

# The Great Escape: Making the Choice for Upward Social Mobility

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THE GREAT ESCAPE:  
MAKING THE CHOICE FOR UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY

by

TRINA GILLIAM

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in Sociology  
in the College of Sciences  
and in The Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
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Thesis Chair: Dr. Amy M. Donley

## ABSTRACT

The goal of my research is to examine motivations for upper mobility vs stagnation of people in poverty. Bandura (1971) states people's motivations do not come from their willpower and people are not trapped in their situation. However, 43% of Americans born poor, remain poor as adults and 27% of people remain near poor to poor (Pew 2013). I will examine individuals with higher upper mobility aspirations (HUMA) and those individuals with lower upper mobility aspirations (LUMA) in order to provide the salient factors contributing to the desire for upward mobility.

Five hypothesis will be analyzed; (1) Individuals with aspirations for personal growth and development will be more likely to have a positive linear relationship to their agency. (2) Individuals are more likely to have a strong belief in personal motivators than belief in structural barriers. (3) Individuals with beliefs in structural barriers will not believe in having to change behaviors for upward mobility. (4) There is an association between respondent's race and individual's motivation for upward mobility. (5) There is an association between respondent's gender and individual's motivation for upward mobility.

My prediction is LUMA individual's attitudes about assimilation and structural barriers prevent them from moving upward. They will strong negative feelings towards having to change their speech and dress style to be successful. I hope provide a better understanding of the emotional and structural barriers that hinder upward mobility.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2004, Dr. Bill Cosby gave a speech at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the landmark Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education Supreme Court Decision expressing strong opinions regarding the unscrupulous behavior of poor Blacks.

Grandmother, mother, and great grandmother in the same room, raising children... And these people are not parenting. Isn't it a sign of something when she's got her dress all the way up to the crack... those people are not Africans, they don't know a damned thing about Africa. With names like Shaniqua, Shaligua, Mohammed... it doesn't want to speak English. I can't even talk the way these people talk (Cosby 2004).

He went on to include women giving birth to multiple children from different men and mothers and families raising their children to value material items instead of investing in products that would stimulate learning.

Bill Cosby also criticized families who do not speak proper English and the concept of living in the projects as a multi-generational lifestyle. He stated that Blacks have a school dropout rate of 50%, copious numbers of Black men in prison, Black women are having children out of wedlock, and in general there is a lack of parental and community involvement. During Cosby's speech, the specific type of black people he was targeting was referred to 16 times as "these people" in a seemingly sarcastic derogatory tone. "I'm talking about these people..." (Cosby 2004).

There are many possible variables, theories and concepts that attempt to explain why "these people" act this way. The first is the famous Culture of Poverty, although it was controversial and

not received well, it attempted to explain common characteristics passed from generation to generation that perpetuates poverty (Lewis 1963). Secondly, an individualist perspective blames the individual for their misfortunes resulting from lack of effort to succeed. The United States is sometimes referred to as a meritocratic country. A country in which, with hard work and determination, everyone has an equal chance to achieve upward socioeconomic mobility. This sentiment is celebrated by telling stories of individuals who have done just that, that is rags-to-riches stories (Secombe 2011). Bennett (1987) posits that popular culture is also an agent of socialization besides family, peers, and school. This theory is another explanation to be considered as an explanation that could partially explain why people act a certain way. Young people are particularly impressionable and emulate the images and music to which they are exposed. Lastly is the concept of in-group support. This accounts for how supportive and influential people are towards people from the same ethnic background (Colette van Laar 2010).

## CULTURE OF POVERTY AND BEYOND

In 1965, Oscar Lewis introduced the Culture of Poverty in his book *“The Children of Sanchez: Autobiography of a Mexican Family.”* The book highlighted the complexities, personalities, relationships and aspirations of the life experiences of the Sanchez family that lived in slums of Mexico City. Lewis interviewed the father and the four children in 1956 on an anthropological field project. Out of these interviews came the Culture of Poverty theory which he used to explain the attitudes and behaviors that he believed contributed to the perpetuation of the cycle of poverty.

Lewis (1961) explained people in poverty encompass characteristics and issues that are prevalent to their subculture. Those attitudes and behaviors were not exclusive to poor Blacks; he believed they affected poor people of all races and ethnicities (Lewis 1963:17). The concept of the Culture of Poverty explained that similar types of traits related to the “family structure, social interactions, time orientations, value systems, spending patterns, and the sense of community” are universal and could be found across nations from rural to urban areas alike (1961:xxv). The term *culture* is defined as the intergenerational transmission of cultural lifestyles (Lewis 1961: xxiv). Wilson elaborates that culture provides mechanisms like practices and characteristics along with limitations in interacting with others. Limitations also include “cultural frames,” how the group defines themselves and other groups. These mechanisms and limitations may be developed and shared as a result of living in a predominately poverty stricken area making it difficult to have aspirations of upward mobility (Wilson 2010; Young 2010). American society cannot be understood without knowing all of its parts (Wilson 2010).



It is both an adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a class-stratified, highly individuated, capitalistic society. It represents an effort to cope with feelings of hopelessness and despair that arise from the realization by the members of the marginal communities in these societies of the improbability of their achieving success in terms of the prevailing values and goals (Lewis 1966:21).

Lewis (1961) divided characteristics and traits into two categories, “economic traits” and “social and psychological characteristics.” Some of the “economic traits” had to do with the relentless struggle to maintain, being unemployed, being underemployed, minimal pay, numerous unskilled jobs, underage workers, no savings, living beyond their means, food insecurities, pawning items, payday loans, and using hand-me downs .

