GRADE EXPECTATIONS: 
THE INTERACTION OF RACE, SEX, SCHOOL CULTURE, 
AND STUDENTS’ SCHOLASTIC EXPECTATIONS

by
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ABSTRACT

There is a growing body of research dedicated to how students’ identities and role models inform students’ ideas about career aspirations (Lareau 2011; Tan, Barton, Kang & O’Neill 2013; Kerr, Vuyk, & Rea, 2012); the current study will use an intersectional framework to analyze student’s scholastic expectations. A random-intercept ordinal logistic regression was run including several interaction terms; Black females expected to go further in school than white males, and Hispanic females and Asian females were less likely to expect to go further in school than white males. In schools with a greater percentage of free/reduced lunches, females were more likely to expect to go further in school than males, and Hispanic students were less likely to expect to go further than white students. This study not only looks at the characteristics of students, but also school characteristics, to paint a broader picture of what shapes students’ expectations of how far in school they will go.
Chapter 1

GRADE EXPECTATIONS

According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, women today outnumber men in colleges and universities 1.35 to 1 (National Center for Education Statistics 2013; Goldin, Katz, & Kuziemko, 2006). This has been a developing trend since women’s entrance into the workforce in the 1970’s, and many changes attributed to the women’s movement throughout education have also affected the way that adolescent girls plan for their futures. For instance, women are now able to obtain employment in the same areas as men in the military, and laws are continuously written and revised both to further women’s inclusion in all areas of education and work, and to punish those who treat women unfairly.

To date, there is a growing body of research dedicated to how students’ identities and role models inform students’ ideas about career aspirations (Lareau 2011; Tan, Barton, Kang & O’Neill 2013; Kerr, Vuyk, & Rea, 2012); however, none of these studies attempt to use an intersectional lens to further our understanding of the many factors that can shape students’ perceptions of their level of attainment in school. As individuals begin planning for careers and their future more generally, they will need to assess what that career will require in terms of certifications and higher education. Examining students’ scholastic expectations could be a way of not only looking at their perceptions of themselves and their own abilities, but also their career aspirations for the future. The current study attempts to fill the current gap in the literature by taking an intersectional approach to students’ scholastic expectations
using data from a U.S. national survey. The current study will look at how gender, race, socio-economic status, student role models, and school environment influence students’ expectations of the highest academic degree they will complete.

**Intersectionality and Gendered Institutions**

The current study uses intersectionality as a guiding theory for analyses. This theory came as a reaction to research done during the second wave of feminism; research coming from this era tended to universalize women’s experiences. A pioneer of the intersectional theory and framework, Patricia Hill Collins (1990) argues that feminist theory and other types of theories often reinforce the power of those who created it, mainly middle and upper-class white males and females. Intersectionality and intersectional frameworks are a response to these theories in that it attempts to remedy the individuals who are often left out of sociological theories because they occupy multiple intersections of oppression (Collins 1990). Researchers using the intersectionality theory purport that variable effects occur in complex and specific ways when multiple identities intersect; these occur within certain locations in history, so intersectional research is context-specific (Brah & Phoenix 2004; McCall 2005; Glenn 1992). One of intersectionality’s important tenets is that identities such as gender, race, and class are additive, so one may act out their gender and femininity according to their class or race (Bettie 2000; Crenshaw 1991).

Hamilton and Armstrong (2009) illustrated the tenets of this theory by looking at college women and finding that their all-female sample tended to divide by class, with middle and upper-class women tending to navigate hook-up culture while lower class, less privileged women finding this culture hostile and instead tended to place more value on long-term relationships. This study illustrates that gender is only one of
many intersecting identities that individuals have to navigate in their social worlds. Many leading scholars have long seen the issues with treating identities as separate, and argue that these types of models are inadequate in explaining the nuances and differences in the many identities that people can occupy at different places and times (Collins 1986; King 1988; Glenn 1992). Often in research, obtaining nuances of intersecting identities is more likely to be revealed in qualitative research analysis. Thus, the methodological challenge with this paper will be to attempt to analyze the effects of intersecting identities using quantitative survey data.

