Is higher education the key to unlock the door of fortune? A study of students' occupational aspirations

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IS HIGHER EDUCATION THE KEY TO UNLOCK THE DOOR OF FORTUNE?

A STUDY OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

An Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Daiyue Sun

University of Northern Iowa

May 2013
ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the relationship between students' social backgrounds and their occupational aspirations (in terms of becoming an authority, financial success and recognition in the workplace). By applying the status attainment theory and segmented assimilation theory, this study examines the significance of parental socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and social capital in predicting college freshmen's occupational aspirations using multivariate analysis. Interaction effects between the main predictors as well as control variables such as immigrant status, gender, school performance, motivations and skills are tested in the analysis. Results suggest that socioeconomic status is not statistical significance in predicting individuals' occupational aspirations in all models. African Americans and Asians have the highest level of occupational aspirations, while Native Americans have the lowest level of occupational aspirations without introducing interactions into the model. All three social capital variables are positively related to students' occupational aspirations, especially the effects for mentors/role models. Strong interaction effects between parental socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity variables have been found in the study as well. Results of interaction effects indicate that although Native Americans have the lowest levels of occupational
aspirations at lower levels of parental SES, their levels of occupational aspiration increase radically with the increase of their parental SES levels. However, groups such as African Americans and Asians experience a decrease in their occupational aspirations with an increase of parental SES. The interactions between parental SES and social capital variables are weak. The interaction effects between race/ethnicity and social capital variables suggest that Asian students’ occupational aspirations are benefited from their parents’ expectations, while other races and other Latino students’ occupational aspirations are promoted by studying with peers.
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Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The United States of America spent a colossal amount of resources on education in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). Existing statistics show that public school systems spent an average of 10,615 dollars per pupil, and spent a total of 602.6 billion out of the total of federal, state, and local revenues in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). After the Second World War, many students of average performances entered postsecondary education institutions in the United States (Collins 2002). This phenomenon illustrates the importance of higher education in the United States. Along with these lines, there has been a growth of the vocational majors and degrees (Collins 2002; Goyette and Mullen 2006). It has been documented that education is associated with individuals’ future income, occupational prestige, and job market opportunities. In this context, education is viewed by the general public as an avenue for upward social mobility.

In 2009, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics collected data from full-time workers. The data revealed that lack of educational credentials affects both unemployment rates and weekly wages (U.S. Department of Labor 2010). As stated in U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, people with professional/doctoral
degrees had weekly average salary of approximately $1,500. The average weekly salary for people with M.A./M.S. degrees and bachelor degrees were $1,257 and $1,025, respectively (U.S. Department of Labor 2010). People with high school degrees earned $626 on average. Educational levels negatively correlate to unemployment rate (U.S. Department of Labor 2010). The unemployment rate for people with a professional/doctoral degree was noted at less than 2.5 percent, and people with a high school degree had an unemployment rate at 9.7 percent. The unemployment rate rose to 14.6 percent for people without a high school diploma. Furthermore, the National Center for Educational Statistics examining a sample of individuals of 25 to 64 years of age show that 37.6 percent of those who finished upper secondary education earned wages above the national median (U.S. Department of Education 2009).

Since higher education is linked to social mobility, some scholars consider that postsecondary education works as a great equalizer that reduces social inequality (Haveman and Smeeding 2006). For example, scholars argue that having a postsecondary education credential is essential for individuals to succeed in the job market, and is "one of the nation's most crucial means of reducing persistent economic inequalities" (Haveman and Smeeding 2006: 126).
Other scholars point out that college enrollment gaps exist between low socioeconomic status students and students with high socioeconomic status backgrounds (Walpole 2007). Therefore, their conclusions are that the higher education mechanism continues to reproduce social inequality, and does not always act as an equalizer for students from low SES families.

Although education is associated with social mobility, educational resources and opportunities are not equally distributed across the population. According to existing research, students with high SES families, report having higher levels of educational attainments, which allows them to access occupations that are associated with high status and prestige (Sewell and Hauser 1975; Sewell, Haller, and Portes 1969/2011; Bozick et al. 2010). Students from low SES families typically have lower levels of educational attainment, and they tend to have more limited opportunities in the job market as a result. Status attainment theory suggests that students’ educational and occupational aspirations are keys to understand the transition from school to work (Sewell and Hauser 1975; Sewell et. al 1969/2011; Bozick et al. 2010). As stated in this theory, affluent students usually have more resources that ensure them to advance in the educational system (Farrell and Pollard 1987; Mau 1995; Schoon
and Parsons 2002; Lee and Rojewski 2009). Students with high levels of socioeconomic status tend to have access to prestigious private schools that are generally well funded (Rowan-Kenyon, Perna, and Swan 2011). On the other hand, students from low socioeconomic strata typically go to publicly funded schools, and some of these public schools are located in less affluent areas, which are not always be able to provide the necessary academic training (Cookson and Persell 1985).

As a result, high socioeconomic status students tend to have better academic skills and higher standardized test scores. Even if high socioeconomic status students suffer from low academic performances, their social networks may provide additional resources and educational opportunities. Students from low socioeconomic status families may lack sufficient academic skills because their families have limited accesses to resources (Cookson and Persell 1985; Freeman 1997; Freeman 2005). Public schools play a vital role in providing these students with adequate academic training (Cookson and Persell 1985; Freeman 1997; Freeman 2005). Furthermore, students from low socioeconomic status families are more likely to follow a vocational trajectory than a non-vocational academic track (Rowan-Kenyon et al. 2011). Even if low socioeconomic students
have suitable academic skills, they often lack supports from social networks to be
enrolled in colleges (Cookson and Persell 1985).

Thus, I argue that social capital is crucial in defining students’ aspirations. Some argue that high socioeconomic status students are generally more academically oriented because they follow successful role models and mentors who are members of their immediate social networks (Rowan-Kenyon et al. 2011). Some scholars argue that parents of affluent SES students use their own educational experiences to influence the career choices of their children (Carter 1999). Thus students from affluent families, learn the importance of higher education from interactions with friends and family members (Rowan-Kenyon et al. 2011). In schools, these students often socialize with mentors who provide critical information related to professional and managerial positions, and encourage them to pursue higher education. On the contrary, parents of low socioeconomic students may have ambiguous expectations regarding their children’s education, and tend to have less information about opportunities in the job market. Low socioeconomic status students may thus be unable to receive adequate information about their future opportunities, as they lack guidance from mentors (Flores and Obasi 2005). Furthermore, their peer groups may be
inadequate role models or incapable of sharing valuable information regarding occupational opportunities. Consequently, affluent students may show higher levels of educational and occupational aspirations, while low socioeconomic status students report lower levels of expectation and aspiration.

While SES status is linked to lack of resources and ultimately lower levels of occupational opportunities, existing research also indicates that minority students, in some instances, generally have higher educational and occupational aspirations compared to their white counterparts (Smith-Maddox 1999; Lee and Rejewski 2009; Howard et al. 2011). Some minority groups such as Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants, somehow manage to overcome discriminations and achieve upward social mobility in the United States, because they have copious social capital and rely on their community resources (see Zhou and Bankston 1996; Louie 2001; Dandy and Nettelbeck 2002). The family structures of these minority groups and their social networks, in some instance, provide the necessary resources for students to advance in the educational system. This trend is reversed if minority students and immigrant families belong to the low socioeconomic strata, lack social capital, and experience discrimination. This intersection process results in having low levels of educational and occupational
aspirations compared to immigrants with richer community resources (Allen and Haniff 1991; Flowers and Pascarella 2003; Walpole 2008; Walpole et al. 2005). The intersections of SES and race/ethnicity and immigration status result in a highly segmented model.

Socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and social capital are thus, important elements that influence individuals’ choices and opportunities (Sewell and Hauser 1975; Sewell et al. 1969/2011). I argued that occupational aspirations are formed during the years of schooling, socialization at home, and occupational aspirations are thus a reflection of community resources and over all levels of discrimination. Following the status attainment theory, I further argued that it is important to understand how occupational aspirations are the key to explain the transition from school to work (See Sewell and Hauser 1975; Gottfredson 2005).

This thesis examined individuals’ occupational aspirations, as these are critical in defining students’ future occupational choices. I employed status attainment theory, segmented assimilation theory, and social capital theory to explain the mechanisms between individuals’ social backgrounds and their occupational aspiration outcomes. In Chapter 2, I discussed previous researchers’ definition of occupational aspirations, defining occupational aspiration as
individuals' ideal goals about future occupations (Rojewski 1997; Lee and Rojewski 2009). I then discussed the educational psychology model based on Gottfredson's (1996;2005) developmental theory of occupational aspirations. Next, I examined how socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and social capital are related to occupational aspirations respectively. I then further discussed the segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Portes and Zhou 1993). In Chapter 3, I described the data and research design by using the 1999 CIRP data set. I used multivariate regression analysis to examine the relationships and interactions between socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and social capital on occupational aspirations. In Chapter 4, I reported and discussed the results of the multivariate regression analysis. I particularly discuss the analysis of the interaction effects between SES, race/ethnicity, and social capital. Finally, in Chapter 5, I discussed the theoretical implications and limitations of my analysis and future direction for this type of research.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Occupational Aspirations

Definition of Occupational Aspirations

Occupational aspirations are individuals' ideal goals and choices, which are related to their future careers (Rojewski 2005). Unlike "occupational expectations", which emphasize realistic goals and choices, occupational aspirations express individuals' future career goals based on ideal conditions and self-reflections. Additionally, Lee and Rojewski (2009) argue that theories examining occupational aspirations define this process as developmental, which is based on individuals' self-understandings as well as considerations of future opportunities in the labor market. Socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status are key elements that affect these processes.

Occupational aspirations as a developmental process suggest that an individual starts to form aspirations at an early age, and these aspirations gradually changes as individuals develop an understandings of their career choices (Rojewski 1997; Lee and Rojewski 2009). Results of previous research
indicate that occupational aspirations have effects on students' learning plans, course choices, educational aspirations, educational attainment, preparation for adulthood, and future career attainment (Schoon and Parsons 2002; Rojewski 1997; Lee and Rojewski 2009).

Socio-demographic variables, which might influence occupational aspirations, and variables such as age, gender, race, and socioeconomic status are commonly applied as independent variables in occupational aspirations studies (Lent, Brown, and Hackett 1994; Cook et al. 1996; Wahl and Blackhurst 2000; Hellenga, Aber and Rhodes 2002; Lee and Rojewski 2009). In addition, structural forces such as the school environment, family dynamics, community solidarity and resources, and parents' expectations can cast direct and indirect influences on occupational aspirations (Bo 1994; Wall, Covell, and MacIntyre 1999). This suggests that an occupational aspirations study needs to include individuals' social backgrounds as well as structural, contextual, and community variables.

In the area of occupational aspirations studies, researchers have developed several theories to explain the mechanisms involved in these processes. Lee and Rojewski (2009) point out that Gottfredson's developmental theory of occupational aspirations and status attainment theory are frequently
used in occupational aspirations research. Development of occupational aspirations theory views the development of children's occupational aspirations as a process of ruling out alternative career options and choices, and finally selecting careers that are compatible with their capability and personality (Gottfredson 1996:187-202). She considers that children continuously rule out alternative career options based on their capabilities and personality in the process of development. The theory defines this process as "circumscription", and argues that middle school children start to define their socioeconomic status when they evaluate their occupational choices. Eventually, influenced by the process of circumscription, individuals choose a career that is more accessible for them and matches with their abilities and preferences. She considers this process as a "compromise" process. This framework emphasizes the individual (micro) dimension, and explains the developmental processes of occupational aspirations.

**Status Attainment Theory**

Lee and Rojewski (2009) suggest that status attainment theory is another crucial theoretical framework in explaining students' occupational aspirations and other contextual factors. Status attainment theory considers that students' occupational aspirations are products of the social stratification and dependent
on contextual variables such as gender, race/ethnicity, community solidarity, parents' socioeconomic status and social class (Johnson and Mortimer 2002). These occupational aspirations are socially stratified. They argue that a more sociological approach of status attainment theory focuses on how structural (macro) factors shape individuals' choices and attainment, while a psychological approach accentuates on how individuals' various orientations influence their attainments.

I draw upon the status attainment theory and the distinctions between micro and macro processes to understand occupational aspirations. Status attainment theory focuses on studying how social class, especially socioeconomic status, affects individuals' educational and occupational attainment. Blau and Duncan (1967) point out that father's educational levels and father's career attainment, mediated by respondent's educational levels, can predict respondents' occupational attainment. Carter (1999) argues that Blau and Duncan's (1967) research merely considers structural forces, but lacks other key individuals' controls such as aspirations and choices. Individuals agencies are thus, embedded in institutional environments. Sewell and Hauser (1975) completed Blau and Duncan's (1967) model and introduce individuals'
aspirations, academic abilities, and significant others’ influences into status attainment models. Therefore, Sewell and Hauser’s (1975) model of status attainment theory (also known as the Wisconsin model) stresses the importance of the processes of individuals’ aspiration levels as well as the role of their social networks (their significant others’ influences) in explaining career attainment (Sewell and Hauser 1975; Sewell et al. 1969/2011; Walpole 2007; Bozick et al. 2010). Even though the Wisconsin model has been introduced to the academia since the late 1960s, the status attainment theory is still relevant and important for today’s research. I argue that the role of significant others corresponds to a MESO level. Thus, one vital difference between the Wisconsin model and prior models is that, in addition to social-psychological orientations, it also includes multiple familial factors.

As stated in the Wisconsin model of status attainment, socioeconomic status, mental ability, academic performance, and influence of significant others are all factors associated with individuals’ occupational outcomes (Sewell et al. 1969/2011). Bozick et al. (2010) point out that the Wisconsin model defines youth’s parents, teachers, and peers are their significant others. Individuals’ mental ability influences their academic performance, and academic performance
reflects one’s ability because of the strong association between these two variables. Socioeconomic status seems to affect one’s academic performance indirectly. Socioeconomic status and academic performance directly affect how “significant others” (social networks) shape students’ occupational choices. Youth interact with significant others and progressively form their educational aspirations.