Some of the “social and psychological characteristics” included overcrowded living conditions, no privacy, frequent drunkenness, physically discipline their children, physical partner abuse, sexual intercourse in early adolescence, cohabitation, a moderately high absentee fathers, matriarchal families, defiant towards authoritative figures, and ideology of family unity. Other traits included were: preferring instant gratification and to live in the moment, a fatalistic view, acceptance of male dominance, and, among women, a feeling of victimization. (1961: xxvi-xxvii)

The political effects of the introduction of the term “culture” in relation to Blacks produced continual attempts to comprehend and assimilate Blacks in society. If individuals displaying these culture of poverty type characteristics remediated their practices and beliefs closer to the dominant culture, they would have the ability to assimilate to some degree (Nunnally and Carter 2012). The standpoint of needing to transform an individual’s morals, therefore giving them the ability to be more productive, is a key feature of individualism (Seccombe 2011). Nunnally and Carter (2012) state that the solution to difficulties of Black people not achieving upward mobility is a

reconstructing of their destructive characteristics. Additionally, part of the difficulties is the collapse of the traditional Black family structure which results in a loss of values being transmitted from generation to generation (Nunnally and Carter 2012). However, social structure barriers such as low wage paying jobs that does not offer sufficient financial means to support a family are given marginal consideration (Seccombe 2011). Perhaps individualistic perspectives contribute to people having to depend on government services because they felt they were not able to live up to the expectations of mainstream society and developed a fatalistic attitude (Wilson 2010).

Beside family, other agents of socialization typically referenced are peers and institutions (e.g., school and church). Bennett (1987) claims popular culture to also be an agent of socialization. People imitate what they see and hear from clothing, behavior, language and motivations toward certain ideologies. Young people are characteristically susceptible to these materials and are most impressionable and impulsive. Popular culture also has influences on attitudes about political matters, sexuality, social movements, and “persona shifts.” At times these influences produce negative effects and hinder social growth and upper mobility.

In-group support in relation to motivation and achieving social mobility can also hinder social growth and the upper mobility of an individual. Members of an in-group are more likely to support an individual when their pursuit for mobility fits into the social identity of the group. For example, an individual gets a new job and feels in order to fit in they need to change certain things about themselves (e.g. speech and style of clothing). The in-group may not be supportive of their member changing and may make references of “acting white” or an “Oreo” toward the individual. Members of in-group can also be non-supportive of interests that do not benefit the group.

Someone pursuing a position or interest of the dominant culture may find themselves in a position of not having strong support from the out-group and no support from the in-group, which in turn, may deter the individual from trying. Furthermore, when an in-group member's pursuits are related to the upward mobility of the group, the individual is supported and is considered to have a greater recognition in the group. Support from other in-group members aids to maintain an individual's motivation and performance (Colette van Laar 2010).

Nunnally and Carter (2012) wanted to measure the attitudes with respect Black public opinion surrounding the issues Cosby spoke about. A web-based survey was used with a total of 1021 respondents which included 517 Blacks, 252 whites and 252 Latinos. The operationalization of these measures, which used a five point Likert scale of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), were: (1) "Black people need to improve parenting skills to guide of Black youth" (2) "Black people need to help themselves out of poverty and rely less on government" (3) "Black people need to stop behavior that makes Black people look bad" (4) "Black people need to stop having children out-of-wedlock." The findings indicate that 58% of Blacks strongly agreed that better parenting skills are needed, 42% strongly agreed Blacks should help themselves out of poverty, 54% strongly agreed Blacks need to stop behaviors that makes Black looks bad, and 43% strongly agreed stop having children without being married. Although there were high levels of agreement across racial and ethnic groups, Blacks had higher levels of agreement than any other group of respondents. Having a greater interest in the matter and the poor reflection on their race may have contributed to their higher levels of agreement.

Further findings suggest Blacks that have experienced racial discrimination are less in agreement with Cosby's views. Racial discrimination is relevant to Blacks because those interactions perhaps shape the view of their social status in relation to the ability to control certain circumstances. The findings also suggested some of the Black community feel as though immoral behavior alone is not the salient cause for Black's not achieving upward socioeconomic mobility. The disadvantages felt by Blacks have been a continual accumulation of imbalanced treatment by the dominant culture. Further discussion should include personal motivation as well as the influence of ongoing racial discrimination has on the effort Black advancement (Nunnally and Carter, 2012).

## NOT JUST A BLACK THING

In the book, "*The Children of Sanchez: Autobiography of a Mexican Family*," Jesus was a hardworking parent who wanted his children to have a better socioeconomic status than him. His parental efforts to pass on attitudes of aspirations were still overshadowed by the influences of his son's peers which subscribed to some of the characteristics described in the Culture of Poverty concept. Three out of his four children chose to keep company with people that were taking the wrong path. Jesus said his son's wanted to be rich, however they did not have fortitude to work.

They haven't got common sense. They don't have the will power to get a job and stick to it, an honest job so that they can go out into the street looking decent and feeling proud of themselves. I'd be happy, it would give me the greatest satisfaction, if they could be like that. (1961:481)

For Jesus, he never expected to be anything more than a working class man with a below poverty socioeconomic status. With hard work he was able to live better than most people in the area, an achievement that his children cannot claim (Lewis 1961)

## THROUGH THE YEARS

### Youth

A study done by Geraldine Brookins (2002) wanted to determine what the contextual parameters were of children who deviated from the expected path of behavior. The study included 105 participants that had some level of dealings with the juvenile justice system. The participants' ages ranged from 10-13 years old, the majority were males (86%) and they were of various racial backgrounds. Interviews and existing data were collected from social service case workers, files, school records, probation officers and parents.

Interviews with the children found that 80% of them said they were raised in an authoritative household with expectations of normal childhood behavior. However, approximately 33% reported that their parents were not aware of who they associated with. In addition, 60% of these children felt spending time with family was most important. In relation to involvement outside of the home, more than 50% felt there was not enough community based activities to get involved with. At school the support may not have been much better, nonetheless, 90% thought there was, at a minimum, one adult at school they could communicate with.