Glenn (1992) further expands this theory by examining women’s reproductive labor as it relates to race and nationality. Glenn notes that race, gender, and class are ‘relational’, meaning that these identities only gain meaning and position in relation to each other (Glen 1992). In this article, Glenn finds that the upper-class women help to subordinate lower-class women and continue the cycle of racialized emotional labor; this interdependence is clouded by institutional structures and is therefore not evident to the participants of this system (Glenn 1992). It is important therefore to look not at one identity, but at many, because all individuals continuously occupy complex social locations that go unrecognized by the individuals themselves.

Out of intersectionality came the concept of the gendered institutions, places where patterns of social interaction between men and women structure the institution and produce different expectations for women and men (Acker 1992). All institutions are gendered, because they are all places and instances where individuals perform and enact gender; Hawkesworth (2003) demonstrated that the political institution systematically silences, stereotypes, and challenges the authority of congresswomen of color. Elson (1999) also shows that the mere participation of women in the labor
market is not empowering in itself because of the plethora of gendered institutions that shift women into lower-paying work that blocks them from the opportunity for advancement. This is especially apparent when looking at race and class (Hawkesworth 2003), as women of color and women of lower socio-economic statuses, as they are often relegated to low-wage jobs that are high in emotional labor (Collins 1990; Glenn 1992).

Research by Kenney (1992) argues that within these gendered institutions, gender needs to be considered not as a simple variable but as a continuum that is a process that is challenged, resisted, and in some cases, subverted to women’s advantage. Therefore, it is important to consider school as a gendered institution and as a site where one continuously performs gender because this could contribute to findings of difference between male and females. It would be expected that because males and females have different school experiences, they would differ in terms of scholastic expectations as well. While the current study is looking at sex variables and not gender variables, it remains important to use this theory because it has not been previously used with this dataset, or within this methodology and context. It is important to consider the school in the context of a gendered institution, and that school and parent variables may act as intersecting identities as well and could be significantly interacting with students’ formations of their future plans.

**Individual versus Structural Factors**

Since the 1960’s, research sparked a lot of debate about whether certain factors influence students’ scholastic expectations and success more than others – specifically, Coleman’s (1966) study revealed that individual – level, not school – level factors exerted more of an influence on students abilities to succeed in school. While this has
largely been shown to be an incomplete assessment, this finding influenced policies in a way that focused less on school and teacher resources and more on punishing ‘bad’ parents for not having the resources often available to the middle and upper class to devote to their children’s school success (Strick 2012; Potter 2013). The present study will be able to speak further to this debate because several individual and school-level factors will be analyzed to see how influential each is for students’ scholastic expectations. The subsequent discussion offers a brief overview of the many studies that have emerged to weigh in on the structure versus individual debate.

**Role Models**

Teachers, parents, and other influential adults can affect the way that students begin to map out future careers (Tan, Barton, Kang, and O’Neill 2013). Paa and McWhirter (2000) looked at 464 high school students’ perceptions of factors that they reported influencing their career aspirations. The girls that participated in the survey were aware of the strong influences that their mothers, female teachers, and female peers had on their career aspirations (Paa et al. 2000). There were also some differences relative to boys; for boys, income was rated as a factor with more influence in deciding a career, and this may be the result of gender socialization: if men are expected to be the breadwinners, they would accordingly place more value on income (Paa et al. 2000). However, this study did not take race, class, or any other identity into account, and neglected to ask students specifically about their careers or the education they plan to pursue. So it was evident that students in this study were aware that there are multiple factors influencing their decisions that were both at the individual and structural level.
Research has also found evidence that perceptions of scholastic achievement was affected by not only liking school but also perceptions of teacher involvement with students; students that perceived teachers as caring and fair reported higher perceptions of their own achievement (Ding and Hall, 2007). Students with adequate role models and a favorable view of their teachers’ involvement in the classroom could boost students’ perceptions of their own abilities to complete higher levels of education. As with the previous study, the sample for Ding and Hall’s study was racially homogenous, and failed to take an intersectional lens with their study but provided support that elements of school structure (namely, teachers) can have a significant influence on students.

While there are a great number of studies that have found support that gender, race, class, and teacher involvement are influential to students, there remains a notable gap in research that examines these factors in terms of students’ scholastic aspirations. Education is an important cornerstone in planning for future careers and goals, therefore, it is extremely important that this gap in the research is examined further, not only because of the importance that students place on planning for their future, but also so that the current body of literature is expanded to include more comprehensive analyses about how students think about their capacity to go further in school.