Limitations of the status attainment model. Although the status attainment model has greatly contributed for the sociological literature, it has its own limitations. Status attainment theory oversimplifies the complexity of an individual’s understanding of social mobility (Jencks et al. 1972). This means that individuals have different definitions of what it means to be socially mobile, occupational success, and overall educational attainment. Individuals articulate these different definitions based on their positions in stratification system. Additionally, the changes occurred in the U.S. society and economic growth affect individuals’ understanding of their choices. Status attainment theory, especially the Wisconsin model, claims that this type of socialization is a universal process affecting various social groups (Bozick et al. 2010). Scholars argue that the measurements of status attainment theory unfortunately are cross-
sectional in nature (Corcoran 1995; Bozick et al. 2010). It is hard to study developments of youth in the school when status attainment studies merely studies during a relatively short period. In addition, cross-sectional design makes status attainment theory focuses on people who are employed-white-male and middle class, and this causes bias in result. Status attainment theory has a strong social-psychological tendency, which overemphasizes the importance of personal characteristics such as socioeconomic status, academic ability, and parents' influences rather than structural factors (Morgan 2005). I intend to contribute to the literature, and examine some of these factors by analyzing their interactions.

Socioeconomic Status

According to the status attainment model, socioeconomic status plays an important role in predicting individuals' occupational aspirations. Sewell et al. (1969/2011) suggest that socioeconomic status is strongly associated with the significant others' influence but weakly related to occupational outcomes (p. 559). Sewell et al.'s (1969/2011) results suggest that the relationship between occupational aspirations and socioeconomic status is indirect. Significant others' influence mediates the relationship between socioeconomic status and levels of
occupational aspirations. Many studies reveal mixed results of this relationship. For example, Mau and Bikos' (2000) research shows that levels of socioeconomic status is positively related to students' occupational aspirations (p. 189-190; see also Farrell and Pollard 1987; Mau 1995). Along these lines, Schoon and Parsons (2002) point out that socioeconomic status is a strong indicator in predicting parents' aspirations, and parents' aspirations significantly modify students' occupational aspirations. Furthermore, Carter (1999) applies the status attainment model and supports the argument that socioeconomic status and academic achievement alter significant others' influence, and significant others further affect students' educational expectations and aspirations.

Additionally, Lee and Rojewski (2009) argue that individuals with higher socioeconomic status tend to have higher educational and career expectation and aspirations partially because they have more access to these educational and career options, and they have greater availability to pursue these expectations (p. 83). As reported by their research, socioeconomic status is a strong predictor of individuals' occupational aspirations, and more influential than family background factors such as race/ethnicity groups and gender. Furthermore, Howard et al. (2011) reveal that socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity have an
interaction effect on occupational aspirations. They report that Asian/Pacific islanders and Native Americans who have high socioeconomic status have higher occupational aspirations, while Native Americans with low socioeconomic status have lower occupational aspirations than any other peer groups. Howard et al. (2011) point that Nakao and Treas’ (1992) socioeconomic status index is considered by Entwisle and Astone (1994) as the best socioeconomic status index. Likewise, Walpole (2008) uses Nakao and Treas’ (1994) socioeconomic status index, which is an updated version of the previous index in her study (Nakao and Treas 1992). Informed by the literature, I conducted a study of college freshman students’ career choices and occupational aspirations to examine these processes.

Race and Ethnicity

Race/ethnicity is an additional important predictor of occupational aspirations under the theoretical framework of status attainment theory. Recent research addresses this issue and includes race/ethnicity as a vital predictor. Lee and Rojewski (2009) point out that minority students generally have higher occupational aspirations than their white counterparts do (p. 89). They suggest
that race is crucial in modifying individuals' occupational aspirations after high school. Their finding contrasts with existing literature that argues minorities are prone to lowering their occupational aspirations due to racial discrimination and barriers (Worthington, Flores, and Navarro 2005). I argued that these findings do not necessarily contradict one another, but instead speak to the segmented nature of the educational outcomes.

Bozick et al. (2010) explain that among individuals with high socioeconomic status, occupational aspirations are more stable and high, while on lower socioeconomic status, occupational aspirations are inconsistent and mixed (p. 2031). Individuals as active agencies make their own choices (Carter 1999). On the other hand, many minority and lower socioeconomic individuals are encouraged to receive college education because the U.S. culture emphasizes achieving upward social mobility through education, and have optimistic attitudes toward education and careers (MacLeod 1995; Rosenbaum 2001; Bozick et al. 2010).

Status attainment theory acknowledges that individuals' early experiences and social biases may affect their later aspirations and attainment (Johnson and Mortimer 2002; Lee and Rejewski 2009). According to social-psychological
research, the fundamental attribution error is a pervasive bias, and has an impact on individuals’ aspirations (Ross 1977; Gergen and Gergen 1981). The fundamental attribution error is a tendency of using individualist explanations to describe the individuals’ positions in the stratification (Ross 1977; Gergen and Gergen 1981; Kluegel and Smith 1986). Additionally, the fundamental attribution error can take another form: the assumption that a successful life is the result of positive personalities and efforts (Kluegel and Smith 1986; Guimond, Begin, and Palmer 1989). In this circumstance, minorities who are usually disadvantaged in many aspects are more likely to accept the individualist explanation of their situations, because it is easy to understand and can encourage them to strive for their welfare. On the other hand, they are pressured to have higher aspirations, because they fear to be judged and discriminated by others who are using the same individualist explanations. Thus, the mixed results of minorities’ occupational aspirations seem to corroborate partially with the social-psychological orientation of the status attainment theory.

As I mentioned above, Howard et al. (2011) reveal that Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans with the high levels of socioeconomic status have the highest level of occupational aspiration, while Native Americans with
low socioeconomic status possess the lowest level of occupational aspiration among all groups. Other research reports that Black students have significantly higher aspiration levels than whites do (Wilson and Wilson 1992). Mau (1995) points out that Asian American students have the highest aspiration levels, while Native Americans have the lowest. Moreover, Mau and Bikos (2000) point out that female students have higher aspirations than male students, and Black and White male students have higher aspirations than Hispanic and Native American male students (p. 187). Furthermore, Mau and Bikos (2000) report that Asian American students have the highest occupational aspirations while Black students have the second high occupational aspirations (p. 189-190). Additionally, Hispanic students and white students are not statistically different in terms of their occupational aspirations. I will further discuss the mechanism between race/ethnicity groups and occupational aspirations in the section of social capital.

**Segmented Assimilation Theory**

Portes and Rumbaut (1996) argue that immigrant parents and their children often acculturate at different levels and rates. It is crucial to discuss Portes and Rumbaut's (1996) segmented assimilation theory in my thesis.

Segmented assimilation theory has theoretical implications of explaining group
differences in terms of educational and occupational aspirations. Portes and Zhou (1993) argue that immigrants do follow different patterns of assimilation depending on: (1) governmental policies; (2) societal reception; and (3) co-ethnic communities (p. 84). They point out that assimilation process contains two steps: acculturation and assimilation. These scholars emphasize acculturation as the process of learning English language and life styles, and understanding the social norms. In their study, assimilation means that individuals adapt to a segment of the U.S. society in coordination (or lack of coordination) with their parents.

These scholars argue that this relationship between immigrants and their children (in the process of acculturation) follows two methods: consonance and dissonance acculturation (Portes and Rumbaut 1996). They consider that there are three types of consonance. The first consonant type is that both parents and children reject the acculturation process, which means that immigrants reject to learn English, culture, and life styles. The second consonance type is that parents and children acculturate at the same level and rate without the community support of the original culture, which means that parents and children both learn to speak English and absorb the U.S. life styles. In this model, they lack strong community support of their original culture. The third consonance type is that
parents and children may or may not acculturate at the same level and rate, but their community of their own culture supports a selective acculturation process for them. This means that the immigrant community is providing resources and support to help immigrants and their families to acculturate. This type of acculturation tends to reproduce a trend where immigrants adopt the strong points of their ethnic culture but reject negative aspects of the settlement society. Dissonance means that immigrant parents remain unacculturated or acculturate at slow rate, but their children acculturate at a faster degree without their parents’ guidance and supervision.

Portes and Rumbaut (1996) point out that these are three major contextual factors affect the acculturation process. The first factor is race, and they argue that race is not just a body feature but how people perceive this body feature in the society (racialization process). The second factor is location. They argue that the location to which immigrants settle is crucial in understanding their acculturation process. Location is also critical in determining whether immigrant families will receive community support of their own ethnic culture, and what level of discrimination that immigrant families might face. The third factor is the job market, and they argue that today’s U.S. job market is highly based on
credentials. In this thesis, I use segmented assimilation theory to shed light on how the radicalization process experienced by minorities and immigrants may influence on how their children may take advantage of the educational system to overcome these difficulties.

Portes and Rumbaut (1996) suggest that assimilate into different segments of the U.S. society have different consequences for immigrant families and their intergenerational social mobility. Immigrant families can assimilate into the mainstream U.S. society that demands educational credentials, or the marginalized inner city segment that counters the mainstream culture. In this circumstance, the segmented assimilation process for the second generation of immigrants is largely affected by the type of acculturation.

If parents and children consonantly resist acculturation, they are at risk of experiencing downward social mobility. A possible assimilation result for this type of acculturation is that immigrants return to their home country. This situation may happen when families are facing immense discrimination and lack of resources from either families or communities. Another possible assimilation outcome is that immigrant families also remain in the host society but do not absorb the U.S. culture at all. This situation may happen when families are facing
the low levels of discrimination and their families and communities provide abundant resources. For example, Portes and Rumbaut (1996) conduct research on Mexican immigrants in California, and point out that some Mexican youth are consonantly resistant to acculturation because they expect to return to their home country.

If immigrant families reproduce the consonant acculturation process, the outcome of the second generation might depend on other contextual factors. In the worst scenario, the immigrant families face excessive discrimination and shortage of resources. Then, the second generation of immigrants will show a downward mobility trend. Otherwise, in the perfect situation when the immigrant families face the least level of discrimination and have substantial resources from either families or communities, the second generation of immigrants will describe an upward social mobility trend as their families actively assimilate into the mainstream society. Moreover, Portes and Rumbaut (1996) provide an example that West Indians in Florida have reproduced a model of consonant acculturation. Thus, both parents and their children learn English and U.S. culture. They successfully assimilate into the mainstream society.
because their first language is English. The first generation immigrant often has already obtained degrees in higher education.

If immigrant families reproduce a dissonant assimilation model, their second generation is in danger of reproducing a downward mobility trend. When immigrant families face high levels of discrimination and do not have enough community resources, the second generation will reproduce a downward mobility trend. They will assimilate into the underclass. Even when immigrant families have copious resources and experienced less social discrimination, the second generation immigrants still face uncertainty in their life, because they lack supports and guidance from either their parents or their communities. In this circumstance, the social mobility of the second generation immigrant is largely decided by individuals’ abilities and talents. Since dissonance acculturation youth lack guidance from neither their parents nor their communities, they are at risk of assimilating into the underclass.

An example of this type of assimilation is mentioned by Portes and Rumbaut’s (1996) research on Haitian immigrants in Miami. Haitian immigrant parents want their children to reproduce the upward social mobility trend. Their children, however, face enormous discrimination and lack of the supports from
communities. As a result, few Haitian immigrants reproduce the upward social mobility trend (for their exceptional academic skills), and they have supports of their families. Others assimilate into the underclass and reproduce the culture of inner city.

Waters' (1999) research corroborates Portes and Rumbaut's (1996) findings. Racial segregation and discrimination oppress the West Indian second generation immigrants to adopt the inner city culture. In this case, the second generation of immigrants generally disagrees with their parents' identity (of being West Indian immigrants), and they want to assimilate into the local black community to be more "Americanized". In addition, community support, which sustains the first generation of Caribbean immigrants, becomes feeble for the second-generation immigrants.

If selective acculturation happens in families of immigrants, the future of the second generation immigrants is bright. In the worst environments, immigrant families face a great deal of social discriminations and lack of resources. However, these obstacles only slow the upward social movement of the second generation immigrant. In the perfect situation, immigrants experience minimum level of discrimination, and will have enough family resources and
community supports. In the latter scenario, second generation immigrant will move upward swiftly in the stratification system.

Another example illustrating the assimilation process is Zhou and Bankston’s (1996) research on the Vietnamese immigrants. They argue that Vietnamese culture provides resources for members of the group, to fight discrimination. They show how the first generation of the Vietnamese immigrants has a relatively lower human capital, compared to the second generation of the immigrants. As such, the second generation of the immigrants has higher academic achievement and a lower dropout rate compared to other minority students. This is a case of consonant acculturation. Vietnamese community provides a value that is fit nicely into the mainstream U.S. upward social mobility mentality. Thus, the second generation of the Vietnamese grows up in a cultural setting that emphasizes reproducing upward social mobility trend through higher education. In this kind of community, if an immigrant student has higher educational achievement, he will not only honor himself, but also honor his family or even the whole community, and vice versa. I expect that, assuming many of the freshman students to reproduce the upward social
mobility trend, their occupational aspiration fell in line with a model of intergenerational upward social mobility.

**Social Capital**

Sewell et al. (1969/2011) point out that the influence of significant others plays an important role in status attainment theory. They consider that the influence of significant others mediates the effect of socioeconomic status and academic achievement on individuals' occupational and educational aspirations (p. 559). In Lin's (1999) ideas on "social resources", which are resources possessed by individuals through their direct and indirect ties. For example, friends can act as role models and have negative or positive effects on children. In addition to students' parents, "significant others" can be schoolteachers and peers. Sewell et al. (1969/2011) argue that significant others are people who are closely related to students. Sewell et al.'s (1969/2011) definition of the influence of significant others is both theoretically and methodologically identifiable with the concept of social capital. Social capital is a vital concept in status attainment theory, and numerous studies have addressed the relationship between social capital and occupational attainment. For example, Volker and Flap (1999)
discover that respondents' personal networks (a form of social capital) have a positive correlation with their later occupational prestige.

Although social capital as a concept appears in myriad studies, it has various definitions based on different theories. For instance, Bourdieu (1983) argued that social capital is the aggregate of individuals' positions, networks, and relationships. Putnam (1995) also stated that social capital is social networks, and is generated from collective activities. Paxton (1999) suggests that social capital is based on trust, and trust is a critical indicator for positive networks. Since this thesis focuses on status attainment theory, I will discuss scholars who had applied social capital from the status attainment perspective.

The definition of social capital is “resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions” (Lin 2001:29). Specific social structure defines who become the significant others. Parents and siblings become students' significant others because they are in a key social institution—families. Schoolteachers and peers are also significant others because they interact with each other in the school sphere as well as in community system. In this sense, influences of significant others are certainly embedded in social structures. Social structures not only define who can become influential
persons in an individual's life, but also regulate the extent of their influences (Lin 2001). Influence of significant others is a crucial resource in determining individuals' educational and occupational outcomes. According to the status attainment theory, significant others' influences will affect individuals' aspirations, which directly affect their future attainment (Sewell et al.'s 1969/2011). In this situation, students acquire social capital from everyday interactions with parents, teachers and peers. Lin (2001) describes this process as individual actors acquire social capital through interactions and social networks. The high positive influence of significant others as social capital will facilitate the process of transforming social capital to material capital.

