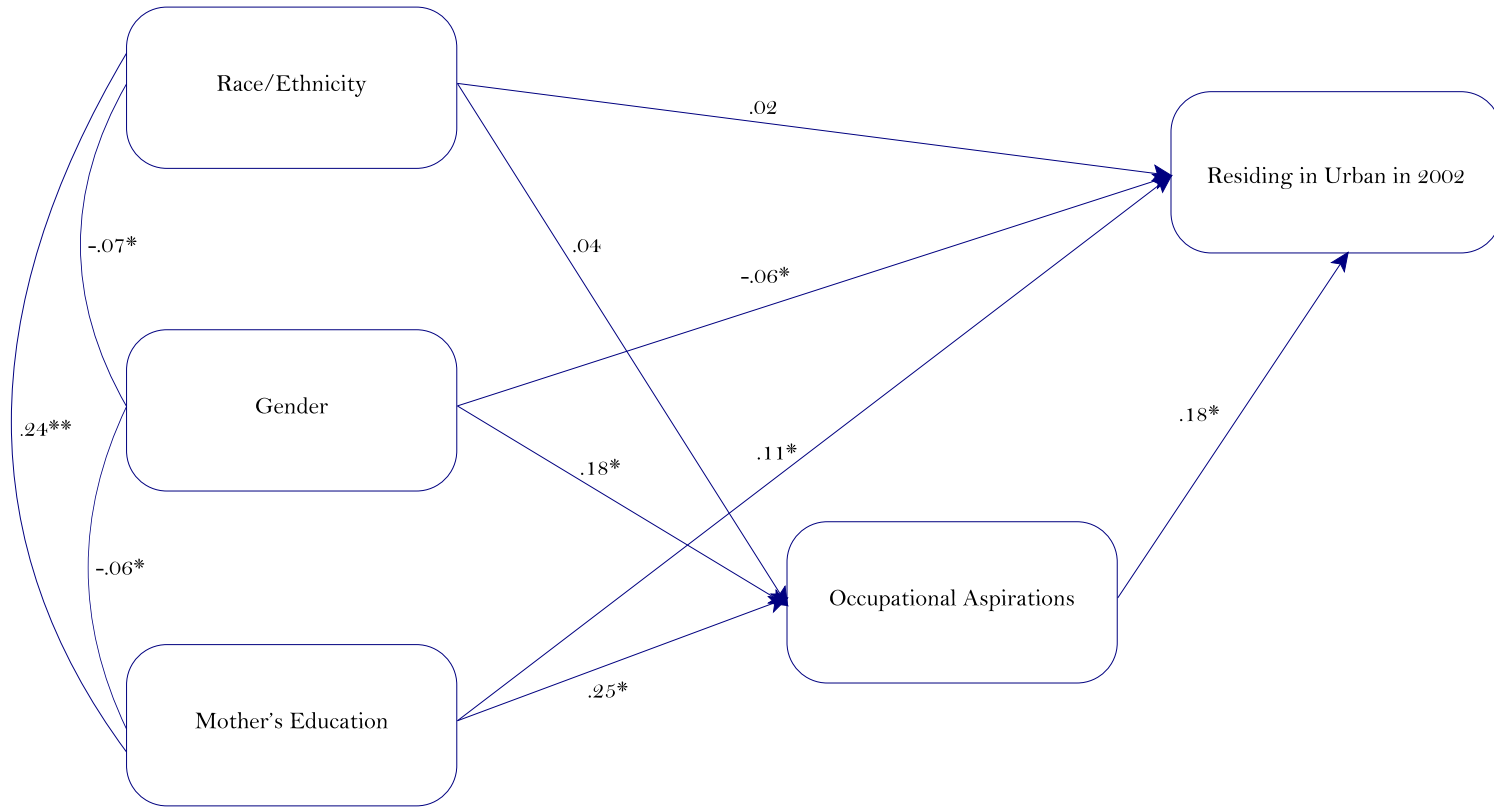
Table 4. LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR MIGRATION TO AN URBAN COUNTY IN 2002 BY OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (N = 1,181).

OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND MOTHER'S EDUCATION (<i>n</i>)	ODDS RATIOS	SE
Comparison Group (High and Mom's Education; 66)		
High and mom's ed low (80).....	.21 ^{***}	.45
Medium and mom's ed high (40).....	.26 ^{**}	.51
Medium and mom's ed low (776). ....	.19 ^{***}	.39
Low and mom's ed high (9). ....	.15 ^{**}	.78
Low and mom's ed low (210).....	.11 ^{***}	.41
Sex (Females; 591)		
Males (590).....	.76 [*]	.12
Race/Ethnicity (Whites; 175)		
Blacks (62). ....	.82	.27
Hispanics (16).	1.00	.14
Educational Attainment (College Grad; 13)		
Less than High School (548). ....	.26	.72
High School (490). ....	.33	.70
Some College (77). ....	.84	.72
Age (21-24; 228)		
Under 18 (447).....	.56	.23
18-20 (506).....	.76	.18
Chi-Square (df)	87.62 (13)	

NOTE: Occupational aspirations and mother's educational attainment is collapsed into high (college and some college) and low (high school and less than high school).

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Figure 1. PATH ANALYSIS FOR OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND RESIDING IN URBAN IN 2002.



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the power structure in rural counties limits opportunities for women and prevents low-income minorities from leaving (Ni'Laoire and Fielding 2006; Wilson 1996).

McCall (2005) argues categorizing variables strategically can capture how race/ethnicity, gender, and class work together to determine life chances. Results from this study reveal several important findings that capture this intersection. When race/ethnicity, sex, and mother's educational attainment were combined with occupational aspirations, those with high occupational aspirations were more likely to have migrated than individuals with medium and low occupational aspirations. In addition, when race and gender were combined with occupational aspirations, the three worked together to predict migration patterns. This may be because higher class individuals take advantage of their privileged position and use resources, such as money or housing, to enable them to migrate to better opportunities (Collins 2005; White 2005).

Race/ethnicity has important impacts on rural to urban migration as predicted in hypothesis 1. Whites with high occupational aspirations were more likely to have resided in an urban county in 2002 than blacks with high occupational aspirations and blacks and Hispanics with medium and low occupational aspirations. These results were consistent with studies that show that even when minorities—males and females—migrate, they often return to their place of origin, possibly because structural circumstances such as being denied certain privileges based on their race, pushes them back to their place of origin where they are segregated from dominant groups (Brewster 1994; Falk et al. 2005; White 2005).

Hypothesis 2 was also supported in that rural females with high occupational aspirations were more likely to migrate to urban counties than males and females with lower occupational aspirations. This is also consistent with current literature. Other studies have shown that women living in rural areas have higher expectations for migration, which in part may be due to the generally higher occupational aspirations of females or the fewer opportunities for females in rural areas (Campbell 2006; Elder et al. 1996; Glendinning et al. 2005; Ni'Laoire and Fielding 2006).

Hypothesis 3, which tested the migration patterns of occupational aspirations and mother's educational attainment, was strongly supported when controlling for other variables. Groups who report high occupational aspirations whose mothers had high educational attainment (i.e., some college or higher) were much more likely to have resided in an urban county in 2002 compared with those with high occupational aspirations whose mother's had lower educational attainment and those with lower occupational aspirations.

Tests from hypotheses 4 also provide some evidence that race/ethnicity, gender, and class work together to shape migration decisions (Collins 2005). Rural areas commonly build identities that fit the lower class white male stereotype (O'Connor

2001). White women may not only see these occupational limits to opportunities in rural areas, but may also be more likely to take advantage of their race/ethnicity and class privilege to migrate to urban areas where more opportunities for women seem to exist (O'Connor 2001).

Conclusion

This study aids both the intersectionality and migration literature. Intersectionality theory is relatively new to the migration literature and is also usually used only with qualitative research (McCall 2005). This study attempted to show how quantitative analyses can be successfully used to explore migration outcomes for varying intersectional groups further.

Next, this study serves the migration literature by demonstrating how occupational aspirations influence migration. The structural forces and ideological hegemonies surrounding race, class and gender lead to disparate individual and group estimations of the possibility of success that is inherent in aspirations. As this study both newly demonstrates and reinforces, race, gender and class status play a key role not merely in setting aspirations, but in perceptions of one's ability to take effective action for their fulfillment. In this sense, rural women's aspirations for a fulfilling career encourage practical migration decisions, especially if these women feel the lack of other social limitations or vulnerability due to race or class status.

Future researchers studying rural occupational aspirations and intersectionality may want to examine the concept of race/ethnicity using a larger sample of Hispanics and a sample of different ethnic groups such as American Indians and/or Asians. Additionally, examining whether certain individuals or groups fulfilled their occupational aspirations might be beneficial for the migration literature. Those with high occupational aspirations who achieve their aspirations may be more likely to migrate than those who did not meet the occupational aspirations they reported. Finally, examining the occupational aspirations and migration chances of different intersectional groups using qualitative methods will also be beneficial. Qualitative interviews can better capture what types of experiences, opportunities, and constraints the existing structure of rural America provides for varying intersectional groups.

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