**Sex, Race, and Family Socio-Economic Status in Academic Institutions**

It is well supported that boys and girls have different experiences in education, and these differences are complicated further with differences in race, sexual orientation, and class as well; some differences include males receiving more attention by teachers, and female and minority students being placed into honors programs at a slower rate (Howard, Carlstrom, Katz, Chew, Ray, Laine, & Caulum 2011; Lareau,
The school environment is one in which boys and girls can learn, reinforce, and perform their gender identity as well as navigate their own social locations – this socialization is especially effective because of the high intensity of social interaction among students and teachers (Lareau, 2011). It is important in this context to note that this study is looking at sex differences, as many researchers have pointed out the difference between studying sex and gender (Crenshaw 1991; Acker 1992; Bettie 2000).

Some notable sex differences in education definitely reveal that boys have higher drop-out rates, are more likely to repeat grades, and are now the minority in both undergraduate and graduate institutions, with African American and Hispanic males being underrepresented at all education levels (Sadker 2002; 1995). Previous research suggests that there are many reasons that could contribute to this under-representation, including cultural values (Laws 2005; Lee and Staff 2007), lack of family/societal resources, and differential treatment, upbringing, and socialization within the family and school system (Sadker 2002; Lareau 2011); Lareau (2011) and Sadker (2002) especially show that both student/family and school level factors can play a role in shaping students’ experiences in school.

Although women outnumber men in higher education institutions, they follow very different career paths with different economic consequences – Sadker (2002) and Deutsch (2006) argue that a large factor that influences these career decisions has to do with gender socialization that happens in school where boys tend to be called on more and are given more challenging materials and where girls tend to be rewarded for silence and are often overlooked in classrooms. While this research gives us a
broad look at the gender differences in education, it fails to look at other social structural factors that influence students in their education expectations, but we can now expect that males and females of different SES backgrounds and races may be different in their scholastic expectations.

When we look more closely at sex differences, many researchers point to ‘gendered practices’ that are prevalent throughout school experiences and located in the structure itself. Kerr, Vuyk, and Rea’s (2012) definition of gendered practices entail the processes that bring gender into social relations through interactions. An example of this would be the noted practice of teachers calling on boys more than girls, and the research that finds that girls are often barred from early access into gifted programs because of their invisibility in the classroom, which could lead to boredom, being out of step with their peers, and a decreasing enthusiasm for school (Kerr et al. 2012; Saunders, Davis, & Williams 2004; Tyson, 2011). These factors greatly affect students’ perceptions of career opportunities, and could also be damaging in respect to how girls view themselves in terms of both their career and academic plans.

While gendered institutions such as schools can have negative influences on males and females in different aspects, gender is only one of many intersecting identities; many of the previously cited studies have failed to consider other salient identities that students hold. A study conducted by Diamond, Randolph, and Spillane (2004) found support that teachers working in schools with high concentrations of low-income African American elementary school students have lowered expectations and a lowered sense of responsibility for students. School contexts and family resources play an integral part in shaping children’s expectations for themselves (Hanselman, Bruch, Gamroan & Borman 2014; Lareau, 2011; Tyson, 2011). Socio-
economic status has also been shown to drastically impact students during the course of their education; this privilege gap, Adam Gamoran (2001) argues, will most likely continue to exist at stable levels because of the way that privileged groups protect their status and advantages.

Race is another primary identity that can make navigating the social world a difficult process. Several studies have found that for school students specifically, being racially marginalized can negatively impact a student’s ability to do well on tests and in coursework, and that racially marginalized students can also have negative psychological outcomes related to their marginalization (Billings, Demming, and Rockoff 2014; Benner and Wang 2014; Chapman 2014). Specifically, Billings et al. (2014) found that students who are racially marginalized have significantly lower grade-point-averages and do worse on tests compared to those who are not racially marginalized.