Significant others become a source of social capital, because they cast their influences on individual actors. Students accumulate social capital from daily interactions with significant others. Thus, positive influences from students' close relationships certainly increase their chance to succeed. Finally, the operational definition of the significant others' influence is methodologically similar to the measurement of social capital. Sewell et al. (1969/2011) suggest to measure parents' expectations, teachers and role models' encouragements, and peers' influences on students' aspirations, and Lin (1999) points out that strong positive
social network is social capital and the strength of social networks should be measured by different categories such as parents, communities, and peers.

Rowan-Kenyon et al. (2011) point out that students at middle and high class schools, which possess sufficient funding and copious resources, receive career related information for parents, key family members and school. On the contrary, students attending schools with low resources schools have more limited opportunities to access good information. According to their research, students attending schools with from high and middle levels of resources schools emphasize the importance of receiving college education. Students in schools with high resources have a better understanding of what their future careers might be. Students attending schools with high resources have the most detailed information about their future careers, which includes information about the number of years of education, the type of programs that will provide them degrees, and courses that students will be required to take. Researchers observe that these students are likely to have more concrete ideas of importance of higher education (Rowan-Kenyon et al. 2011:340). They conclude that this concrete plan comes from the exposure to successful family and friends who have received similar degrees. In addition, teachers are crucial for students to decide their
future careers, and students from all schools report that inspirational teachers are crucial in encouraging them to pursue a certain career, sharing information of careers.

It is vital to recognize that social capital has an influence on minorities' occupational aspirations. There is a high level of heterogeneity among Asians, even though many researchers consider Asian immigrants as a fully integrated ethnic group (See Mau and Bikos 2000; Lee and Rejewski 2009). It is wise to acknowledge these heterogeneities, when exploring the mechanisms and the differences between race/ethnicity groups and occupational aspirations. Scholars argue that Asian immigrants are prone to choose technical and science occupations, because these occupations are more likely to provide higher prestige, income, and job security (Leong 1991; Goyette and Xie 1999; Xie and Goyette 2003). An important explanation of this phenomenon is that Asian family values emphasize the importance of filial piety, which means parents should bestow almost all of their resources to their children's education to achieve upward social mobility trend for the honor of the family, and children in turn should unconditionally repay their parents in the future (Zhou and Bankston 1996; Louie 2001; Dandy and Nettelbeck 2002). Therefore, Asian
parents are highly involved with their children's education, and commonly have higher levels of expectation for their offspring compared to other groups (Goyette and Xie 1999; Xie and Goyette 2003; Goyette and Mullen 2006; Okubo et al. 2007). Some argue that Asians have become a “model minority” (Fong 1995:1075). Asian students feel pressured from their parents on the issue of choosing prestigious careers (See Tang 2002; Acorn Media Publishing Inc. 2013). For example, Korean students report that they have pressure from their family, and that their parents intently define successful careers as doctor and lawyer because of the high prestige and income (Eun-Young Kim 1993). Louie (2001) points out that Chinese parents with middle class backgrounds are willing to spend more money and energy on their children, while working class parents can hardly provide support for their children. Ma and Yeh (2010) point out that Chinese students, whose parents provide skill teaching and verbal encouragement, are more likely to have higher occupational aspirations. Qualitative research on the Vietnamese community, reveals the same pattern and suggests that the members of the local community have close connections with each other (Zhou and Bankston 1996). That is to say, they hold each other accountable, especially when it comes to their offspring's education (Zhou and
Bankston 1996). Since working class parents often lack resources to support their children’s education, the community culture becomes a vital resource for students from lower socioeconomic families. These social networks encourage students to pursue professional career through higher education as other successful immigrants in the community.

Behnke, Piercy, and Diversi (2004) points out that Latino parents have a great impact on their youth’s occupational aspirations. For example, when Latino parents have high career expectations for their children, their children usually choose to be doctors and other high prestigious occupations as their dream-occupations. Parents’ lower occupational aspirations result in youth choosing blue-collar jobs as their future occupations. When parents have no clear career expectation for their children, Latino youth typically have unrealistic career goals. Behnke et al.’s (2004) research corroborates with previous research that parents’ involvement in the school process will enhance individuals’ educational aspiration and have great influence on youths’ career decisions (Clayton 1993; Qian and Blair 1999). Behnke et al. (2004) further argue that Latino parents may have lower career expectation for their youth due to lack of social capital, as I argue above, becomes a source of information. Furthermore, Latino youth report
that many suffer from racism from schoolteachers (Behnke et al. 2004:28). Schools fail to provide sufficient information and help for Latino youth.

Some literature documents that social capital influences Mexican Americans' educational and occupational aspirations (Keith and Lichtman 1994; Okagaki et al. 1995; Ramos and Sanchez 1995; Fisher and Padmawidjaja 1999; Flores and Obasi 2005). Flores and Obasi (2005) point out that mentors are influential for Mexican American students. Mentors provide critical advice, information, help, and psychological support for high school students. Mexican Americans' mentors include parents, extended family members and school teachers. Fisher and Padmawidjaja (1999) point out that Mexican American students consider that their parents have higher expectation. Parents significantly influence their children's educational plan and future career development (Ramos and Sanchez 1995; Fisher and Padmawidjaja 1999).

Furthermore, Mexican American parents with high socioeconomic status are more likely to be involved with students' educational processes and career decisions, and this involvement enhances students' educational attainments and future career opportunities (Keith and Lichtman 1994; Okagaki et al. 1995). Moreover, Flores and Obasi (2005) point out that most Mexican American
students consider parents as their role models, followed by teachers as their second most influential role models. Mexican American students further report that mentors play a vital role in helping them with career decisions and pursuing a certain goal.

Many researchers report that African American students have higher educational and occupational aspirations, but lack necessary material conditions to succeed in schools (Freeman 1997; Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998; Freeman 2005). Smith-Maddox (1999) suggests that African Americans' occupational aspirations are affected by social and cultural capital. He argues that parental involvement in school activity significantly increases students' educational and occupational aspirations. Parents, who are involved with their children's education, are better informed and can promote children's school performances, and change their children's educational track. He further argues that teachers as well as educational tracks are responsible for African Americans' low academic performances. Teachers and lower levels of educational track fail to provide vital knowledge that is necessary for African American students to advance in the educational system. Therefore, African American students suffer from low grade point averages and lacking information about college admission
African American students have higher educational and occupational aspirations when they have social networks that promote their education. Several studies corroborate this argument, and argue that African American students have higher aspirations for graduate degrees than their White counterparts do (Carter 1999; Pascarella et al. 2004). Moreover, having social relationships with faculties and other students significantly increases African Americans’ degree aspirations (Carter 1999). Studying in Historically Black Colleges and Universities, where African Americans are more easily able to build social networks with other students and faculty, increases the odds of having higher degree aspirations (Pascarella et al. 2004). Additionally, Perna (2004) points out that African Americans are more likely to enroll in first professional programs than whites do. This indicates that they may have higher occupational aspiration than whites because they attend preparatory programs for professional occupations.

The contribution of this thesis is that it uses status attainment theory and segmented assimilation theory to investigate freshman students’ occupational
aspirations. A measurement of occupational aspirations, which includes measurements of career related authority, opportunity, success, and reputation, will be used in the analysis, and influences of individuals' social capital, which has been rarely addressed in similar psychological research, will be considered. The measurement of the levels of occupational aspirations captures the instrumental aspects of higher education as well as individuals' perceptions of their future occupations.

Nye (1967) defined "instrumental value" as "the desirability which becomes attached to an object, experience, or event because that property has become identified as necessary or effective in producing an outcome desired by the individual or the society" (p. 242). This means that higher education is appreciated because the practical or material outcomes that higher education may produce are desirable. Sullivan (2006) argues that if students are concerned about the connection between higher education and the job market, their belief belongs to the category "instrumental." Furthermore, Connor (2001) also indicates that students who highlight the tangible rewards of higher education are in the instrumental category. He categorizes their reasons for going to college as labor market reasons, which include getting a higher-status job,
increased earning, and gaining job security. In Psychology arena, Ashby and Schoon (2010) defines "ambition value" as youth setting future goals of advancing in the stratification, which is similar to the instrumental aspect of the occupational aspiration. Thus, occupational aspirations that I focused on capture the ambition value aspects of students' aspirations.

**Research Question:**

What are the sociological process behinds the students' occupational aspirations? In particular, what is the role parents' SES in their decision in terms of occupational aspirations? What is the role of social capital (measured as students' mentoring, parental, and peer networks) in their career decisions making process? Are there significant differences across racial and ethnic lines and immigrant groups in terms of occupational aspirations?

**Hypotheses:**

\( H_1 \): Among freshman students, those with parents who have attained high levels of SES (compared to those with low levels of parental SES), their occupational aspirations (high status score) will be higher.
H₂: Minority freshman students (vis-a-vis Whites) will report higher levels of occupational aspirations (high status score).

H₃: Among freshman students, those with richer networks of supports (compared to those with weaker ties), will report higher levels of occupational aspirations.

H₄: Minority students with high level of parents' SES, compared to minority students with low level of parents' SES, will report higher levels of occupational aspirations.

H₅: Minority students with richer social networks of supports (through their social capital), compared to minority students with weaker social networks, will report higher levels of occupational aspirations.

H₆: Students with the average amounts of social networks of support (through their social capital) and higher levels of parents' SES, compared to students with the average amounts of social networks of support and lower levels of parents' SES, will report higher levels of occupational aspirations.
Figure 1. A Status Attainment Model of Occupational Aspirations and Contextual Variables

- **SES**: Socioeconomic status
- **Race/ethnicity and Immigrant status**
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Immigrants
  - Permanent residents
  - Non-English speaker
- **Social Capital**
  - Parents' expectation
  - Mentor/role model encouragement
  - Positive peer influence
- **Occupational Aspirations**
- **Controls**
  - Sex
  - SAT verbal & SAT math
  - High school GPA
  - Influence of Individualism
  - Educational expectation
  - Motivation
  - Internet skills
  - Political affiliation
CHAPTER 3
DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data and Model

CIRP Freshman Survey

I will use data from the 1999 CIRP Freshman Survey to examine my hypotheses. The CIRP Freshman Survey uses a probability-sampling method and focuses on college freshmen who are entering two-year and four-year colleges. The Higher Education Research Institute conducts the survey every year when college freshmen are in the process of registration and orientation. In this study, the research target population will be college freshmen who are full time students enrolled in four-year colleges in the United States. There are two major reasons to choose the CIRP dataset in this study. First, the CIRP data set is suitable to answer my research question. The CIRP Freshman Survey contains a wide range of topics that includes college freshmen’s attitudes, beliefs, educational plans, occupational expectations, and socio-demographics. Furthermore, the previous academic performance of freshmen, which is critical for my research to control spuriousness, is also documented in the dataset. Second, the CIRP Freshman Survey randomly selects a large sample size from a large population, which increases the overall quality of the data, ensuring that it
represents the larger population. For example, the CIRP data set collected 5 million cases from 1971 to 1999. Therefore, a survey with a large sample size and probability sampling method is more likely to representative of a large population and will be beneficial for my study in terms of generalizability.

I decided to use the CIRP dataset in this research, as the survey applied the probability sampling method. This is vital for quantitative research in terms of generalizability. Additionally, it contains a wide range of variables that are related to my study, and the overall quality of the data is high in terms of the representativeness due to the large sample size. A total of 148,850 cases will be included in the research because these cases provide the most complete information.

**Multivariate Regression Model**

Multivariate regression model will be applied to conduct the analysis. The existing theories suggest that there is a linear association between individuals' social origins and their occupational aspiration. Furthermore, the multivariate regression model is suitable for this analysis due to the large sample size of the data set and the interval/ratio measurement of the dependent variable.
Dependent Variable

The dependent variable measures college freshmen's occupational aspirations. Occupational aspirations are reflections of individuals' abilities, expectations, ideal career goals, and future career choices (Rojewski 2005). In order to measure students' occupational aspirations, I applied a factor analysis technique. Factor analysis is a statistical technique that concentrates on extracting underlying variables, which are derived from theoretical frameworks. Factor analysis creates indices from existing variables through exploring the inner relationships between original variables. In the context of my research, the occupational aspiration is an underlying factor; occupational aspirations involve a combination of self-reflection of individuals' abilities, expectations, ideal career goals, and choices (Rojewski 2005). Thus, I choose a cluster of variables that are categorized as students' future goals. The original questions read as follows:

"Indicate the importance to you personally of: (1) Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts (acting, dancing, etc.); (2) Becoming an authority in my field; (3) Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special field; (4) Influencing the political structure; Influencing social values; (5) Raising a family; (6) Having administrative responsibility for the work of others; (7) Being very well off financially; (8) Helping others who are in difficulty; (9)
Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.); (10) Creating artistic work (painting, sculpture, decorating, etc.); (11) Becoming successful in a business of my own... etc.” All of these original questions are measured on a four point Likert scale that range from 1 as “Not important”, 2 as “Somewhat important”, 3 as “Very important”, and 4 as “Essential”.

In addition, to the factor analysis I conducted a reliability test for the different factors. The reliability test is designed to test whether or not there are any underline variables, and whether or not the inner relationship is strong enough to have construct validity. Therefore, I incorporate these twenty variables into the reliability test, and the test reports that the alpha level is at .835, which implies that there is strong construct consistency.

Moreover, I conducted the factor analysis by using all twenty variables. The correlation matrix reports that the determinant equals .004, which is very close to zero. Moreover, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy reports .866, which considerably surpasses the .6 cut value, while the Chi-Square test result is of statistical significance. All of these statistical results indicate the model’s robustness. Furthermore, 26.290% of variance is extracted for the factor 1 while 10.799% of variance is extracted for factor 2 from the Initial Eigenvalues. This shows that both factor 1 and factor 2 have captured the inner relationships
between these variables. Then, for the rotated factor matrix, I applied the option blank (.40), which indicated that I rule out loadings that are smaller than .40. In the end, the output of the rotated factor matrix reveals that five variables have been extracted for the factor two. The factor contains the following variables: “(1) Becoming an authority in my field; (2) Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special field; (3) Having administrative responsibility for the work of others; (4) Being very well off financially; (5) Becoming successful in a business of my own”. With the aim of applying these variables in my regression analysis, I compute the mean of these variables, and request the SPSS to remove these cases with less than four pieces of information from these five variables. In sum, I transform this factor into a new variable called “occupational aspiration” as my dependent variable, and the variable ranges from 0 to 3. Having high value of the dependent variable is to having high levels of occupational aspiration. It combines occupational aspects of success with high level of status attainment.