The parents' interviews revealed that 36% agreed that when children are labeled as troublesome it is a problem for the reason that stigmatization continues to track them through their educational experiences. As a consequence, the same amount of investable time may not be given to the student by teachers and other school staff. Parents felt the teachers needed to enact a validation type of communication with the children. Parents also agreed that there was not enough community based activities for kids to get involved in, along with transportation to get there.

Furthermore, 43% believed there needed to be more positive role models, however 64% parents felt their child had someone in their life that has had a positive impact on them. In contrast to what the children reported, 88% of parents claimed to know who their child's associates were.

Social service case files pertaining to the respondent's household situation, noted the case workers themselves assigned to help the families looked at their situations with prejudice. Case workers also made inferences that blame for the families for their living situations. However, social service providers agreed teaching social interaction techniques, empowerment, and programs with structure and stability would be the most effective program characteristics. These would work in combination with simultaneous participation of the children, family and community to help combat against delinquency (Brookins, 2002).

## Youth Adults

The purpose of Prudence Carter's research was to explain the dominant White culture's effect on minority's education and career aspirations and how that generates intra-racial racism. Carter's research project was an offshoot from a previous larger project done in 1997-1998 for Yonkers Family and Community Project (YF&CP). Of the original respondents, 68 people were deemed as eligible to participate (177). The respondents came from a "high-poverty, high-minority neighborhood in southwest Yonkers," and the others from a "low-poverty, predominantly white neighborhood in east Yonkers (176)." Of the 68 respondents, there was 30 males and 38 females ranging from the ages of 13 to 20 were interviewed. In both categories, at least half lived in households with incomes of less than \$10,000, with someone that was employed and with a parent that did not have a high school diploma. At least 68% of the respondents came from a single parent

household and at least 87% of their household received welfare (177). Both survey and interview data were collected. . Questions regarding future employment plans, interactions with other races, “blackness,” “Spanishness,” “acting white,” and culture and styles were asked.

Overall, the respondents felt that education was important for future success. Over 90% of participants thought success in school correlated to occupational achievement in the future, that education was the right path for adolescent minorities, and that adolescent minorities will have better life chances if they have a successful education experience. An overwhelming, 95% agreed that getting an education would improve their life in the future. However, while 93% of the African Americans were optimistic, only 68% of Latinos believed that poverty in American would end if everyone received a good education.

Parents were asked if they thought their children would have a better life than them. Parents felt, 89% of their daughters would do better while 59% felt their sons would do better. A possible explanation for the gender difference is that the majority of the households were headed by single mothers. In turn, those mothers were seemingly encouraging their daughters to be strong independent women that will not need to rely on a partner.

Although 97% of respondents said they were proud of their culture, assumptions about exhibited behavior and communication among their own race varied in terms of how they thought about their culture in general. As a result, Carter developed three ideological profiles to explain the process of how members of a non-dominant culture assimilate and interact with the dominant culture: the cultural mainstreamers, the noncompliant believers, and the cultural straddlers.



“Cultural mainstreamers” still identify with their cultural background however their aspirations are to fit into the dominant culture for the purposes of achieving upward mobility. Some of the characteristics of these individuals are that they are self-motivated, have high aspirations and desire for achievement, their dialog and style of dress is more in-line with the dominant culture (Whites), and they usually do not subscribe to their culture’s behaviors and values. They may fit the image of an ideal student, and may be teased and thought of as being nerdy or similar, and accused of “acting white.” However mainstreamers are still aware of racial struggles. It comes as no surprise that among the five participants in this study that were cultural mainstreamers, 100% of them wanted and expected to get a post-secondary education.

“Noncompliant believers” are oppositional to assimilating to the scripts of “White society.” Their success may be more about maintaining what they believe to be their culture or their blackness. This has been explained by Elijah Anderson as the “code of the street” (Anderson, 1999). The code of the street encompasses norms that dictate social behavior in particular subcultures. To gain respect or successfully maintain status means that subscribers must exhibit masculinity, wear clothes in a particular style of dress, and using the appropriate dialect (Wilson 2009). Obtaining an education may still be important, however, subscribing to the mainstream ideal of success is not. In school noncompliant believers may be disengaged because of poor conditions in the school, disapproval of the school curriculum (lack of Black history taught), and because of their opposition towards the school dress code and other policies. However some may also feel “school is means to an end.” Some may still participate in sports programs, take on roles of leadership, while others are there for socializing. Parents that have experienced negative experiences with whites may pass on their deleterious feelings to their children. Those feelings

then become part of the child's cultural frames (Wilson 2010). Although the mainstream ideal of success may not be important, 82% still want for a post-secondary education, however, only 55% expect they will. In this study, 38 of the respondents were noncompliant believers (25 were Black and 13 were Latino).

“Cultural straddlers” have the ability to charismatically navigate between the cultural realms of their ethnic group and dominant group successfully without fully assimilating. They are able to fit in both cultures without being accused of acting white. Some of the characteristics noted from the interviews for this profile were self-determination to achieve upward mobility, not getting caught up in the drama that sometimes goes along with their group, belief in success and that they have the same chances as whites, and being well known and liked by other students. Twenty-five of the respondents were cultural straddlers. A sizable majority (84%) of cultural straddlers wanted a post-secondary education, however, 89% expected they will.

## Adults

Barnes (2001) examined data from The Urban Poverty and Family Life Survey of Chicago associated with negative attitudes and behaviors of people considered to be poor (20-29.99% poverty level) and near poor (30% or more poverty level) by ethnic and neighborhood background. The survey included qualitative and quantitative data collected from 2,333 respondents ranging from 18-44 years of age pertaining to their attitudes and behaviors related to their finances, education, criminal activities, affiliations, and social isolation. The purpose of the research was to show if underclass attitudes and behaviors were shared and if tendencies varied based on race and neighborhood.