Researchers in early studies argued that the lack of Black student achievement was a cultural phenomenon; Black students rejected education as an institution that contributed to their marginalization and created opportunities for white students (Kao and Thompson 2003). However, recent studies have shown that this is not the case – Black students have been shown to place equal or higher values on school and education (Harris 2006; Diamond, Randolph, and Spillane 2004; Kao and Thompson 2003). These studies’ findings suggest that other factors are at work that curb Black students’ abilities to succeed and become equally represented in education – socio-economic status and school structure/culture could play a large role in this. Antonia Randolph (2013) found that in diverse schools, there is a racial hierarchy in which immigrant minorities are favored and legitimized at the expense of poor Black
students; specifically, Asian students typically received better treatment for being a ‘model minority’, and were treated better by teachers. It is clear that there are complex interactions between race and school experience, which is why it is expected that there will be significant differences in students of different races and ethnicities.

These studies also found that socio-economic status, not race, plays a larger role in differences in childrearing, and that this difference in child-rearing accounts for the education gap between students of different races (Long, Kelly & Gamoran 2012; Lareau 2011; Cheadle 2008). Tyson, Darity, and Castellino (2005) found that school structure plays a significant role in students’ achievement aspirations. They found that, contradictory to the theory that Black students avoid scholastic achievement because of its association with ‘whiteness’, it is school structure that influences how achievement becomes classed or racialized. In fact, two studies that used data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study found no support that there is an oppositional culture between Black and white students, and that Black students actually demonstrated more pro-school attitudes than their white counterparts (Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998; Cook and Ludwig 1998). School structure, therefore, will be an instrumental variable(s) of the current study.

**School and School Culture**

In a study conducted by Karolyn Tyson (2011), one of the most important factors that influenced children’s academic aspirations was the courses that they were placed into through the process of tracking: children placed into less challenging courses saw themselves as less capable of achievement. This is especially important considering the research that has shown that the tracking process re-segregates students according to race, with non-white students often being ‘tracked’ into lower-
level courses (Lucas, 1999; Diamond et al. 2004), and is important in that it directly contradicts the Coleman report’s (1966) observation that schools do not play a role in student marginalization. In a comprehensive study looking at the differences in child-rearing by middle-class and poor families, Sociologist Annette Lareau (2011) found that middle-class parents are better preparing their children for academic success by having them practice time management through extra-curricular activities, and by having their children have meaningful interactions with other adults.

Other studies suggest that the culture of the school itself can also affect students’ abilities to perform well in school and to perceive themselves as successful. Several studies show that students who frequently witness violence in their schools and communities were less likely to do well in school and more likely to suffer from symptoms of trauma – note that these students only had to witness violence, they did not have to be victims or perpetrators of violence themselves (Flannery and Singer 2004; Bowen and Bowen 1999). School culture could therefore be an important factor to consider in addition to other school-level variables to control and test for.

The Current Study

Current research provides integral support that differences exist across multiple axes of inequality, and this must be taken into consideration while looking at students’ scholastic expectations. While intersectional frameworks tend to be used more in qualitative methodology, it remains important to consider students’ social locations when looking at differences in education planning because as some of the cited literature has shown, certain identities intersect (race, SES, and sex). This study also attempts to contribute to the literature by addressing these questions of intersectionality and equality quantitatively by using interaction terms to examine
effects of race, gender, and socio-economic status. The current study aims to incorporate the current gaps in the literature in order to construct a more comprehensive model of intersectional and structural factors that help explain differences in students’ scholastic expectations.

Examining scholastic expectations is not only important because of the link between higher education, class mobility, and better employment opportunities. In examining scholastic expectations of 11th grade students, we can also gain insight into student's perceptions of themselves and their perceptions of their abilities to complete more or fewer years of school. Education is also a more immediate future expectation than are career aspirations, which tend to change quickly and often. Eleventh grade students are on the cusp of graduation and so are more immediately and directly thinking about their education plans; many may have already began visiting potential colleges and universities. Therefore, scholastic expectations are important to measure, especially since there are so many potential factors that could be influence them.

The study addresses several questions. How influential are students' individual, family, and school factors in shaping the way that students think about their academic futures? Does occupying multiple intersectional identities lead to significantly different scholastic expectations across students? How can qualitative frameworks enhance our understanding of quantitative findings?