Occupational aspirations are individuals’ desired future career choices, which reflects individuals’ understanding of careers, their abilities, and themselves, and occupational aspirations are different from “occupational expectations” that focus on realistic goals and choices (Rojewski 1997; Lee and
Rojewski 2009). According to the definition, occupational aspirations have the following characteristics: first, occupational aspirations must reflect students' expected career goals in the future; Second, occupational aspirations must be students' goals that are related to careers and works. Third, occupational aspirations need to be self-reflections of individuals' desires, their abilities, and perceived opportunities (Rojewski 2005). My dependent variable thus measured students' aspirations about their future occupations, without emphasizing their actual abilities and desires.

Becoming an authority in one's field indicates one of the future goals of students. It clearly implies that students want to obtain professional or technical expertise and reputation. It is also a reflection of individuals' aspirations in terms of professional skills and credentials. Obtaining recognition in a special field is another students goal, because college freshmen have not contributed to any area yet. In order to achieve this goal, students need to have confidence in their teamwork and leadership skills. Thus, it is also a reflection of individuals' administrative abilities and responsibility for the work of others. Thus, it represents occupational prestige that involved in the workplace. Students evaluate their managerial skills as well as their communicate skills. Being very well off financially reflects the ultimate payoff for students' educational
attainments. Students view themselves as obtaining the necessary business acumen and willpower to achieve success. Becoming successful in one's own business suggests students consider themselves as having enough business expertise and managerial talents. This variable is highly related to occupational success and economic self-interest. Therefore, all variables that are selected via the factor analysis are inner connected. Through the notion of occupational success, they noticeably represent the concept.
Table 1. Items and Descriptive Statistics and Items for Variables: CIRP Freshmen Survey, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Variable description</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupational aspirations</td>
<td>A mean index of the following variables from factor analysis</td>
<td>1.5183</td>
<td>.61866</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational aspirations</td>
<td>• Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: Becoming an authority in my field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: Becoming successful in a business of my own</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: Being very well off financially</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: Having administrative responsibility for the work of others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special field.</td>
<td></td>
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Table 1. (Continued)
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<th>S.D</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Independent variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>A mean index of the following variables, SEI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental SES</td>
<td>which are recoded by Nakao and Treas' (1994)</td>
<td>59.1163</td>
<td>15.16480</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>97.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's SES</td>
<td>Your father's occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's SES</td>
<td>Your mother's occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity¹</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>.7479</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>.0204</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>.0741</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>.0676</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican/Chicano</td>
<td>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>.0254</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>.0099</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Latino</td>
<td>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>.0203</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other race/ethnicity</td>
<td>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>.0344</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-native speaker²</td>
<td>Is English your native language?</td>
<td>.0690</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants³</td>
<td>Citizen status</td>
<td>.0137</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent residents³</td>
<td>Citizen status</td>
<td>.0287</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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Table 1. (Continued)
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td>In deciding to go to college, how important to you was each of the following reasons? My parents wanted me to go.</td>
<td>.7489</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent's expectation</td>
<td></td>
<td>.4609</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor/role model's encouragement</td>
<td>In deciding to go to college, how important to you was each of the following reasons? A mentor/role model encouraged me to go.</td>
<td>.8841</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive peer influence</td>
<td>Indicate which activities you did during the past year: Studied with other students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Your sex</td>
<td>.5618</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school GPA</td>
<td>What was your average grade in high school?</td>
<td>5.2911</td>
<td>1.45856</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT verbal score</td>
<td>What were your scores on SAT and/or ACT?</td>
<td>39.1485</td>
<td>9.63090</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT math score</td>
<td>What were your scores on SAT and/or ACT?</td>
<td>39.8474</td>
<td>9.70030</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
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<th>S.D</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None degree (other credentials)</td>
<td>What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?</td>
<td>.0201</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?</td>
<td>.0038</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td>What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?</td>
<td>.4230</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td>What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?</td>
<td>.1892</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical degree</td>
<td>What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?</td>
<td>.1081</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jurisprudence degree</td>
<td>What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?</td>
<td>.0549</td>
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<td>Divinity degree</td>
<td>What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?</td>
<td>.0043</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' motivation</td>
<td>A mean index of the following variables from factor analysis</td>
<td>1.3042</td>
<td>.42498</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.57</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What is your best guess as to the chances that you will: Be elected to an academic honor society?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What is your best guess as to the chances that you will: Be elected to student office?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Table 1. (Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable description</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your best guess as to the chances that you will Graduate with honors?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What is your best guess as to the chances that you will Participate in volunteer or community service work?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year: Discussed politics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year: Discussed religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year: Performed volunteer work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year: Tutored another student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. (Continued)
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>Variable description</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skillful Internet user</td>
<td>A mean index of the following variables from factor analysis</td>
<td>1.3274</td>
<td>0.48732</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year: Communicated via e-mail

• For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year: Used a personal computer

• For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year: Used the Internet for research or homework

• For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year: Participated in Internet chat rooms

• For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year: Other Internet use

Table 1. (Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Variable description</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influence of individualism</td>
<td>Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now.</td>
<td>1.5663</td>
<td>.92041</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Affiliation⁵</td>
<td>How would you characterize your political views?</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political left</td>
<td>How would you characterize your political views?</td>
<td>.2843</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N                              | 148,850                                                                               |

¹ the reference group is Whites  
² the reference group is native speakers  
³ the reference group is U.S. citizens  
⁴ the reference group is Bachelor degrees  
⁵ the reference group is Political right  
Source: CIRP Freshmen Survey, 1999
Independent Variables

Socioeconomic Status

In this study, socioeconomic status will be an independent variable based on aforementioned literature. My study will use Nakao and Treas’ (1994) socioeconomic status index, since it appears to be an accurate measurement of the parents’ socioeconomic status. Parent’s occupation (father and mother’s) will be combined as an overall SES score. Although the SES score in Nakao and Treas’ (1994) socioeconomic status index theoretically range from 0 to 100, the SES score in my study ranges from 17 which refers to being unemployed to 97 which refers to being physician.

I assign socioeconomic scores to parents’ occupations by applying Nakao and Treas’ (1994) socioeconomic status index, and both fathers and mothers’ occupations will be taken into account. The original survey question phrases father’s career as “your father’s career”, and students circle answers such as “artist” “college teacher”, etc. The original survey question reads mother’s career as “your mother’s career” and students circle answers such as “artist” “college teacher”, etc. Fathers’ socioeconomic statuses range from 17 as unemployed to 97 as physician. Mothers’ socioeconomic statuses also range from 17 as unemployed to 97 as physician. Parents whose career is unemployed are assigned the lowest
socioeconomic score (17) according to the detailed socioeconomic status index. Then, I compute the mean of both fathers’ and mothers’ socioeconomic statuses in order to create students’ parents’ socioeconomic statuses. Therefore, the minimum value of this variable is 17 and the maximum value is 97.

**Race/Ethnicity**

I will use race/ethnicity as another independent variable in this study. The original variable of race groups in the 1999 CIRP data set contains eight groups. In this study, I recoded the racial groups in the dataset, and created seven dummy variables. These dummy variables include: (1) “Black”, (2) “American Indian”, (3) “Asian”, (4) “Mexican/Chicano”, (5) “Puerto Rican”, (6) “other Latino”, and (7) “other race/ethnicity” while leaving the “White” out of analysis as a reference category.

Existing literature suggests that individuals’ immigrant status is important for their future occupation and assimilation process (Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Zhou and Bankston 1996; Waters 1999). Individuals’ fluency in English is a form of linguistic assimilation, which is a focus of segmentation. Therefore, it is important for me to control student’s immigration status as well as their native languages. Two dummy variables “immigrants” and “permanent residents” are created to assess individuals’ immigrant statuses based on
question "citizen status". Immigrants are these people who are "neither citizen nor green card holder", while permanent residents are people who have "green card". The U.S. citizens are my reference group. I create the dummy variable "non-English speaker" for people whose first language is not English, while leaving the category of people whose "first language is English" out as my reference.

Social Capital

Social capital as an independent variable is inspired by Sewell et al.'s (1969/2011) concept of significant others' influence. Scholar demonstrates that influence of significant others is one key dimension of social capital (Lin 1999; Lin 2001). Moreover, many scholars argue that race as a variable has captured some aspects of the concept of social capital (e.g., Zhou and Bankston 1996; Behnke et al. 2004). According to these researches on race and social capital, scholars express similar idea that parents, schoolteachers, and peers have a great impact on an individual's occupational aspirations, which provides a way to measure social capital (e.g., Keith and Lichtman 1994; Okagaki et al. 1995; Smith-Maddox 1999; Pascarella et al. 2004; Ma and Yeh 2010). Rowan-Kenyon et al. (2011) demonstrate how school and teachers play a central role in providing career information for students, and indicate that students from high resources
schools may have extra information about future occupations because of the social networks of their families.

Based on theories, race/ethnicity groups have already captured some aspects of social capital, and I will focus on students' interactions with their parents, teachers, and peers when measuring the social capital variable. Thus, I use variables such as "parent's expectation", "mentor/role model's encouragement", and "positive peer influence" to capture the core concept of social capital. The original question for "parent's expectation" is "In deciding to go to college, how important to you was each of the following reasons? My parents wanted me to go". Then, students choose answers from 1 which refers to "Not important", 2 which refers to "Somewhat important", and 3 which refers to "Very important". I recode the variable and assign 0 to "Not important" category to make it as a reference category. I assign 1 to both "Somewhat important" and "Very important" indicating that students' view this issue as important in some way. The original question for "mentor/role model's encouragement" is "In deciding to go to college, how important to you was each of the following reasons? A mentor/role model encouraged me to go". Then, students circle answers from 1 which refers to "Not important", 2 which refers to "Somewhat important", and 3 which refers to "Very important". I recode the variable and
assign 0 to "Not important" category to make it as a default category. I give 1 to both "Somewhat important" and "Very important" signifying that students' view this issue as important in some way. Eventually, "positive peer influence" is measured by survey question, "Indicate which activities you did during the past year: Studied with other students". Students are required to choose an answer from 1 which refers to "Not at all", 2 which refers to "Occasionally", and 3 which refers to "Frequently". I recode this variable into a dichotomy variable and students who never study with their peer are my reference group. I assign 1 to students who occasionally or frequently study with their peers signifying that they participate in group study in some way.

Control Variables

I will use gender as a control in this study, and multiple researches include gender as a variable (e.g., Mau 1995; Mau and Bikos 2000; Patton and Creed 2007; Lee and Rejewski 2009; Howard et al. 2011). Sewell and Hauser (1975) mention that gender have an influence on individuals' aspirations. Previous literature provides diverse results on the issue of gender and occupational aspirations. Mau and Bikos (2000) as well as Mau (1995) argue that female students are more likely to have higher occupational aspirations than male
students, while Howard et al. (2011) suggests that female students’ occupational aspirations are not significantly different from males. However, other research indicates that male students tend to choose professional and prestigious occupations, while female students tend to select occupations that are less prestigious (Patton and Creed 2007). Correspondingly, Lee and Rejewski (2009) also argue that although female high school students tend to report higher occupational aspirations than their male counter-parts, they lower occupational aspirations in colleges because they narrow their career options down. Therefore, it is important me to control gender as a variable in my study. In this study, I recoded the respondents’ sex into a dichotomous variable—“female” with the goal of controlling for the effect of gender. The original variable contains two categories male and female. I put male as my reference group and create a variable named “female”.

Students’ school performance is another control variable in this study. Academic performance will affect the interactions between individuals and their significant others, which indirectly affect their occupational aspiration (Sewell and Hauser 1975; Sewell et al. 1969/2011). Schoon and Parsons (2002) support Sewell et al.’s (1969/2011) argument and point out that students’ academic performances as self-reflection lens are moderately associated with their
occupational aspirations according to the status attainment theory. Other researches also suggest controlling individuals' academic performance in aspiration studies (Mau and Bikos 2000; Walpole 2008). In this study, I will measure students' school performance by using their grade points average and their SAT scores. The variable high school GPA is indicated by the survey question "What was your average grade in high school", and it ranges from 1 as "D" to 8 as "A or A+". I recode students' high school GPA and make it ranges from 0 as "D" to 7 as "A or A+" for easier interpretation. Moreover, I use students' SAT score to measure their performance. The original variables are phased as "What were your scores on SAT and/or ACT?", and are coded from 200 to 800 for the math and verbal scores. Then, I transformed the SAT math and verbal scores into 20-80 scales by dividing the original value by 10, and then recode them to 0-60 scales for a better interpretation.

The status attainment theory indicates that educational aspiration is an influential factor in occupational aspiration studies. Sewell et al. (1969/2011) suggest that occupational aspirations and educational aspirations may be correlated to each other, and Sewell and Hauser (1975) point out that prestigious occupations are dependent on both educational and occupational aspirations, and high status families are more likely to stimulate the educational and
occupational aspirations of their children. Since many prestigious occupations require higher education as professional level, it is reasonable for me to control students' educational expectation in this study. The variable educational expectation is measured by survey question “what is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?” I left people whose expected degree is bachelor's degree as the default group. Then, I combined the category “none”, “vocational certificate” and "other" to create a dummy variable “other degree”. Afterward, I created a series of dummy variables (See Table 1). For example, dummy variable “master degree” represents people who expect a “Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)”. Dummy variable “doctoral degree” signifies people who want a “Ph.D. or Ed.D.”. Dichotomy variable “Medical degree” signifies individuals whose expected degree is “M.D., D.O., D.D.S., D.V.M.”.

Research has previously indicated that students’ motivation affects their educational outcomes, and motivation significantly alters students' views of education (Kao and Thompson 2003; Freeman 2005). Therefore, it is critical for me to control student's motivation in my research. In this research, I applied factor analysis techniques to measure motivation. I placed variables that ask students about their activities in the past year and their future goals into factor analysis. These variables capture the core part of students' motivation, which
focus upon participation in extra-curricular activities and high academic expectations. A factor has been extracted from the pool of variables, and contains eight variables (See Table 1). The factor resides at the .704 alpha levels, and reflects students who actively participate in various discussions, volunteer work, and tutoring as well as having higher expectations of their future college performance. I transformed these variables into a new variable, and named it as "motivation". The variable "motivation" is a continuous measurement that ranges from 0 to 2.57, and it is normally distributed.