Education was believed to be important by 90% of the respondents. However, when asked if they expected their children to attend college, poor Blacks had the highest expectation levels (72.3%) while poor Whites had the lowest (55.4%). One-fourth or less of the respondents left school early to start working. Poor Mexicans had the highest rate of 23.4%. Measures of criminal activity in neighborhood showed that 70.0% of the near poor Puerto Ricans felt that gangs were a problem in the neighborhood. Poor Black had the lowest result at 31.9%. Over a third of the respondents felt there were problems with gangs in their neighborhood which relates to there being some structural barriers to achieving upward mobility.

Outcomes for the measurement of relationships indicate 64.1% or more of the respondents agree women should avoid marriage to unemployed men. The traditional ideology of marrying someone who is employed implies most women in poverty wanted to be with a partner that has contributable income. Overall, the findings in this study suggest that regardless of race/ethnicity, attitudes and behaviors of people in poverty were very similar. Although, when behavioral variables relating to economic and structural barriers, attitudes varied greatly. Attitudes of people in urban areas will remain the same. However, a deteriorating control of economic opportunities will effect a person's behavior (Barnes 2001).

## THE AMERICAN DREAM

The American Dream is a meritocratic ideology that says that by playing by the rules and working hard anyone can attain upward financial mobility (Pew 2013). This notion implies that poverty is a state of financial impermanence (Gans 2011). Polls have shown that 40% of Americans believe the American Dream is attainable. However, in reality, 43% of Americans remain at the bottom and 27% make just below the middle income quintile (Pew 2013). In 2013, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) reported 11.5 million people were unemployed, 53% lost their job, 28% were reentering the job market, 11% were first time job seekers and 8% left the work force. And 46,496,000 people in the United States lived below the poverty line that year (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor and Smith 2013). The factors found to have an impact on upward mobility are race, education, family employment and financial capital.

Human capital factors such as having a college education, two-income households, and constant employment were found to increase the possibility of attaining upward mobility. Data indicated:

Of people who were continuously employed, 86% of college graduates, 84% of dual-earner families, and 64% left the bottom income quintile.

By contrast, only 55% of non-college graduates, 49% of single-earner families, and 34% of people who experienced unemployment moved up from the bottom quintile. (2)

When education and two-income households are combined, the chances increase to make it at least the middle income quintile from the bottom.

There were also racial difference in upper mobility, 68% of whites had enough of an increase in income to move from the bottom quintile, contrary to 45% of blacks. Whites also have

a higher rate of 35% vs 25% of Blacks of mobility to a minimum of the middle quintile. At this point when college graduate and dual-earner household is factored in with race, statistically the chances for moving up become statistically similar. The report concluded that 40% of Americans believed rags-to-riches can be achieved. However, 43% of Americans born poor, remain poor as adults and 27% of people remain near poor to poor (Pew 2013).

## THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

The purpose of my research is to examine motivations for upper mobility vs stagnation of people in poverty. Bandura (1971) states people's motivations do not come from their willpower and people are not trapped in their situation. Social Learning Theory explains learning comes from direct experience as well as observation of others and their outcomes. Those observational experiences can include emotional responses, fear and defensive behaviors, and other cautionary type behaviors which will then be used as a schema for their social interactions. This continuous cycle also depends on their cognitive abilities of how they interpret and apply it their behavior going forward (Bandura 1971:2). A college student might have observed that the way to be successful in life is to a college degree. Conversely a young man may have learned hard work and modest living is satisfying enough. Someone from a poor socio-economic background may feel the system is not set up for them to be successful being all they have observed are people working hard and still not being able to make it ahead.

The other orientation that can be applied is Robert Merton's Strain Theory. The American Dream or the rags-to-riches ideology is common goal taught and observed from a young age though varies agents of socializations. However not everyone has the same advantages, opportunities or social capital to be in the position to achieve such a goal. There are five adaptations to Merton's strain theory categorized by attitudes towards the goal of achieving the American Dream and means by which to do so. The first is Conformity, the goal and means is accepted. For example, cultural mainstreamers will abandon their cultural identity to assimilate into mainstream culture and follow the expected path graduating from college and having a prestige high paying

job. Secondly, Innovation is accepting the goal but not the traditional means to get there. For example, non-compliant believers do not subscribe to mainstream cultural ways and may decide illegal or non-traditional means will still make them successful. Third, Ritualism rejects the goals but still accepts the means. For example, this person may go to work every day, however does not subscribe to the ideal of them achieving the American Dream. Forth, the Retreatist rejects both goal and means. This person could be equated to someone with a fatalistic perspective about life. For example, this person may be someone who is homeless on purpose because they do not want to be involved in any part of the system. The last adaption is Rebellion, this person rejects the traditional goals and means, but substitutes them with new ones. For example, people that organized Occupy Wall Street movement.

## RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESES

What are the salient factors among Higher Upper Mobility Aspiration individuals and Lower Upper Mobility Aspiration individuals that contribute to their desire for upward mobility?

- H<sub>1</sub>: Individuals with aspirations for personal growth and development will be more likely to have a positive linear relationship to their agency.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Individuals are more likely to have a strong belief in personal motivators than belief in structural barriers.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Individuals with beliefs in structural barriers will not believe in having to change behaviors for upward mobility
- H<sub>4</sub>: There is an association between respondent's race and individual's motivation for upward mobility.
- H<sub>5</sub>: There is an association between respondent's gender and individual's motivation for upward mobility.



## METHODOLOGY

Originally data was going to be collected through two modes. First I was going to do door-to-door surveying in Eatonville and West Orlando. For personal safety reasons, that strategy was changed. My goal was to get at least 150 people from the general public and least 150 responses from University of Central Florida students. My research was done using convenience sampling. The participants were asked to voluntarily complete an approximately five to seven minute anonymous survey. The survey contained questions related six categories: motivators, agency – control of future, beliefs about structural barriers, beliefs about assimilation, attitudes and behaviors, and demographics. The personal motivators, agency, and structural barrier’s questions, a five point matrix Likert scale was used. The survey also contain several multiple choice, single answer questions. Which option best fits your motivation for wanting to better your life? Who inspires you most? (See appendix A for the full survey.)