**Method**

The current study uses multilevel modeling to analyze the relationship between students’ expectations of how far they will go in school and students’ race, gender, and socioeconomic statuses. The data come from the 2009 High School Longitudinal Study from the National Center for Education Statistics; 23,415 students from 944
schools, both public and private, participated in this comprehensive paper survey that included a baseline survey for first-year students, and then one follow-up survey to track students’ trajectories throughout high school. From the 944 schools, 25 students from each school and their parents were randomly chosen to complete the survey; principals, counselors and other school staff were also asked to complete a survey about the school itself, which is where the school-level variables were obtained.

In total, 18,459 students participated in the follow-up survey; 8,434 identified as female, and 10,025 identified as male. Four hundred and seventy one students identified being Pacific Islander, 1,263 identified as Native American, 2,672 identified as Black or African American, 2,614 identified as Hispanic, 1,782 identified as Asian, and the remaining 12,352 students identified as white. Most of these students (15,081) come from public schools as well. This sample is heavily skewed in terms of race and school type, and it is also skewed in terms of sex (there are more males), which is interesting because women now outnumber men in educational institutions.

The current study uses the follow-up survey to assess 11th graders’ scholastic expectations because they are closer to graduation and may have thought about their future more seriously than they did when in 9th grade. The surveys asked students 131 questions about many aspects of their academic lives, including how well they were doing in their courses, and in which courses they will enroll in the following years. The students were also asked about activities that they and their families were involved in outside of school, how their friends felt about school, and how involved their parents were in their education. The dependent variable asks 11th grade students how far they expect to go in school; this variable includes all options ranging from not completing high school to completing a Ph.D. or other professional degree, there are
12 options total. 105 students indicated that they did not know how far they expected to go, so they were not included in the analysis.

**Student - Level Variables (Table 2)**

I also used variables that asked about the help that students have received regarding a future plan (either with their careers or education), and created dummy variables for those responses. Parents helping their children with future planning was coded 1 for yes, or 0 for no, the student’s parents did not help with future planning. Similarly, if no one had helped the 11th grader with a future plan, that was coded as 0. If the 11th grader received help from anyone regarding their future career/education, that was coded 1. Dummy variables were also created for student’s sex and race, with Male students and white students being left out of the model for comparisons. All other race options were included: Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, Native American, and Asian.

**School - Level Variables (Table 3)**

I created a dummy variable that compared the type of school; 1 representing public, and 0 representing the other types of schools included. The 2 other types of schools in the study were private/charter schools and Catholic or other religious schools. In total, 20,658 students sampled came from public schools, while the remaining 4,548 of the students were enrolled in the private or alternative types of schools. Because both categories were much smaller in comparison to the number of public schools sampled and because there is not a theoretical reason to study them separately, these two types of schools were included together under the non-public school variable.
To test for school structure and culture, I tested for the percentage of students who are qualified to receive free or reduced price lunches (an indicator of the socio-economic area of the school and of the student body), and I tested for school diversity by including the percentage of white students at the school. I also included a variable that assesses teacher resources on a Likert-type scale ranging from ‘1. Not a Problem’ to ‘4. A Serious Problem’. There are two variables assessing the frequency of physical conflict and racial tension; each variable is also measured on a Likert-type scale ranging from ‘1. Never Happens’ to ‘5. Happens Daily’. In order to assess the support that the school provides for students, I included the number of certified full-time counselors that are employed at each school. Only 734 of the schools reported having no counselors, and 30 schools reported having 17, which was the highest number of counselors; most schools reported having between 1 and 7 full-time counselors.

Because several levels of variables will be analyzed, a Poisson multilevel model would be appropriate for this research question; however, because the data did not include student sampling weights, which are necessary in order to run a Poisson model, I decided to run an ordinal logistic random intercept model instead. See Table 4 for descriptive statistics of all variables included in the model.

**Results**

I centered the two continuous independent variables (the percentage of students on the free/reduced price lunch program and the percentage of white students at the school), and ran tests of predicted level-1 residuals; the data are normally distributed. After testing for multicollinearity, no issues were found and no variables needed to be removed from analysis. The model is statistically significant ($p < .05$) with the model explaining 4.3% of the variance in scholastic expectation scores, and
3.6% of the variance being attributed to the school that the student attended; there are several important significant indicators shown in the model (Table 1).