Choi (2008) argues that many students learn their information technology skills in an informal setting rather than receive formal training. In this context, students usually see information technology as computer based skills. According to her research, most students choose information technology as their minor because information technology is considered a practical skill. In this situation, students consider information technology skill as something that they will need for their future career, regardless of the type career they will choose in the future. Although information technology learning can happen in both formal and informal setting, college students learn information technology for the sake of future occupations. Additionally, Venegas (2006) points out that low-income students experience many problems with online financial aid application process.
Although most low-income students report that they have access to computers, many students have made mistakes while applying financial aid due to the lack of instrumental knowledge. I used factor analysis skills to create the variable to measure students' internet skills. I entered a series of variables that pertained to individuals' last year activities and their future goals. The factor analysis generates a suitable factor, and then contains five variables that are involved with computer skills (See Table 1). The factor is at the .751 alpha level, and represents students who actively practice and learn computer skills, which is a crucial skill for later academic development. I computed the result of the factor analysis and create a new variable “internet skills”. This variable is a continuous measurement, which ranges from 0 to 2, and it is also normally distributed.

Multiple researches suggest that the U.S. has a dominant culture that emphasizes individualist achievement (MacLeod 1995; Rosenbaum 2001; Bozick et al. 2010). Some scholars point out that this is biased explanation of achievements is the fundamental error (Ross 1977; Gergen and Gergen 1981; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Guimond et al. 1989). Therefore, it is critical to control the influence of this bias in my research. The influence of the individualist culture will be measured through students' view toward taxing on riches. The variable is specified by survey question “wealthy people should pay a large
share of taxes than they do now”, and it ranges from 1 as “strong disagree” to 4 “strong agree”. I recode the scale and make it ranges from 0 to 3 for easier interpretation.

Students' political affiliations will be a control variable in this thesis. Political views are measured by the following survey question “How would you characterize your political views?” Students are asked to choose from “far right”, “conservative” “middle-of-the-road” “liberal”, and “far left”. Students' political views have been recoded into dummy variables. Variable “political moderate” includes “middle-of-the-road”. Variable “political left” includes “liberal” and “far right”. These two dichotomy variables left categories “right” and “conservative” out as the reference category.
Table 2. Results from OLS Regression Models Predicting Freshmen’s Occupational Aspirations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.570</td>
<td>1.505</td>
<td>1.384</td>
<td>1.703</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent variables</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental SES</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity(^1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>-.059***</td>
<td>-.058***</td>
<td>-.028*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>.187***</td>
<td>.182***</td>
<td>.109***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>.304***</td>
<td>.296***</td>
<td>.183***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican/Chicano</td>
<td>.087***</td>
<td>.076***</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>.072***</td>
<td>.070***</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Latino</td>
<td>.162***</td>
<td>.158***</td>
<td>.063***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other race/ethnicity</td>
<td>.088***</td>
<td>.088***</td>
<td>.041***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent’s expectation(^2)</td>
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<td>.037***</td>
<td>.049***</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentor/role model’s encouragement(^2)</td>
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<td>.110***</td>
<td>.064***</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Positive peer influence(^3)</td>
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<td>.018***</td>
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<td>Non-native speaker(^4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.095***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants(^5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.042**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent residents(^5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.027*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R\(^2\)                        | .000    | .023    | .034    | .127    |

Table 2. (Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control variables</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female(^6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.185***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>High school GPA</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SAT verbal score</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT math score</td>
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<td>-.002***</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree expectations(^7)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None degree (other credentials)(^8)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.083***</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
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<td>.010</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Master degree</td>
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<td>.107***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.161***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical degree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.165***</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jurisprudence degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.314***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divinity degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.080**</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational motivation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' motivation</td>
<td></td>
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<td>.203***</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skillful Internet user</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.107***</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Influence of individualism</td>
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<td>Influence of individualism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-.051***</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Affiliation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.023***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political left</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.023***</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Table 2. (Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R^2</th>
<th>.000</th>
<th>.023</th>
<th>.034</th>
<th>.127</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>148,850</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 the reference group is White
2 the reference group is "not important"
3 the reference group is "not (study with peers) at all"
4 the reference group is native speaker
5 the reference group is U.S. Citizen
6 the reference group is male
7 the reference group is Bachelor degree
8 none degree expected, vocational certificate and Other credentials are code into this category

*p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001

Source: CIRP Freshmen Survey, 1999
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Main Indicators

I used a series of OLS regression models to examine the relationship between individuals' occupational aspirations and their family backgrounds as well as their social capital. In models 1-3, I considered the association between my key predictors and students' occupational aspirations. In Model 4, I included control variables into the regression analysis. In models 5-6, I studied the interactions between my main indicators effects and their interaction effects on occupational aspirations.

Model 1 evaluates the relationship between parents' socioeconomic statuses and individuals' occupational aspirations. Parents' SES is the solo predictor in this model, and an R square at .000 is reported for this model. Result of model 1 suggest that parents' SES is statistically significance at the .000 level, but the change of the dependent variable is less than .001 for 1 unit change in parents' SES. Although, parents' SES ranges from 17 to 97, the result has no practical significance. This suggests that solo SES has limited predictive power in explaining occupational aspirations, and Parental SES is not directly associated with children's occupational aspirations.
I introduce individuals’ race/ethnicity groups into Model 2. Model 2 reports an R square at .023, and suggests an improvement of the model fit. All variables in Model 2 are statistical significance at .001 level, but Parents’ SES remains weak in predicting occupational aspirations. The reference category of all these race/ethnicity variables is the group “White”, and the constant of the model is 1.505. All minority groups except Native Americans, have higher occupational aspirations than Whites do in Model 2. Native Americans’ occupational aspirations are .059 less than Whites’ occupational aspirations. Comparing to Whites, Asian students have .187 more occupational aspirations score, while Black students have .304 more occupational aspirations score. Mexican and Puerto Rico students’ occupational aspirations are .087 and .072, respectively, higher than White students’ aspirations. Other Latinos have .162 occupational scores more than Whites do. After controlling for SES, other races’ occupational aspiration is .088, which is similar to the group of Mexican students, (always compared to Whites). This result indicates that minority students except for the Native American students tend to have higher occupational aspirations than white students do. Among minority groups, Black, Asian, other Latinos have noticeable higher aspiration scores than Whites do, while Native American students have statistical significance less occupational aspirations than Whites do.
I included three social capital variables, which include students' parents' educational expectation, mentor/role model's encouragement of receiving college education, and occurrence of group studies. Parents' SES, race/ethnicity, and students' social capital combine explain 3.4% of the overall variance of the occupational aspirations. A 1% of R square change has been reported, and the R square change suggests a moderate enhancement of the model quality. All variables in Model 3 are statistically significance at 99.9% confidence level. A constant of 1.384 has been reported for the model. Parents' SES remains statistically significance in the model, but still lack explanatory power in terms of individuals' occupational aspirations. Native Americans have .058 less occupational aspiration scores than Whites. Asian students have .182 point scores more than Whites in terms of occupational aspirations. Black remains the group with the highest occupational aspirations, and they score .296 more than Whites. Mexican students score .076 higher than Whites, and Puerto Rico students' occupational aspiration is .070 more than Whites. After controlling SES and social capital variables, other race's occupational aspirations are .088 higher than Whites' aspirations. Parents' expectation of going to college is a nominal dichotomy variable and its reference group is individuals do not consider parents' higher educational expectation as relevant in making the college going
decision. The result of the regression analysis suggests that parents' educational expectation is positively associated with individuals' occupational aspirations, and people who value their parents' high educational expectations score .037 more than people who consider their parents' expectations as irrelevant do. Mentor/role model's encouragement is also positively correlated to individuals' occupational aspirations. If individuals value mentor/role models' encouragement of going to college, their occupational aspiration is .110 higher than individuals who do not. Students who frequently study with their peers usually have higher level of occupational aspirations. They score .046 more than individuals who never participate group studies. Model 3 indicates that race/ethnicity is still a strong predictor in explaining individuals' occupational aspirations, even after controlling social capital variable. Social capital variable has some explanatory power in predicting occupational aspirations. For example, a Black student who has high level of social capital have .489 more aspiration scores than a White student with no social capital, with holding parents' SES constant. Under the same condition, a Black student with high level of social capital will have .547 more occupational aspiration scores than a Native student without social capital. This means that race/ethnicity variables together with social capital variables have a considerable predictive power, since the range of
the dependent variable is an index of ranging from 0 to 3. Furthermore, if a White student with the maximum social capital will score .011 higher than an Asian student without social capital in terms of occupational aspirations.

Main Indicators and Controls

Model 4 adjusts a series of control variables, and considers the relationship between individuals' social origin variables and occupational aspirations after controlling for a cluster of variables. In Model 4, I included variables regarding individuals' immigrant status, gender, academic performance, degree expectations, motivations, skills, bias, and political affiliations as controls to provide a robust model for the study. Model 4 reports a R square at 13%, and shows that the independent variables together with control variable explains a large portion of the variation in individuals' level of occupational aspirations. The R square change is reported at .094, and it signifies that, from Model 3 to Model 4, the model quality improved significantly. Furthermore, Model 4 indicates an F-test value at 624.835, and the F-test is statistically significance at 99.9% confidence level. Since the F-test measures the overall quality of the model, it supports the argument that the model quality is
improved from Model 3 to Model 4. Finally, the constant value has changed to 1.703 in Model 4.

Parents' SES loses its statistical significance in Model 4. This indicates that parents' SES does not directly correlate to their children's occupational aspirations. However, parents' SES is important according to status attainment theory, and previous literature strongly suggests including this variable in the model even if it is not statistical significance. Furthermore, I still keep parents' SES because interaction effects may exist between parents' SES and other main parameters.

Model 4 suggests that race/ethnicity variables are still influential in predicting individuals' occupational aspirations. Native American students have lower occupational aspirations than White students, and the difference in occupational aspirations is .028. This result is statistical significance at 95% confidence level. Compare to White students, Asian students score .109 higher in the occupational aspiration scale, and the result is significant because the P value is smaller than .001. In Model 4, Mexican/Chicano and Puerto Rico students' occupational aspirations are not different from Whites' occupational aspirations in a significant way after control clusters of variables. Other Latino students are .063 higher in occupational aspirations than Whites are, and the P value of
this result is smaller than .001. Students, who are belongs to others, have an occupational score that is .041 higher than White students are ($p < .001$). After controlling a series of variables, dummy variables such as Mexican/Chicano and Puerto Rico lose their significance. These groups are not statistically significantly different from Whites in terms of their occupational aspirations. Groups such as other Latinos and other races still have higher occupational aspirations than Whites, but the significance result is not at practical level and their effects are moderate. Additionally, minorities such as Asian and Black do have substantial higher occupational aspirations than Whites, and these differences are at practical level, because the practical significances are relative.

Social capital variables still have moderate predictive power in explaining the variance of college freshmen’s occupational aspiration. Students, who consider their parents’ expectation as influential in deciding to go to college, have .049 more scores on occupational aspirations than those who are not affected by their parents’ expectations of going to college. It is noticeable that the parents’ educational expectation is statistical significance at 99.9% confidence level. Moreover, these students, who are stimulated to go to colleges by the encouragement of their mentors and role models, are .064 higher on the occupational aspiration scale compare to their counterparts who are not
motivated by their role models and mentors. Mentor/role model’s encouragement is statistical significance at .001 level. Furthermore, students who frequently study with peers have occupational aspirations that are slightly higher than those who study alone or do not study. Although the statistically tests show that this variable is significant at 99.9% confidence, the coefficient is only at .018. Therefore, mentor and role models’ encouragement is the most influential variable in predicting individuals’ occupational aspiration among three social capital dummy variables, after controlling for other factors.

Besides the independent variables that were discussed above, Model 4 includes several clusters of controls variables, and some of these controls variables have both, statistical and practical significance, in term of predicting college freshmen’s occupational aspirations. Individuals whose first language is not English have .095 higher levels of occupational aspirations than others whose first language is English. Non-native speakers tend to have higher level of occupational aspirations, and the result indicates a (P-value <.001). Moreover, students who are neither U.S. citizens nor green card holder have .042 higher scores on the levels of occupational aspiration compare to these people who are U.S. citizens. The statistical test points out that the coefficient of this dummy reports a P-value that is smaller than .01. Additionally, being a permanent
resident slightly contributes to one's occupational aspirations compared to being a
U.S. citizen. A student who is a green card holder has .027 occupational
aspiration scores more than a student who is a U.S. citizen. The coefficient for
this dummy variable is statistical significance at 95% confidence level. In sum,
among these three dummy variables that measure individuals' immigrant
statuses, whether individuals are native speakers or not have the most influential
explanatory power in extrapolating occupational aspirations. Other two
dichotomy nominal variables only have moderate predicting power in terms of
occupational aspirations.

The control variable gender has both statistical and practical significance
in predicting individuals' occupational aspirations. According to the statistical
results, female college freshmen have .185 lower occupational aspirations than
their male counterpart, and the result is statistical significance at 99.9%
confidence level. This means that female college freshmen are, somehow
discouraged to aim at prestigious occupations, which is connected to gender
inequality and discrimination experienced by women in the workplace.

Students' academic performance variables is also a very important control..
Initially, individuals' high school GPA has no practical significance, though it is
statistical significance according to the result. 1 unit change in college
freshmen's high school GPA only provides .004 variance on their occupational aspirations. Student's high school GPA is an interval/ratio measurement, which ranges from 0 to 7. In this circumstance, students with a GPA at A/A+ only score .028 more on occupational aspiration scales, comparing to individuals' with a GPA at D level. This indicates that students' high school GPA only have a moderate effect on their levels of occupational aspirations. The result suggests that the moderate effect of high school GPA is due to the grading standard among high schools.

Additionally, college freshmen's SAT scores do have practical significance on their occupational aspirations. Both the SAT verbal score and SAT math score are negatively correlated to individuals' occupational aspirations. 1 unit change in the SAT verbal score will bring up a .014 variation on students' occupational aspiration scores. Since the SAT verbal score is an interval/ratio variable and has a maximum value of 60, the influence of the SAT verbal score on occupational aspirations is substantial. This indicates that a student scoring 60 in the SAT verbal test, will score .84 less on the occupational aspiration scales compare to a student scores 0 in the SAT verbal test, while controlling all other variables in the model. In addition, the unstandardized coefficient for the SAT math test scores is -.002, and the coefficient is statistical significance. Similar to the SAT verbal score,
students SAT math test score is from 0 to 60. It seems that students with the high SAT scores are less preoccupied with high levels of occupational status. This means that a student with the maximum SAT math test score will score .12 less on the occupational aspiration levels. Considering the variance in the SAT math score variable, it has a moderate strong explanatory power in predicting occupational aspiration levels. The result suggests that the SAT scores as standard test scores are more significant in predicting occupational aspirations than students’ high school GPA. The SAT verbal test scores are negatively related to individuals’ occupational aspirations in a large scale. It is important to notice that both students’ high school GPA and their SAT scores yield a negative effect on individuals’ occupational aspiration scales. This result suggests that individuals who are successful in academic areas, especially in liberal arts areas, are less likely to be aspired to have prestigious occupations.