Surveys were administered by paper, on iPads, and via the online survey system Qualtrics. Data were collected in five different sites: Zora Neale Hurston Festival of the Arts, Eatonville, Florida; Lynx Parramore Bus Station, Community Food and Outreach Center, and University of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida. The Town of Eatonville is the first incorporated African American settlement municipal in the United States ([townofeatonville.com](http://townofeatonville.com)). In 2010, the population was 2,159 with 84.5% African American. In 2010, 34.4% of resident’s income was below the poverty level (Census, Eatonville). Over a two day period, 28 responses were completed from doing on-site interviews at this site. Orlando’s population for 2010 was 238,300 with 19.2% living below poverty level (Census, Orlando). A total of 99 paper surveys were completed from

onsite interviews over a three day period. Twenty-four surveys were administered at Community Food and Outreach Center. Lastly, the University of Central Florida has a diverse student population of 60,000+ students. Responses completed via iPad surveying were 80 and 135 done through Qualtrics. The total sample size is 366.

This study looks at individuals with presumable higher and lower upper mobility aspirations. Aspirations in this context is defined by Oxford Dictionary as “a hope or ambition of achieving something. Similarly the objects of one’s hope or ambition; a goal. Agency is one of the factors used to operationalize aspirations for achieving upper mobility. I define agency as an individual’s internal determination to act on their goal. Lastly, structural barriers is defined as societal matters that individuals consider to be beyond their control. These sites were chosen because it was presumed that the low income population would have lower upper mobility aspirations (LUMA) and UCF students would represent a higher motivation population (HUMA). The data collected allows for statistical inference about individuals with either lower or higher aspirations for upper mobility. The iPad and online survey data were downloaded to an SPSS file and data from the paper surveys was input into this file to allow for statistical analysis.

## **Measurements**

*Demographics.* The demographics being measured include the highest level of education which runs from some high school to post graduate degree and race/ethnicity which is based on self-identification. Age was a write-in option while gender is based on self-identification and measured dichotomously with male or female options.

*Motivation.* Respondents were asked how important each of the following is as a motivator: education, financial independence, travel, occupational prestige, meeting parent's expectations, increasing career satisfaction, family obligations, and having a better life than parents. These were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Measurements regarding motivations were used to compare the strengths of motivations to each other. These included motivations versus agency, belief in structural barriers, belief in assimilation, and attitudes and behaviors.

*Agency.* I measured the belief in control of the future by assessing agreement with the following statements:

- Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.
- I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life.
- I use my willpower to work harder than others.
- I often think about and plan for my future.

The control of future measurements are important in the perception of whether individuals feel that their conditions are entirely within their personal control. Such views may impart some perspective into agency with the control of future accounting for explanations of aspirations or a fatalistic view.

*Belief in structural barriers.* Questions pertaining to beliefs in structural barriers included agreement with the statements:

- I have little control over the things that happen to me in life.
- I will not have a better financial future than the family I was raised in.

- I had access to a good education and support from school staff.
- I can advance as far as I want in life.
- It is impossible to get a job without knowing someone that will vouch for me.
- I feel people are willing to help me.
- Society gives some people a head start and holds others back.

These were measured on five-point Likert scale where 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

*Beliefs in changing behaviors.* These questions were measured on the same five point scale. These measures assess belief in having to change dress style for success, abandoning cultural practices or norms to fit in, having to speak proper English, and having to minimize ethnic or racial background for success. These measures should indicate attitudes about whether people feel they need to change who they are in order to be successful and how they feel about doing it.

*Attitudes and behaviors.* The following statements were used for this measurement:

- My life often seems to lack any clear goals or sense of direction, sense of accomplishment in life.
- Nowadays, a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.
- When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for.
- Next to health, money is most important.
- So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
- I am satisfied with my life.

These were measured on five-point Likert scale where 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

## Results

N=366. The demographics for the sample consist of 41.8% of respondents were male and 53.0% were female. Racially, 38.5% were White, 33.3% African American, 14.8% Hispanic, and 8.5% other (Asian, Native American and other.) A higher concentration of the respondents had incomes of either under \$10,000 or \$50,000-above. Only 28 of 338 recorded responses were unemployed. An overwhelming 207 out of 347 respondents had at least some college education. Age results range from 18-73 with a mean of 28.29. (See table 1.)

I conducted a Pearson's Correlation to determine the relationship between the nine motivator variables. Out of the 36 relationships produced, two had a strong positive relationship: to be financially independent with increasing career satisfaction and meeting parents expectations with meeting family obligations. Both are significant at  $p < .01$  level. Twenty-nine others had moderate positive relationships. However, to increase education with being financially independent, increasing education with increasing career satisfaction, buying a house with planning to travel, and meeting family obligation with having a better life than parents have a higher moderate relationship. The majority of them are significant at the ( $p < .01$ ) level with the exception of 2 are significant at the ( $p < .05$ ) level. This test was run to have a better understanding of the strengths of the motivators were to each other for the purposes of discussing what salient factors contributed to individuals aspiring for upper mobility. (See Table 2.)

Next, I ran another bivariate analysis looking at ten items representing positive agency and comparing a combination of \*motivations index, \*belief in structural barriers index and changing behaviors. The first item compares positive agency variables; thinking and planning for the future and using will power to work harder than others has a strong positive relationship ( $r = .772$ ).

Items 2 and 3 are used for testing hypothesis 1- if an individual's aspirations for personal growth and development has a positive relationship with agency, I examined the relationship between the motivation index and agency. The motivation index and using willpower to work harder than others ( $r = .237$ ) and the motivation index and thinking and planning for future ( $r = .179$ ), both had a moderate positive relationship. This means as an individual's aspirations increase so does their agency. Item 4 was used to test hypothesis 2- individuals are more likely to have a strong belief in personal motivators will not have a belief in structural barriers, I looked at the motivation index and belief in structural barriers index. The result is a negative relationship, ( $r = -.143$ ), this means as individuals belief in personal motivators goes up, their belief in structural barriers goes down.