Several school-level variables were significant; with each percent increase in the number of students receiving the free lunch program, the odds of students expecting to go one step further in school decreases by 2% (p<.000). Interestingly, as the percentage of white students per school increases, the odds of students expecting to go one step further decreases by about 4% (p=.001). As physical conflict in schools becomes more of an issue/more frequent, the odds of students expecting to go one step further in school decreases by 11% (p=.002), and for students enrolled in public schools versus private or religious schools, the odds of students expecting to go further in school are 44% lower (p<.000). As the number of full-time counselors increase, the odds of students expecting to go further in school increase by 3% (p=.006). Lastly, as teachers reported that they had less resources at their disposals, the odds of students expecting to go further in school decrease by 7% (p=.036).

Compared to males, the odds of female students expecting to go further in their education are 43% higher (p<.000). The odds of students who reported their parents as helping them plan their futures expecting to go further in school are 35% higher (p<.000). Compared to white students the odds of students who identified as Asian expecting to go further are 148% higher (p<.000); none of the other race variables were significant in the model.

I then ran the 11th grade model with several interaction terms and included them in the original model. I looked at the interaction between student’s race and sex, and then I looked at the interaction between race, sex, and the percentage of students receiving the free or reduced price lunch program at their schools (school-level SES
indicator). There were several significant findings. The odds of a Black female expecting to go one year further in school are 43% greater than those of white males (p=.002), and the odds of a Hispanic female expecting to go one year further in school are 25% less than those of white males (p=.028). Interestingly, the odds of an Asian female expecting to go one year further in school are 36% less than white males (p=.002). As the percentage of students receiving free/reduced price lunches increase, the odds of females expecting to go one year further in school are .3% more likely than males (p=.039); the odds of Hispanic students expecting to go further in school are .6% less likely than white students (p=.021).

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The study set out to examine school and student factors that can influence students’ expectations of how far they will go in school; there were several interesting interactions within the model. The study first and foremost found continuing support that there are student and school – level factors that influence students’ perceptions of their academic abilities; this study also calls for policies to not only put more resources into all schools and to ensuring a better school environment, but to also continue to address the problems associated with punishing low SES parents for not having the resources that the middle and upper class tend to have.

Extant research supports the finding that Black students have either higher or similar educational attainment levels than white students; these findings were used to critique the theory that Black students rejected school and saw it as an avenue for white individuals to succeed (Harris 2006; Diamond, Randolph, and Spillane 2004; Kao and Thompson 2003). My finding that Black female students are more likely to expect to go further is not only important in that it supports current literature, but also
because of the stark contrast of these findings with the vast under-representation of Black women at all levels of higher education. It is also well known that Black females occupy multiple intersections of oppression and because of this, they face a number of different structurally-related stressors that make it difficult; Black women are subjected to violence that goes unnoticed by society at large, their experiences are often erased, and they are taken advantage of and ignored by current systems of power (Crenshaw 1991; Collins 2002; McCall 2005; Quadagno 1994). So the results reported here are even more disheartening that Black females are more likely to expect to go further but remain marginalized, which inhibits their chances of obtaining better employment opportunities.

Hispanic females being less likely to expect to go further in school than their white male counterparts is, while unfortunate, an expected finding. Previous research has found evidence that in addition to socio-economic factors, cultural factors may inhibit Hispanic students in completing school; the high school drop-out rates for Hispanic students tend to be higher than students of other ethnicities (Lee & Bean 2004; Olatunji 2005; Stanton-Salazar 2001). Several studies note that in Mexican families, a pervasive expectation is that adolescents should begin working; this takes away from time spent on schooling, and can end up pushing students out earlier than their non-Hispanic counterparts (Laws 2005; Lee and Staff 2007). Hispanic students were also less likely to expect to go further in school than white students as the percent of students in the free/reduced price lunch program increased, indicating that Hispanic students could be more affected by the socioeconomic status of the schools they attend.
It was also an expected finding that Asian students were more likely to expect to go further in school than their white counterparts; it is found that Asian-American students are consistently found to have higher academic attainment (Wong 2006). This becomes more interesting when looking at the interaction between race and student sex; as Asian females were significantly less likely than white males to expect to go further in school. This suggests that gender could play a really crucial role in Asian female student’s perceptions of their abilities to succeed in higher levels of education. Antonia Randolph (2013) found supporting information through extensive interviews about how people perceive those of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. She finds that certain minorities are favored over others; namely, that Asian students are at the top of this ‘racial hierarchy’ and are often encouraged and receive more positive reinforcement for doing well and are treated as a ‘model minority’ (Randolph 2013).