College freshmen’s expected future degree is associated with their occupational aspiration. Students, who do not expect to earn a degree or want to receive other credentials, are sorted to the none-degree-seeking variable. Comparing the individuals who expect to receive a bachelor degree from college, people who are none-degree-seeking score .083 higher on the levels of occupational aspirations (P-value < .001). This indicates that individuals who are
not seeking degrees in college are more specify on the specific work-related credentials. Individuals who expected associated degrees are not statistically significantly different from individuals who want to receive bachelor degrees from colleges (P-value > .05). Moreover, college freshmen who expected to receive master degrees from colleges score .107 higher on the aspiration levels compare to people who merely expect a bachelor degree. The coefficient is statistically significant at 99.9% confidence level, and the effect of the variable is strong. Furthermore, individuals who want to obtain doctoral degrees have an occupational aspiration scores that are .161 higher than individuals who expected bachelor degrees (P-value < .001). This result suggesting that expecting higher academic degrees enhance individuals' occupational aspirations.

Additionally, college freshmen who expected to gain medical degrees from colleges have .165 higher occupational scores than people who want to receive bachelor degrees, and this is statistically significant at .001 level. This means that individuals with a medical degree expectation have more occupational aspirations than people who want to obtain doctoral degrees. It is crucial to notice that a law degree expectation will practically significantly modify one's occupational aspirations. Individuals who want to acquire a law degree have .314 occupational aspiration points than individuals with a bachelor
degree expectation. The huge practical significance suggests that law degree has long been associated with professional and prestigious occupations. An individual who wants to have a law degree has a clear occupational plan and his/her education trajectory is career oriented. Interestingly, for those people who want to obtain divinity related degrees, their occupational aspirations diminished. Compared to people with a bachelor degree expectation, individuals who seek divinity related degrees score .080 less on occupational aspiration levels, and the result is statistical significance at 99.9% confidence level. This means that religious teaching may reduce individuals' occupational aspirations.

Students' educational motivation is an interval/ratio variable that is generated from factor analysis. It has a minimum value of 0, and a maximum value of 2.57. Educational motivation is statistical significant at 99.9% confidence level in predicting individuals' levels of occupational aspirations. The statistical test reveals that 1 unit increases in students' motivation will bring .203 growths in the levels of occupation aspirations. This means that college freshmen's motivation is associated with occupational aspirations at a practical significant level. For example, with holding other variables in the model constant, a student with maximum value of educational motivation have .521 occupational aspiration points more than people with 0 level of educational motivation. In this
situation, students, who want to participate in many extracurricular activities and make academic accomplishments, are having significant higher level of occupational aspiration.

The students' internet skills variable is an interval/ratio variable, which is generated by applying the factor analysis. Students' internet skills as part of their career-oriented skills are statistical significance in explaining the variance of the dependent variable (P-value < .001). The unstandardized coefficient for this variable indicates that 1 unit increase in students' internet skills will bring .107 growth in the levels of occupational aspirations. Suppose that these are 2 units that escalate in individuals' internet skills, the levels of occupational aspirations will gain .214. The results show that practical skills such as internet skills are vocational oriented and these types of vocational oriented skills are positively related to individuals' occupational aspirations.

Surprisingly, individuals who embrace the individualist explanation of personal success have lower occupational aspiration scores. Influence of individualism is negatively associated with occupational aspirations, and the result is statistical significant (P-value < .001). Individuals' political affiliation is controlled in Model 4, and both of these two dummy variables have statistical significance coefficient (P-value < .001). Being political left increases .023
occupational aspiration points compare to being political right. Moreover, being moderates also increase .023 on the dependent variable compare to political conservatives.
Table 3. Results from OLS Regression Models Including Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
<th>Model 6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td><strong>Independent variables</strong></td>
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<td>Parental SES</td>
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<td>Race/ethnicity¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>.353***</td>
<td>.339***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>.814***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican/Chicano</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>-.272**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Latino</td>
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<td>.442***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other race/ethnicity</td>
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<td>.428***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent’s expectation²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentor/role model’s encouragement²</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive peer influence³</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Control variables</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-native speaker⁴</td>
<td>-.044*</td>
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<td>Immigrants⁵</td>
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<td>Permanent residents⁵</td>
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<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>.131</td>
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</table>

Table 3. (Continued)
Interactions

American Indian × SES .018***
Asian × SES -.004***
Black × SES -.011***
Mexican/Chicano × SES -.002*
Puerto Rican × SES .005***
Other Latino × SES -.008***
Other race/ethnicity × SES -.007***

Mentor/role model’s encouragement × SES .001***

Non-native speaker × SES .002*
Immigrants × SES .003**
Permanent residents × SES .004***

Asian × parent’s expectation .037*
Other Latino × positive peer influence .118**
Other race/ethnicity × positive peer influence .053*

R² .130 .131
N 148,850

1 the reference group is White
2 the reference group is “not important”
3 the reference group is “not (study with peers) at all”
4 the reference group is native speaker
5 the reference group is U.S. citizen
*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001
Source: CIRP Freshmen Survey, 1999
Interactions

Model 5 considers the interaction effects between socioeconomic status and other independent variables. I introduced the interaction effects between parents' SES and individuals' social capital, and then included the interaction effects between parents' SES and race/ethnicity. I also added interaction effects between SES and college freshmen's immigrant status. Model 5 reports a R square at .130 and a R square change at .003. The constant value in Model 5 is 1.659.

Model 5 examines the interactions effects between parents’ SES and social capital on the dependent variable occupational aspirations. The output indicates that having mentor/role model’s encouragement of going to college covariates with parents’ SES. The interaction effect is statistical significance at 99.9% confidence level. This suggests that mentors' effects and parents' SES work together boost one’s occupational aspirations. This means that mentors’ encouragement in pursuing higher education goals has a multiplicative predictive effect with the increase of individuals’ parents’ SES. There is thus a significant growth in their occupational aspirations. For individuals from low SES families, mentor/role models’ encouragement has little effect on their occupational aspirations. However, for students from high status family, mentor/
role models' encouragement have much more of an impact on their occupational aspiration levels. The result supports the argument that mentor/role model’s encouragement of going to colleges are more likely to be effective for students who are from abundant families, and social capital is more important for high status students.

Model 5 tests the interaction effects between parental socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity on college freshmen’s occupational aspiration. Variables that are used to measure interaction effects between SES and race/ethnicity are all interval/ratio variables and are range from 0 to 97. Native American students with parents have abundant SES increase their occupational aspirations largely. The interaction effect between Native Americans and parental SES are statistical significance at .001 level. For the interactions between Native American student and SES, a coefficient of .018 is reported in the analysis. This means that Native American students with the increase of their parents’ SES, these is a statistical significance increase in their occupational aspirations. This means that for low SES Native American students, parental SES is not very influential in predicting one’s occupational aspiration. Nevertheless, for Native American students with high level of SES, growth in their parents’ SES has a greater effect on their levels of occupational aspiration. The result suggests that a Native American whose
parents have great amount of resources, in the shape of higher SES, are easier to have a more ambitious career plan.

The interaction effect between Asian students and SES is also significant at 99.9% level. Being Asian and having SES at the same time reduce individuals’ occupational aspiration levels. A coefficient of -.004 is reported by the statistical results of the interactions between Asian and parents’ SES. Asian students with the increase of their parental SES, a significant decrease occurs in their occupational aspirations. This means that the higher value of parents’ SES, the smaller slope between Asian students and predicted occupational aspirations, and so the weaker is the effect of being an Asian. For low SES Asian students, SES has little impact on their occupational aspirations. For high SES Asian students, SES has larger negative effect on their occupational aspirations. This suggests that an Asian student’s occupational aspiration does not benefit from having high SES parents. On the contrary, an Asian student who has parents with great amount of resources is easier to have a meek career plan.

Being Black students and having high level of parental SES at the same time diminish one’s levels of occupational aspirations, and the coefficient of the interaction effect variable is statistical significant at 99.9%. A coefficient at .001 is reported for the interaction effect between Black and SES. The increase of parents’
SES decreases Black students' occupational aspiration. This means that the higher value of parents' SES, the smaller slope between Black students and predicted occupational aspirations, and so the weaker is the effect of being a Black. This suggests that Black students' occupational aspiration levels are hindered by their parents' high levels of SES.

For Mexican/Chicano students with parental SES, their occupational aspiration diminishes slightly. The result is statistical significance at 95% confidence level, and a coefficient of -.002 is reported for the interaction effect between Mexican/Chicano and parents' SES. The higher the value of parents' SES, the larger slope between being Mexican/Chicano and predicted occupational aspirations, and the stronger is the effect of being Mexican or Chicano. Mexican/Chicano students are benefited from their parents' high SES in terms of occupational aspiration. The result suggests that Mexican/Chicano students can have an ambitious career plan if their parents have plentiful resources.

Being Puerto Rico students and having parents' SES at the same time have a positive association with their occupational aspirations. The result is statistical significant at 99.9% confidence level, and a coefficient at .005 is reported. This means that parents' SES boosts Puerto Rico students' occupational aspirations. The higher the value of SES, the larger effect of being Puerto Rico students will
be casted on predicted occupational aspirations, and so the stronger is the effect of being Puerto Rico. The result suggests that Puerto Rico students’ occupational aspiration levels are benefited from parents’ SES, and occupational aspiration is high for Puerto Rico students with parents have substantial resources. Thus, resources of the family are the key for Puerto Rico students to make aspirant career choices.

Being other Latinos and having parental SES diminish one’s occupational aspirations, and it is statistical significance (P-value < .001). A coefficient at -.008 is reported for the interaction effect variable. This means that the higher the value of parents’ SES, the smaller the slope between predicted occupational aspirations and being other Latinos. Other Latino students with the increase of their parents’ SES, a decrease happens in their occupational aspirations. The result suggests that occupational aspiration does not benefit from having high SES parents, for a student form other Latino groups. On the contrary, other Latino students tend to have modest career plans when their parents have large amount of resources.

For being other races and having SES, also negatively affect one’s aspiration levels (P-value <.001). The unstandardized coefficient of the interaction effect between other races and SES is -.007. This means that the higher
value of parents’ SES, the smaller the slope between predicted occupational aspirations and being other races, and so the effect of being other race students is weaker. The result suggests that students who are from other race groups are negatively affected by their parents’ SES in terms of their occupational aspirations.

Socioeconomic status has interaction effect with individuals’ immigrant status. The interaction between being non-native speaker and SES is statistical significance at 95% confidence level. The unstandardized coefficient of the interaction effect between SES and being non-native speaker is at .002. The slope between being non-native speaker and SES on individuals’ aspiration is increase when the value of SES increases. In this circumstance, the effect of non-native speaker is amplified on individuals’ occupational aspirations. The result suggests that a non-native speaker person’s occupational aspiration will be boost if that person has parents provide enough resources.

Additionally, being immigrants and having parental SES have a positive effect on the occupational aspiration scales (P-value < .01). An unstandardized coefficient of.003 is reported. The slope between being immigrants and SES on the dependent variable is increased when the value of SES increases. The result
suggests that if immigrant families have many resources for their children, students who are immigrant tend to formulate more ambitious career plan.

Furthermore, being a permanent resident and having parental SES at the same time are positively associated with individuals' occupational aspirations. The association is statistical significance at 99.9% confidence level. The coefficient of the variable that describes the interaction between SES and permanent resident is .004. The slope will be larger between dependent variable and being a permanent resident, if we have higher the value of parents' SES. In this situation, the effect of being a permanent resident is stronger. Having higher value of SES boosts permanent residents' occupational aspiration, because parents can provide more resources for students who are permanent residents.

Model 6 considers the interaction effects between race/ethnicity and social capital on occupational aspirations. Asian and parents' expectation have a positive interaction effect on their occupational aspiration level, and the result is statistical significant at 95% confidence level. A coefficient of .037 has been reported by the model. This means that parents' expectation of going to college has an extra effect on Asian students' occupational aspiration. If parents' expectation plays an important role in the college going decision-making, Asian students will have higher level of occupational aspiration. This evidence
corroborate with the argument that Asian family teaches students to obey their parents' will, and Asian parents' higher expectation transforms into students' occupational aspirations due to the family structure.

Moreover, participating group studies have an extra positive influence on other Latinos' occupational aspiration, and the coefficient is statistical significance at 99% level. The coefficient of this variable is .118, which signifies a strong predictive power. This means that other Latino students are benefited from studying with their peers and group studies increases their occupational aspirations. A positive peer influence on other Latino youth is suggested by the result. It is crucial for other Latino college freshmen to learn with their peers, if a higher level of occupational aspirations is expected.

Finally, for other race students who study with their peers, a coefficient of .053 is reported by the model (P-value < .05). For other race students, studying with their peer frequently boosts their occupational aspiration levels. A positive influence of group studies on other race students are suggested by the result. The result suggests that group studies are crucial for other race students because they may exchange information about their future career, which may help them to formulate ambitious career plans.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATION

Conclusion

There are four key questions in this thesis: first, I explored to what extent the effect of parents' socioeconomic status is connected to students' occupations. Second, I examined whether minority students have higher levels of occupational aspirations than Whites do, and the differences of occupational aspirations between different racial/ethnicity groups. Third, I tested the hypothesis whether individuals' social capital will affect their occupational aspiration levels as suggested by the previous literature (See Zhou and Bankston 1996; Flores and Obasi 2005; Rowan-Kenyon et al. 2011). Eventually, I examined the interaction effects between parents' SES, race/ethnicity, and social capital on college freshmen's occupational aspirations.

My analysis of the effect of SES on occupational aspiration does not support the hypothesis that higher parental SES will increase individuals' occupational aspiration levels. Scholars such as Schoon and Parsons (2002) and Lee and Rojewski (2009), argue that parents' SES is a strong, positive predictor of individuals' occupational aspirations. Other scholars argue that SES is positively associated with individuals' occupational aspirations (Farrell and Pollard 1987;
Mau 1995; Carter 1999). After controlling for all other variables, parents' SES is not statistical significance in predicting occupational aspirations. My result is in line with Sewell et al.'s (1969/2011) research, which suggests that SES is weakly associated with individuals' occupational aspiration levels, and the relationship between them is indirect. The results of analysis also support finding by Majoribanks' (2002) research, which argues SES has a small influence, but the variable SES in my model is not statistical significance after holding all other variables constant. The result of my study indicates that the influence of SES on occupational aspiration is only manifested through the interaction effects, though results may be due to the homogeneous nature of the sample. Some of the results are similar to Howard et al.'s (2011) research.