Items 5-10 are tested for hypothesis 3- individuals with beliefs in structural barriers will not believe in having to change behaviors for upward mobility. Belief in structural barriers 2 compared to individuals that feel it is important to change their dress style to have a successful career, ( $r = .201$ ). Individuals that feel it is important to change their dress style to have a successful career analyzed with individuals that have had to abandon their cultural practices or norms in order to fit in ( $r = .256$ ). Belief in structural barriers 2 tested with individuals that have had to abandon their cultural practices or norms in order to fit in ( $r = .237$ ). Individuals that have had to abandon their cultural practices or norms in order to fit in tested with individuals that feel they need to minimize their ethnic or racial background for success, ( $r = .479$ ). Belief in structural barriers 2 compared with individuals that feel they need to minimize their ethnic or racial background for success, ( $r = .118$ ). Lastly, individuals that feel they need to minimize their ethnic or racial background for success analyzed with individuals that feel it is important to change their dress style to have a

successful career, ( $r = .236$ ). Individuals that believe there are structural barrier hindering their achievement of upward mobility also has a positive moderate relationship with having to change certain behaviors like changing the way they dress, forsaking their cultural practices, and having to minimize their ethnic or racial background for success or to fit in. However, the one result that has a strong positive relationship is a given that if an individual has to abandon their cultural practices, then they would also feel the need to minimize their ethnic or racial backgrounds. (See Table 3.)

For hypotheses 4, to test the relationship between an association between respondent's race and individual's motivation for upward mobility, I used an ANOVA and Tukey Post Hoc test. The one-way ANOVA indicated a significant relationship between respondent's race and individual's motivation;  $F(df=3, n=336)=7.436, p<.05$ . Specifically, Whites have less motivation than African American, Hispanic, and other races. However, African Americans have more motivation than Whites, Hispanic, and other races. Hispanics have more motivation than Whites, less motivation than African American and other races. Other races also have more motivation than Whites, less than African American, and more than Hispanics. Overall, I would conclude that minorities have more motivation than Whites for upward mobility (See Tables 4 and 5.)

A  $t$  test was used to see if there was a significant difference between gender and an individual's motivators for upward mobility for male and females. Results for increasing education level motivator,  $t(df=343, -1.947), p <.05$ . Significant for females (Mean=4.52; SD=.723). Another significant difference between the groups was found,  $t(df=344, -3.279), p<.05$ . Females (Mean=4.78; SD=.494) have more of a motivation to be financially independent. Females have more motivation to buy a house,  $t(df=344, -2.091), p<.05, (Mean=4.20; SD=.933)$ . Planning to

travel is also significant motivator for females,  $t(df=344, -2.076)$ ,  $p < .05$ , (Mean=4.34; SD=.893). Having a better life than parents was the only motivator measured that was significantly higher for males,  $t(df=342, 2.784)$ ,  $p < .05$ , (Mean=3.90; SD=1.278). From this test overall, I would determine that females motivation to increase their education level and being financially independent was very strong. However, the financial independence was most prominent. (See Table 6.)



## CONCLUSION

Poverty is colorless, it does not discriminate. There are slightly under 31 million whites in poverty, which is almost 3 times higher the number of Blacks (slightly under 11 million) in poverty. However the percentage of Blacks in poverty is more than double the percentage of whites in poverty. Hispanics of any race are more likely to be in poverty than whites but less so when compared to Blacks (DeNavas-Walt 2013). Nonetheless much more attention is placed on Blacks in poverty, blaming them for being in their impoverished economic state due to laziness, unscrupulous behaviors and unwillingness to assimilate. Colette van Laar (2010) argues that cultural identities should be respected rather than creating “assimilationist-type policies.” People would be motivated, have a sense of belonging and the willingness to perform if their cultural identities were respected.

My findings indicate there is a strong correlation toward being financially independent and individuals increasing their career satisfaction as a motivator. I then infer that people are willing to perform and conform to the bureaucratic goals of the capitalist system for the purpose of having some mobility and stability in their life. However, individuals that indicated agreement to the structural barrier factors has also experienced having to abandon their cultural practices or norms in order to fit in and feel the need to minimize their ethnic or racial background to be successful. Minorities, especially African Americans, are significantly more motivated in their aspirations for upward mobility. Women viewed being financially independent more of a motivator than men, however both very strongly agreed. In addition, increasing education level was also a strong motivator for both male and female.

People in poverty may aspire to be rich. However they may choose to achieve upward mobility by non-traditional means foregoing investing the time it takes to get an education that would presumably give them the ability to secure employment and financial security. Although going the non-traditional route like being a musician, actor or being the outlier that starts a computer company out of their garage works out for some, the other side, are the individuals that engage in illegal activities with aspirations of achieving some upward mobility. This lack of investment in a stable future could be construed as a fatalist view of life. They may have no aspirations of doing anything beyond this and may not even expect to live to see retirement age. In turn, making the investment of the time to attain an education is too high for individuals that have a strong desire for immediate gratification in their situation.