My analysis of the effect of race/ethnicity on the dependent variable generally supports my second hypothesis that minority students have higher levels of occupational aspirations. African Americans, Asians, other Latinos are systematically expressing higher levels of occupational aspirations than White students. This result corroborate with Lee and Rojewski's (2009) research. According to the result of my analysis, Native Americans have less occupational aspirations than White students, and this result is significant at 95% confidence level. This result coincides with Mau's (1995) conclusion that Native Americans
have the lowest levels of occupational aspirations. Occupational aspirations of Mexican and Puerto Rican students are not statistically significantly different from White students. This result is similar to Mau and Bickos’ (2000) result that Hispanic students are not different from White students in terms of their occupational aspirations. Thus, there seems to be a process of convergence between Whites and Hispanics, but not other groups such as Asians without controlling interactions.

African American students have the highest occupational aspirations in my analysis. Results match other scholars’ argument on African American students have scored only higher on aspiration levels compared to other groups (Freeman 1997; Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998; Freeman 2005). An explanation of this phenomenon is that African American students are more likely to pursue professional degrees, which may largely increase their occupational goals (Perna 2004). Asians have the second highest occupational aspirations. The results corroborate with the argument that Asians tend to choose professional and prestigious occupations and have higher levels of occupational aspirations (Goyette and Xie 1991; Leong 1991; Xie and Goyette 2003). The outcome is similar to Mau’s (1995) study, which finds that Asian scores very high on occupational aspiration scales. The result also coincides with Mau and Bikos’ (2000) study,
which point out that Asian and Black students have the highest levels of occupational aspirations compared to any other groups. My analysis shows that other Latinos and other races have significant higher occupational aspirations than Whites at 99.9% confidence level. The occupational aspiration of other Latinos is higher than other races'.

The analysis supports my third hypotheses that students with substantial amount of social capital have higher level of occupational aspirations. The result provides evidence for Sewell et al.'s (1969/2011) argument. Multiple researches suggest that Asian parents' higher level of expectation have positive effect on their children's occupational aspirations (Eun-Young Kim 1993; Zhou and Bankston 1996; Louie 2001; Dandy and Nettelbeck 2002; Tang 2002; Ma and Yeh 2010). These are other studies argue that Latino parents' higher level of expectation is positively related to their children's occupational aspirations (Clayton 1993; Ramos and Sanchez 1995; Fisher and Padmawidjaja 1999; Qian and Blair 1999; Behnke et al. 2004). My result suggests that parents who expect their children to receive college education and actively participate in their children's college going decision-making process have a positive effect on students' occupational aspirations.
Mentor/role model's encouragement casts the most significant effect on occupational aspiration levels among all three social capital variables. The result supports previous research on mentors' encouragement will enhance students' occupational aspirations (Flores and Obasi 2005; Rowan-Kenyon et al.'s 2011). My study suggests that frequency of studying with peers will increase individuals' occupational aspirations, and this result coincides with existing literature (Zhou and Bankston 1996). The understanding of role of students' immediate social networks is relevant for explaining the variation of the outcome explored in the analysis. The interaction effects reveal the complexity of occupational aspirations within and between groups. These intersections (for example, SES and race/ethnicity) have been less systematically examined in the literature focusing on transitions from school to work among freshmen.

The interaction effects reveal an interesting story. At the lowest SES quartile, African Americans score the highest on the occupational aspirations scale after controlling all other variables in the model. Then, they are followed by other Latinos, other races, and Asians. At the lowest SES quartile, Asians' occupational aspiration score is 1.912, which is lower than other Latinos and other races, but the difference between them is marginal (smaller than .1). Then, they are followed by Mexican/Chicano and Whites. Mexican/Chicano scores .181
lower than Asian students, while Whites scores .072 lower than Mexican/Chicano students. Whites have an occupational score at 1.659. They are tailed by Puerto Rico students whose occupational score is 1.512, which is .147 lower than White students. Native Americans have the lowest occupational aspiration score at the lowest SES quartile. They have an occupational score at 1.031, which is .0481 lower than Puerto Rico students and 1.167 lower than African American students’ score.

At the highest SES quartile, the explanation is rather different. Native Americans score the highest on the occupational aspirations scale and have an occupational aspiration score of 1.931. They are followed by Puerto Rico students whose occupational score is .169 smaller than Native Americans. Puerto Rico students’ occupational aspiration is followed by Asians and Whites. Asian students have an occupational aspiration score at 1.712, which is .050 lower than Puerto Rico students and 0.219 lower than Native Americans. African American students’ have an aspiration score at 1.648. They are followed by Mexican/Chicano and other races. Other Latinos have an occupational score of 1.592, and they have the lowest occupational aspiration in the highest SES quartile. Their occupational scores is .02 lower than other races and .339 lower than Native Americans’. Moreover, it is noticeable that the variance among
Whites, African American, Mexican, other races and other Latinos is smaller than 0.07.

Additionally, most racial groups experience a downward trend on their occupational aspiration levels when their SES moves from low to high levels. Whites’ occupational aspiration level is consistent across SES level and they are the constant of the analysis. Occupational aspirations of Puerto Rico students raise from 1.512 to 1.762 when their SES level shifts from low to high. Native Americans’ occupational aspiration score soars from 1.031 to 1.931 when the SES moves from lower quartile to high quartile. Previous research has documented that Native Americans have the lowest occupational aspirations when their parental SES is low, but they have the highest aspirations when their parental SES is high (Howard et al. 2011). The consistency with previous results suggests that high levels of model and construction validity and robustness. This may suggests that lacking parental resources prevent Native Americans from having ambitious plan for their future careers. Therefore, if their parents were to have more resources, they occupational aspirations would grow rapidly. Further research is needed to investigate this phenomenon. Additionally, my analysis surprisingly solids the argument that the occupational aspiration levels have more fluctuations at the low level of SES, but levels of occupational aspirations
are more stable when individuals’ family SES is high (Bozick et al. 2010; Rosenbaum 2001; MacLeod 1995). In sum, my analysis only partially supports my fourth hypothesis, since only Puerto Rico and Native American students have higher occupational aspirations than their low SES counterparts.
Figure 2. Interaction effects between SES and Race
The analysis supports that hypothesis that students who have higher level of social capital and higher level of parental SES tend to have higher levels of occupational aspirations. The interaction effects show that students, whose mentors' encouragement plays a vital role in the college decision-making process, tend to have higher levels of occupational aspirations as their SES increases. At the lowest SES quartile, students report an occupational aspiration score at 1.693 and this score is .034 higher than individuals who do not have the same level of mentor encouragement and SES. At the highest SES quartile, students' occupational aspiration score increases to 1.743, which is .05 more than students with low SES scores. This aspiration value is .077 more than student with 0 level of SES and mentor encouragement. Therefore, mental/role model's encouragement is more effective for student with high level of parental SES. This supports argument that in high resource schools, the SES of students' family is higher than the schools with little resources (Rowan-Kenyou et al. 2011). Mentors and role models provide important information about future careers for students, which significantly help individuals to build their career plans, and increase their occupational aspirations (Rowan-Kenyou et al. 2011).

I tested the hypothesis number six, only a few salient results support this hypothesis. Initially, being Asian students and having parental expectations at
the same time increases individuals' occupational aspiration levels. Asian students with parents who are actively involved with their college decisions report an occupational aspiration score of 2.078, which is .42 higher than people who are neither Asian student nor have parents' actively involved (after controlling for all other variables in the model). The result corroborate existing literature that Asian students are highly influenced by their parents' educational expectation and Asian parents are actively involved in their children's educational processes, and these features of Asian families enhance Asian students' occupational aspirations.

Other Latino students benefit from the learning experiences of working with their peers. For other Latino youth who frequently participate in group studies, an aspiration score of 2.216 is reported. This score is .55 higher than individuals who are neither other Latinos nor studying with their peers frequently. Other race students also gain from studying with their peers frequently, and their occupational aspiration score is 2.137. Being students from other races and studying with peers frequently at the same time increase .471 than people who are neither other races nor studying with their peers. The theoretical implication of the results is that Latino and other races learn from
their peers about future career plans as they exchange information during the group studies.

The first contribution of this study is that my analysis shows that all racial/ethnical groups (including Whites) have similar levels occupational aspirations when parental SES is at the middle of the scale (from 60 to 70). Although 60 to 70 is not the median part of the scale, it indicates a middle class status. This implies that middle class has a homogenous level of occupational aspirations. This homogenous level of occupational aspirations is formed because of the homogeneity of the mainstream culture. Therefore, I argue that it is important to consider SES in any research on race/ethnicity and occupational aspirations.

The second contribution of this study is that my analysis reveals that African Americans, Asians, and Latinos have higher levels occupational aspirations when their parental SES levels are low. This means that African American, Asian, and Latinos are more likely to incline to the material return of the higher education and the idea of upward mobility. With the increase of their parental SES, they are granted more opportunities in the educational system and the job market. Therefore, they can give up the singular consideration of the future careers and the sole concern of the return of the higher education.
The third contribution of this study is that my analysis indicates that Puerto Rican and Native American students have low levels of occupational aspirations at low levels of parental SES, but have high levels of occupational aspirations at high levels of parental SES. The result implies that these two groups are different from Asians, African Americans, and Latinos. This indicates that Puerto Rican and Native American students have low levels of occupational aspirations when their parental SES is low because of the social barriers and discriminations that they faced. Furthermore, they lack resources and social capital that are due to either family or social networks, and they constitute a small portion of the U.S. population. Therefore, they rarely have high levels of occupational aspirations when their levels of SES are low for they understand that they lack important resources to achieve that upward social mobility goal. However, when their parent SES level is high and they possess these valuable resources for the upward social mobility, their levels of occupational aspiration are higher than other groups, which indicates that they eager to success in the job market. In this circumstance, Puerto Rican and Native American students with high levels of parental SES appreciate their opportunities, which are dearth for their peers, in the educational system and the job market.
My analysis suggests that non-native speaker have a higher level of occupational aspirations than native speakers, and this variable is the most influential factors compare to other two immigrant control variables. Both immigrants and permanent residents have higher occupational aspiration than U.S. citizens. It seems that immigrants have more a decisive goal to use education to access occupations with high status. This result supports the segmented assimilation theory that successful the second generation immigrants assimilate into the mainstream American society (Portes and Rumbaut 1996). These college freshmen can be viewed as successful immigrants since they fruitfully enrolled by colleges.

The interaction effects between parental SES and immigrant status is statistically significant for all interaction variables. At the lowest SES quartile, non-native speakers have an occupational aspiration score of 1.665, which is slightly higher than the native speakers. At the same quartile, immigrants and permanent residents have a slight lower score on occupational aspiration than U.S. citizens. At the highest SES quartile, non-native speakers rank .106 higher on occupational aspiration scale than native speakers. Immigrants whose parental SES level is high have a higher occupational aspiration than U.S. citizens. Their occupational aspirations scores .079 higher than U.S. citizens. Same thing
happens to permanent residents whose occupational score is .079 higher than U.S. citizens. This result further supports the segmented assimilation theory, because with the increase of parental resources, in form of SES, individuals’ occupational aspirations increase (Portes and Rumbaut 1996).

Being non-native speakers, immigrants, or permanent residents indicate that individuals are recent immigrants to the United States. Non-native speakers and immigrants have higher levels of occupational aspirations imply that many recent immigrants are eager to improve their socioeconomic status in the United States, despite the fact that English is not their first language and they have arrived in America recently. This indicates that recent immigrants understand the fact that there are many segments in the U.S. society, and they are willing to assimilate into the mainstream society (Portes and Rumbaut 1996). One unique contribution of my study is that it reveals that recent immigrants try to achieve their upward social mobility by embracing the instrumental idea of the higher education, and aiming at prestigious occupations, which are valued by society values. In this circumstance, recent immigrants tend to consider the material return of the higher education, and higher education becomes a mean to prestigious occupations for recent immigrants. In this situation, immigrants’ occupational aspirations will decrease if their segmented assimilation process
has been finished because they acquired their credentials from higher educational system and assimilated into the mainstream. In this situation, they are not necessary to worry about the concrete return of the higher education, and permanent residents have lower occupational aspiration levels support this argument. Thus, for second generation of successful immigrants, they can consider their occupational preferences and the intrinsic facet of education.

Gender is an important control variable in my research. Unlike researches that are done by Mau (1995) and Mau and Bikos (2000), which argue that female students having higher occupational aspirations than male students, my analysis shows that female students have significant lower occupational aspirations than their male counterpart does. The result of my research corroborates Patton and Creed’s (2007) research, which points out that males tend to choose professional and prestigious occupations, while females choose less prestigious occupations. My research also provides evidence for Lee and Rejewski’s (2009) argument that female college students usually have lower occupational aspirations than male students because they narrow their career options down.

Schoon and Parson (2002) find that students’ academic performance is positively associated with their occupational aspirations, and the association is moderate. However, according to my research, students’ high school GPA is
negatively associated with individuals' occupational aspirations. Furthermore, both students' SAT verbal and SAT math scores are negatively associated with individuals' occupational aspirations, and SAT verbal scores are practically significant in terms of occupational aspirations. The negative associations between individuals' academic performance and their occupational aspirations indicate that students, who are academically oriented, tend to have lower occupational aspirations. It is not surprising that students who have the high SAT verbal scores may choose liberal arts related occupations such as writers, social workers and schoolteachers, which are not as prestigious as some other occupations. Although students' standardized test scores are negatively associated with their occupational aspirations, their occupational aspirations are adjusted by their educational expectations. Students, who want to have a master degree in the future, have higher level of occupational aspirations than individuals who only expected bachelor degrees. The occupational aspirations increase when individuals expected a doctoral degree. For students who want to have medical degrees, their occupational aspirations are about the same level as people with doctoral degree expectations. The most salient result is that individuals who expect to have jurisprudence degrees have excessive occupational aspirations, and their occupational aspirations are practically
significant more than the reference group. It is important to understand that advanced degrees need students have higher academic skills, and research support the argument that individuals with higher level of standard test scores are more likely to advance in the educational system (Goyette and Mullen 2006). This means that academic oriented students may moderately lower their occupational aspirations, but they are more likely to expect graduate and professional degrees, which in turn increases their occupational aspirations in the end.

My analysis supports the argument that individuals' motivations have great influence on their occupational aspirations (Kao and Thompson 2003). According to my study, a student's motivation has a great effect on their occupational aspirations. Additionally, I controlled individuals' Internet skills in my study, as Internet skills are both practical and of statistical significance in predicting individuals' occupational aspiration levels. My research provides evidences for Choi's (2008) argument that the Internet skills are career related skills, which promote occupational aspirations. My research corroborates Venegas' (2006) argument that the Internet skills provide more opportunities for students and may enhance their aspirations, as they are more likely to receive scholarships.
This thesis has implications for practice. Initially, the result of the analysis suggests that many minority students with lower levels of parental SES have higher levels of occupational aspiration. In this situation, the advantage of having higher levels of occupational aspiration is that students are eager to succeed in the future job market. However, students with higher levels of occupational aspiration might only focus on courses and materials that are related to their future careers. In this circumstance, college administration and instructors must recognize that providing vocational training is not the solo goal of the higher education. The intrinsic facet of the higher education may also be useful in the future occupations. For example, courses such as calligraphy and philosophy might increase individuals’ creativities, which are crucial for many occupations. Thus, college administration and instructors should encourage students with higher levels of occupational aspiration to explore the intrinsic aspects of the higher education. Additionally, higher levels of occupational aspirations might also increase individuals’ stress levels, because expectations from students’ immediate groups affect their levels of occupational aspiration. Therefore, universities and colleges should provide programs that help individuals managing pressures from both themselves and their social networks.
Limitations

Like all sociological research, this research has its own limitations. The first limitation of my research is that it employs cross-sectional research design. Unlike longitudinal studies, cross-sectional design can hardly control the changes of variables over time. Some scholars also point out that the status attainment model tend to rely on cross-sectional design, but individuals’ educational and occupational aspirations start to form at a very young age and even have life-long influence on individuals’ career trajectories (Corcoran 1995; Bozick et al. 2010). This research applies a cross-sectional design, because of the data availability. Not all survey questions are asked in the same year and it makes the longitudinal design hard to apply. Furthermore, the goal of this thesis is to focus on a small piece of the individuals’ attainment puzzle, and provide an in-depth analysis on aspect of individuals’ the occupational aspirations.

Additionally, there are some limitations with the CIRP freshmen survey. The freshmen survey has a large sample size since it collects data from college freshmen every year. In this situation, more than one hundred thousand cases are included in my analysis. Clearly, it is easier to get statistical significant results with such a large sample size. Additionally, the CIRP freshman survey is a pre-test survey, which focuses on reporting freshmen plans, beliefs, and attitudes. It
lacks actual measurements of students' behaviors in college. Moreover, changes in attitudes are likely to occur between their pre-college experience and their actual experiences when students are in college. Thus, it is hard to control behaviors changes and attitudinal changes over time.

In addition, the measurement of the social capital is not perfect in the sociological research. Although my measurement of the students' social capital captures the basic notion of social capital, it is an approximate measurement of social capital is needed to investigate the concept of social capital. A precise measurement of social capital should involve students' social interactions with their teachers, peers, friends and acquaintance in the context of families, schools, and communities. Additionally, an explicit social capital measurement needs to cover the detailed family activities thus capturing the complexity of the concept of social capital.

Finally, I consider that more contextual variables should be included in my analysis. Researchers point out that the status attainment model must include more sociological factors into analyses (Morgan 2005). In my research, it is clear that a student who expects a Law degree shows a very high level of occupational aspirations. I considered that some contextual elements such as mass media may cast their influences on individuals' occupational aspirations. Finally, as we step
into the age of the World Wide Web, computer technology has significantly shaped our communications and life styles. The first implication of this change is that individuals may have a newer way to acquire career information and possible have more access to more opportunities.

The second implication is that the World Wide Web may have altered the ways of social networking. With the development of the online network sites, students may acquire new information about occupations. These same networks are also critical in disseminating information. These changes of communication are new forms of building communities and may influence students' occupational aspirations. In my research, I have demonstrated that key differences exist between groups with low levels of SES. On the contrary, there is a process of convergence between groups with higher levels. Further research is needed to understand these intersections.
REFERENCES


Clayton, Kermerta Kay. 1993. “Family influence over the occupational and educational choices of Mexican American students.” Presented at the annual meeting of the American Vocational Association, December, Nashville, TN.


APPENDIX A

MODEL ROBUSTNESS

In order to examine the fitness of my model, I have done a series of robustness tests. I have done regression diagnostics. According to existing literature, independent variables are linearly related to the dependent variable. Therefore, linearity is assumed in my study. The dependent variable is an interval-ratio variable, and it is normally distributed. This means that the dependent variable meets the standard of running OLS regression model. After testing the normality of residuals, the result indicates that errors are normally distributed. This is also a sign of model specification. After testing the homogeneity of variance, the result indicates that error variance is constant (Homoscedasticity). This means that there is no heteroscedasticity issue with my model. After testing the multicollinearity, the result indicates that there is no collinearity problem with my model. No tolerance values are less than .01, while none of the VIF values exceeds 10. Therefore, I consider that my model is robust based on these statistical tests.

Sewell et al. (1969/2011) provide an important method for conducting occupational aspirations study, and this method suggests that occupational aspirations should be measured through respondents’ reported future careers.
The approach requires researchers assign prestige value to each reported future career, and form a variable that reflects respondents' occupational aspirations. Therefore, this method mirrors the vertical dimension of respondents' occupational aspirations, since the prestige level is closely related to respondents' career plan (Johnson and Mortimer 2002). Many researchers have adopted this approach (See Lee and Rojewski 2009; Sewell et al. 1969/2011; Howard et al. 2011). Therefore, I use their approach and use students' expected future career prestige scores to check the model robustness of my student. Nakao and Treas' (1994) socioeconomic status index is used again to recode students' future careers into prestige scores. The students' future prestige scores range from 34 as full-time homemaker to 86 as physician. Then, I enter all independent variables and control variables, and run the robustness test to examine the fitfulness of my models.

An R square of 24.7% has been reported but the students' expected future degree contributes to most of the explained variances. The result of the robustness check suggests that the model that I used in my study is fit, because many similar results are provided. In the complete model, Parental SES is still not statistical significance even after controlling all other variables. Additionally, African American students still rank at the top in term of career prestige scores,
while Native American students still have the least level of career prestige scores. Furthermore, Native American students still have lower prestige scores than White students and it is statistical significant. Additionally, studying with peers still has considerable explanatory power in predicting individuals' future career prestige.

Among control variables, the most noticeable result is that female students have a lower career prestige than their male counterparts and it is statistical significant result. Furthermore, permanent residents also have a higher career prestige than U.S. citizens. Among the expected degree variables, a student who expects a master degree has significant higher expected future prestige. Moreover, an individual who expects a doctoral degree has higher expected future prestige than people who want master degrees. Most importantly, individuals who expect medical degrees and law degrees also expect prestigious jobs in the future. These two factors remain the most influential indicators in predicting the dependent variable. Additionally, individuals' motivation is positively associated to their expected career prestige. The skillful Internet users also demand prestigious occupations in the future. Eventually, SAT verbal test scores are negatively associated with individuals' expected occupational prestige.
All indicators that I have mentioned are statistically significant in predicting individuals' future occupational prestige, and match the result of my research. Therefore, I argue that my model is a robust model in predicting individuals' occupational aspirations.
APPENDIX B

FACTOR LOADINGS

Table B1. Factor Loading for the Dependent Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational aspiration</th>
<th>Factor Load</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becoming an authority</td>
<td>.596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a successful business</td>
<td>.453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being well off financially</td>
<td>.569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an administrative position</td>
<td>.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having recognition from colleagues</td>
<td>.650</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cronbach’s Alpha | .713

Note: Items with reported loadings smaller than .40 were removed from the analysis. N=229653.
Rotation method: Varimax. $X^2= 1281817$ df=190 sig=.000 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling=.866.
Source: CIRP 1999 Freshmen Survey.
Table B2. Factor Loading for Students' Motivation and Skillful Internet User

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Students' motivation</th>
<th>Skillful Internet user</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Want to be elected to an academic honor society</td>
<td>.517</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to be elected to student office</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to graduate with honors</td>
<td>.439</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to participate in volunteer or community service work in the future</td>
<td>.599</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed politics in the past year</td>
<td>.405</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed religion in the past year</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performed volunteer work in the past year</td>
<td>.506</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutored another student in the past year</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated via e-mail in the past year</td>
<td>.561</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used a personal computer in the past year</td>
<td>.448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used the Internet for research or homework in the past year</td>
<td>.578</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in Internet chat rooms in the past year</td>
<td>.501</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had other Internet use in the past year</td>
<td>.608</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cronbach's Alpha: .704    Skillful Internet user: .751

Note: Items with reported loadings smaller than .40 were removed from the analysis. N= 211433.
Rotation method: Varimax. X²= 2265778.95 df=1378 sig=.000 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling=.793.
Source: CIRP 1999 Freshmen Survey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Original Questions</th>
<th>Original Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational aspirations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational aspirations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: Becoming an authority in my field</td>
<td>1 Not important, 2 Somewhat important, 3 Very important, 4 Essential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: Becoming successful in a business of my own</td>
<td>1 Not important, 2 Somewhat important, 3 Very important, 4 Essential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: Being very well off financially</td>
<td>1 Not important, 2 Somewhat important, 3 Very important, 4 Essential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: Having administrative responsibility for the work of others.

Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special field.

Independent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Parental SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father's SES</td>
<td>Your father's occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's SES</td>
<td>Your mother's occupation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>1 Accountant or actuary... 48 Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1 Accountant or actuary... 48 Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1 Not marked, 2 Marked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican/Chicano</td>
<td>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Latino</td>
<td>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other race/ethnicity</td>
<td>Are you: (Mark all that apply)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigrant status</th>
<th>Is English your native language?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native Language</td>
<td>1 No, 2 Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-native speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizen status</th>
<th>Citizen status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>Citizen status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent resident</td>
<td>Citizen status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social capital</th>
<th>In deciding to go to college, how important to you was each of the following reasons?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason to go to college: parents' expectation</td>
<td>1 Not important, 2 Somewhat important, 3 Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parent's expectation</td>
<td>My parents wanted me to go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In deciding to go to college, how important to you was each of the following reasons?</td>
<td>My parents wanted me to go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason to go to college: mentor/role model's expectations</td>
<td>In deciding to go to college, how important to you was each of the following reasons? A mentor/role model encouraged me to go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mentor/role model's encouragement</td>
<td>In deciding to go to college, how important to you was each of the following reasons? A mentor/role model encouraged me to go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities in last year: studying with peers</td>
<td>Indicate which activities you did during the past year: Studied with other students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive peer influence</td>
<td>Indicate which activities you did during the past year: Studied with other students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Your sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Your sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>What was your average grade in high school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school GPA</td>
<td>What was your average grade in high school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What were your scores on SAT and/or ACT? (Verbal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT Verbal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT verbal score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT Math</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT math score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None degree (other credentials)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>200–800</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 None, 2 Vocational certificate, 3 Associate (A.A. or equivalent), 4 Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.), 5 Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.), 6 Ph.D. or Ed.D., 7 M.D., D.O., D.D.S., D.V.M., 8 J.D. (Law), 9 B.D. or M.DIV. (Divinity), 10 Other
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Type</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td>What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?</td>
<td>1 No chance, 2 Very little chance, 3 Some chance, 4 Very good chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical degree</td>
<td>What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?</td>
<td>1 No chance, 2 Very little chance, 3 Some chance, 4 Very good chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurisprudence degree</td>
<td>What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?</td>
<td>1 No chance, 2 Very little chance, 3 Some chance, 4 Very good chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divinity degree</td>
<td>What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?</td>
<td>1 No chance, 2 Very little chance, 3 Some chance, 4 Very good chance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Educational motivation Students' motivation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your best guess as to the chances that you will: Be elected to an academic honor society?</td>
<td>1 No chance, 2 Very little chance, 3 Some chance, 4 Very good chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your best guess as to the chances that you will: Be elected to student office?</td>
<td>1 No chance, 2 Very little chance, 3 Some chance, 4 Very good chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your best guess as to the chances that you will: Graduate with honors?</td>
<td>1 No chance, 2 Very little chance, 3 Some chance, 4 Very good chance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is your best guess as to the chances that you will:
Participate in volunteer or community service work?
For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year. If you engaged in an activity frequently, mark F. If you engaged in an activity one or more times, but not frequently, mark O (occasionally). Mark N (Not at all) if you have not performed the activity during the past year:

1. Discussed politics

1 No chance, 2 Very little chance, 3 Some chance, 4 Very good chance

1 Not at all, 2 Occasionally, 3 Frequently
For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year. If you engaged in an activity frequently, mark F. If you engaged in an activity one or more times, but not frequently, mark O (occasionally). Mark N (Not at all) if you have not performed the activity during the past year:

- Performed volunteer work
- Tutored another student
- Internet skills
- Skillful Internet user
For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year. If you engaged in an activity frequently, mark F. If you engaged in an activity one or more times, but not frequently, mark O (occasionally). Mark N (Not at all) if you have not performed the activity during the past year:

Communicated via e-mail

1 Not at all, 2 Occasionally, 3 Frequently

For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year. If you engaged in an activity frequently, mark F. If you engaged in an activity one or more times, but not frequently, mark O (occasionally). Mark N (Not at all) if you have not performed the activity during the past year:

Used a personal computer

1 Not at all, 2 Occasionally, 3 Frequently
For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year. If you engaged in an activity frequently, mark F. If you engaged in an activity one or more times, but not frequently, mark O (occasionally). Mark N (Not at all) if you have not performed the activity during the past year:

- Used the Internet for research or homework
- Participated in Internet chat rooms

1 Not at all, 2 Occasionally, 3 Frequently
Influence of individualism

Political view of taxing on riches

For the activities below, indicate which once you did during the past year. If you engaged in an activity frequently, mark F. If you engaged in an activity one or more times, but not frequently, mark O (occasionally). Mark N (Not at all) if you have not performed the activity during the past year: Other Internet use

Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now.

1 Not at all, 2 Occasionally, 3 Frequently
1 Disagree strongly, 2 Disagree somewhat, 3 Agree somewhat, 4 Agree strongly

How would you characterize your political views?
1 Far right, 2 Conservative, 3 Middle-of-the-road, 4 Liberal, 5 Far left

Source: CIRP 1999 Freshmen Survey.