Overall about 50% of Blacks agreed with Cosby's views, however discrimination also seems to be a factor that still shapes peoples view of the world and their responses to situation (Nunnally and Carter, 2012). As far as parenting is concerned, Brookins's (2002) findings indicated that at least 80% of the children in her study had some parental authority involvement. Adding to that, I would suggest that coming from a household where the parent/s have a college education and to what degree would heavily influence the children to follow on the same path. In that setting going to college is an expectation or a norm. Another perspective are the parent/s that do not have a college education, but nonetheless encourages their children to pursue a higher education in order to advance themselves and possibly break their family cycle of poverty. Furthermore, I would state it is not the norm to see to whole generations of Black families not speaking proper English. Contrary to what some people might believe, the majority of children feel education is important and have aspirations of attending college, including the noncompliant

believers. Noncompliant believers may not subscribe to Cosby's mainstream ideologies of having to speak proper English and dressing without their pants sagging, however 82% of them still had aspirations of going to college and 55% actually expected they would (Nunnally and Carter, 2012). Norms can be different from culture to culture, vary in time, place, and within ethnic groups. However, people can integrate old attitudes with new ones to transition into mainstream culture without abandoning their cultural identities (Vaisey 2010). Statistically 70% of poor and near poor people will never make it to middle income quintile level while trying make the great escape from poverty (Pew 2013).

## LIMITATIONS

During the process, I realized it was an ambitious research project with surveying individuals in the general public and balancing other commitments. One of the limitations I would say is the time constraint. Getting people to take the survey was very time consuming in itself. Although I thought my five - seven minute survey was short, generally I think the people taking the survey felt it was long. At about the four - five minute mark they would comment that the survey was long. Furthermore, while I met a number of nice people, I was unsure if some of the terminology and questions were understood by the people that were being interviewed. For example, the question about having to abandon cultural practices and having to minimize ethnic background. I feel the structure of those questions should have included the definition. Another limitation was how some people answered the questions. For instance, at the Zora Art Festival, some people (men in particular), would answer that they had a higher income. However, the employment type would not be expected to match the income they stated. I do not see how this is a limitation that can be overcome in future research. Some people are prideful of the way they are perceived, even by someone they will probably never see again.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

As the findings suggest, individuals have aspirations for upward mobility. However, there is disconnect between their aspirations and accomplishing upward social mobility by means of conventional methods. The question should be why do individuals create cultural frames that hinder them from escaping poverty. Future research should seek to find out how people of lower socioeconomic status see themselves in society, do they feel discrimination is still a relevant issue, does discrimination of any kind hinder them from advancement, what kind of beliefs were they socialized to believe, and what is the reason for their continued attitudes, and what are the psychology impacts? I would do a quantitative and qualitative study with people who have achieved upward mobility and those that have not. I would also suggest evaluating programs that provide support services to get an indication of what their success rate is, are they accomplishing the goals they indicated and what more needs to be done. Furthermore, the race demographic should be more specific. I found through the interviewing process that many people were hesitant about marking African American and being lumped into one category.

## APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS



### ***Summary Explanation for Exempt Research***

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#### **EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH**

Title of Project: General attitudes toward motivations for upward mobility.

Principal Investigator: Dr. Amy Donley

Other Investigators: Trina Gilliam

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

- The purposes of this project is to get a better understanding of people's attitudes toward motivations for upward mobility.
- You are being asked to participant in a voluntary face-to-face survey.
- The expected duration of will be 5-7 minutes.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

**Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem:** If you have questions, concerns, or complaints Trina Gilliam, Undergraduate Student by email at [trina.gilliam@knights.ucf.edu](mailto:trina.gilliam@knights.ucf.edu), Dr. Amy Donley, Principal Investigator, Department of Sociology, College of Sciences by email at [amy.donley@ucf.edu](mailto:amy.donley@ucf.edu)

**IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint:** Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

Are you 18 years of age or older?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Do you consent to take this survey?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

The adult in your household with the highest educational level has a

- Some high school
- High school/GED
- Some college
- Vocational
- Post-secondary (Bachelor's degree or higher)
- Don't know
- N/A



For you personally how important of each of the following is a motivator

	Very weak	Weak	Neither	Strong	Very Strong
Increase my education level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being financially independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buying a house	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning to travel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occupational prestige	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
meeting my parents expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing career satisfaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meet family obligations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a better life than my parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Following is a list of things people sometimes want to achieve in life. Please select the 5 most important goals to you

- achievement
- beauty
- being the best
- challenge
- comfort
- creativity
- education
- empowerment
- family
- financial freedom
- giving service
- independence
- intelligence
- leadership
- motivation
- passion
- performance
- personal growth
- play
- productivity
- relationship
- respect
- security
- success
- time freedom
- variety

Which option best fits your motivation for wanting to better your life?

- Financial security
- Career satisfaction
- Family obligations
- I want a better life than my parents
- Other

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use my will power to work harder than others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often think about and plan for my future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which of the following matters most in who gets ahead in life?

	1	2	3	4	5
Hard work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Luck or Help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Both equally	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Who inspires you most?

- Family
- Friends
- Authors
- Artists
- Leaders
- Other

Please indicate how strongly

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have little control over the things that happen to me in life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will not have a better financial future than the family I was raised in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had access to a good education and support from school staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can advance as far as I want in life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is impossible to get a good job without knowing someone that will vouch for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel people are willing to help me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Society gives some people a head start and holds others back	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Choice the best answer

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel it is important to change my dress style to have a successful career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have had to abandon my cultural practices or norms in order to fit in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that part of being successful is having to speak proper English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I need to minimize my ethnic or racial background to be successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Choice the best answer

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My life often seems to lack any clear goals or sense of direction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nowadays, a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Next to health, money is most important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
So far I have gotten the important things I want in life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- Trade/technical/vocational training
- College graduate
- Some post graduate work
- Post graduate degree

What is your race/ethnicity?

- White/Caucasian
- African American
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Native American
- Pacific Islander
- Other

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is your age?

Which of the following categories best describes your primary area of employment?

- Homemaker
- Retired
- Student
- Unemployed
- Education - College, University, or Adult
- Education - Primary/Secondary (K-12)
- Education - Other
- Construction
- Finance and Insurance
- Government and Public Administration
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Hotel and Food Services
- Legal Services
- Manufacturing
- Military
- Real Estate, Rental, or Leasing
- Retail
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

What is your current household income?

- Under 10,000
- 10,000 - 19,999
- 20,000 - 29,999
- 30,000 - 39,999
- 40,000 - 49,999
- 50,000 - above

## APPENDIX B: IRB OUTCOME

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)



## Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Amy M. Donley and Co-PI: Trina Gilliam**

Date: **January 16, 2015**

Dear Researcher:

On 01/16/2015, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination  
Project Title: General attitudes toward motivations for upward mobility.  
Investigator: Amy M Donley  
IRB Number: SBE-15-10947  
Funding Agency:  
Grant Title:  
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joanne Muratori'.

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 01/16/2015 04:52:14 PM EST

IRB Coordinator

## APPENDIX C: TABLES

Table 1. Demographics of Respondents (N=366)

<b>Demographics</b>	Number	Percent			
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	153	41.8			
Female	194	53.0			
Missing	19	5.2			
<b>Race</b>					
White/Caucasian	141	38.5			
African American	122	33.3			
Hispanic	54	14.8			
Other	31	8.5			
Total	348	95.1			
Missing	18	4.9			
<b>Median Income</b>					
Under 10,000	109	29.8			
10,000 - 19,999	50	13.7			
20,000 - 29,999	48	13.1			
30,000 - 39,999	28	7.7			
40,000 - 49,999	10	2.7			
50,000 - above	85	23.2			
Total	330	90.2			
Missing	36	9.8			
<b>Employment Type</b>					
Student	129	35.2			
Unemployed	28	7.7			
All other	181	57.1			
Missing	28	7.7			
<b>Education level completed</b>					
Some high school	16	4.4			
H.S. Graduate	48	13.1			
Some college	207	56.6			
Trade/technical/vocational	13	3.6			
College or higher graduate	63	17.2			
Total	347	94.8			
Missing	19	5.2			
<b>Age</b>					
Mean	Median	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Valid
28.29	23	55	18	73	343

Table 2. Correlation Matrix of Responses to Motivator Questions

	Increase education level	To be financially independent	Buying a house	Planning to travel	Occupational prestige	Meeting parents expectations	Increasing career satisfaction	Meet family obligations
To be financially independent	.364**							
Buying a house	.170**	.247**						
Planning to travel	.265**	.260**	.343**					
Occupational prestige	.269**	.154**	.276**	.286**				
Meeting parents expectations	.130*	.204**	.262**	.268**	.224**			
Increasing career satisfaction	.366**	.461**	.175**	.137**	.265**	.177**		
Meet family obligations	.018	.161**	.268**	.185**	.064	.479**	.144**	
Have better life than parents	.011	.228**	.109*	.026	.078	.196**	.265**	.327**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3. Motivations + Belief in Structural Barriers + Changing Behaviors

Correlation Matrix Responses	
Thinking & planning for future and Using willpower to work harder than others.	.772**
Motivation index & Using willpower to work harder than others	.237**
Motivation index & Thinking & planning for future.	.179**
Motivation index & Belief in structural barriers.	-.143.*
Belief in structural barriers 2 & Importance of changing my dress style for success.	.201**
Importance of changing my dress style for success & Having to abandon my cultural practices or norms in order to fit in.	.256**
Belief in structural barriers 2 & Having to abandon my cultural practices or norms in order to fit in.	.237**
Having to abandon my cultural practices or norms in order to fit in & Needing to minimize my ethnic or racial background for success.	.479**
Belief in structural barriers 2 & Needing to minimize my ethnic or racial background for success.	.118*
Needing to minimize my ethnic or racial background for success & Importance of changing my dress style for success	.236**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

1

<sup>1</sup>Note: Structural barriers variables: I will not have a better financial future than the family I was raised in, It is impossible to get a good job without knowing someone that will vouch for me, Society gives some people a head start and holds others back, My life often seems to lack any clear goals or sense of direction, I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life. Recodes.

Structural barriers 2 variables: My life often seems to lack any clear goals or sense of direction, I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life, When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for, It is impossible to get a good job without knowing someone that will vouch for me, I have little control over the things that happen to me in life, Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself. Recodes.

Motivation variables: Increase my education level, Being financially independent, Buying a house, Planning to travel, Meeting my parents expectations, Meet family obligations, Having a better life than my parents. Recodes



ANOVA

Table 4 Analysis of Variance for Motivation Index and Race

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between	180.36	3	60.12	7.436	.000
Within	2716.68	336	8.09		
Total	2897.005	339			

Table 5 Tukey Post Hoc results Motivation Index

RACE	Mean Differences			
	White	African American	Hispanic	Other
White		-1.538*	-1.367*	-1.433
African American	1.538*		.171	.105
Hispanic	1.367*	-.171		-.066
Other	1.433	-.105	.066	

\*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 6. Independent Sample T-test-Motivation vs Gender

Measure*		Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
<b>Increase my education level</b>	Male	4.35	.891	-1.947	343	.052
	Female	4.52	.723			
<b>Being financially independent</b>	Male	4.56	.751	-3.279	344	.001
	Female	4.78	.494			
<b>Buying a house</b>	Male	3.97	1.155	-2.091	344	.037
	Female	4.20	.933			
<b>Planning to travel</b>	Male	4.12	1.070	-2.076	344	.039
	Female	4.34	.893			
Occupational prestige	Male	3.94	1.099	.512	342	.609
	Female	3.88	1.084			
Meeting my parents expectations	Male	3.51	1.352	-1.711	343	.088
	Female	3.74	1.188			
Increasing career satisfaction	Male	4.39	.926	-1.524	342	.128
	Female	4.52	.753			
Meet family obligations	Male	3.96	1.256	.420	343	.675
	Female	3.91	1.149			
<b>Having a better life than my parents</b>	Male	3.90	1.278	2.784	342	.006
	Female	3.53	1.160			

\*Note: Measured on a scale from 1-5; 1=Very weak; 2= Weak; 3=Neither; 4=Strong; 5=Very Strong

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