With this finding notwithstanding, the results of the current study show that there remains more to be studied in terms of gender and race and how students’ expectations of themselves are influenced by these intersecting identities.

Moreover, female students were more likely to expect to go further in school compared to their male counterparts. This makes sense because women have significantly surpassed men in both high school completion rates but also in university enrollment rates (Aud et al. 2011; Snyder & Dillow 2011). This may mean that although there are societal and social factors that impede women’s and girl’s abilities to go further in school and in the upper levels of the workforce, they may not impact adolescent females’ expectations of themselves as they plan out their future educational and career goals. However, this is an interesting finding in conjunction with the literature that shows that males tend to receive more positive attention in
school and are more quickly placed in gifted programs. That males in this study were less likely to expect to go further in school compared to females is really interesting and contradictory to what would be expected from this literature.

School culture and structure were also influential to students in addition to individual-level factors. The number of counselors per school showed to be a significant positive influence on student’s scholastic expectations, and this is likely due to the fact that school counselors are primary career advisors, with some schools requiring mandatory counseling sessions centered on student’s future plans. A greater number of counselors could also mean that the school has more resources to devote to student wellness. While there are no data on how the schools structure counseling sessions, more counselors in a particular school can mean that students have more avenues and adults to help them with career and academic planning. Students going to schools where teachers reported having fewer resources were less likely to expect going further in school; this finding is expected even with controlling for socioeconomic status and has been supported in previous research (Diamond, Randolph, and Spillane 2004), demonstrating that policies need to be more proactive with granting funding and resources at the school-level instead of focusing on individual-level issues.

While the model controlled for school socio-economic status, several studies demonstrate that children raised in environments with a high incidence-rate of violence and crime will do worse than other students on standardized testing, and are more likely to do poorly in school because of the traumatic effects of witnessing and being a part of violence (Flannery and Singer 2004; Bowen and Bowen 1999). The findings from the current study’s model found further empirical support for this
through both the socio-economic status of the school and the incidences of violence at the school; children in elementary through high school spend the majority of their time there, so it would make sense that school level factors would have a great impact on students’ perceptions of their academic abilities.

Students in public schools were more likely to have lower scholastic expectations; this could be due to the fact that students in private schools are more likely to come from families with more resources, both financially and culturally. Both of these structural findings could be working in conjunction with class on some level, as students coming from families with more resources are more likely to go to schools with more resources and be better prepared for the ‘adult’ world and more prepared for better academic and employment opportunities (Lareau 2011). This finding is raced as well, as the Urban Institute (2014) recently reported that Black students are significantly more likely to attend high-poverty public schools, and are more likely to attend racially segregated public schools.

In a similar vein, a finding from the model suggested that as the number of white students enrolled at a school increased, the odds of students expecting to go further in school decreased. This finding supports several previously cited studies (Billings, Demming, and Rockoff 2014; Benner and Wang 2014; Chapman 2014), and suggests that while racial tension did not prove to be an issue among students in schools, the racial nature of the educational institution can inhibit students from succeeding and reaching their full potential. This adds to the literature that suggests that there are several nuanced aspects of the institution that can be both racialized and gendered, and these aspects of the institutions can cause constraints on students’ abilities and aspirations to move into higher education.
Concurrent with Lareau’s (2011) findings, students whose parents had helped them plan for their future were more likely to expect to go further in school. This finding could also be working in conjunction with SES because parents who have more resources also have time to devote to future planning with their children. As Lareau (2011) observes in her study, middle-class parents are not only able to take the time to involve their children in extra-curricular activities, but parents also have connections to other adults that can provide their children with career opportunities or career and academic models. This also supports the role model literature in that parents are significant in terms of helping their children plan for their future careers and general plans (Paa et al. 2000; Tan, Barton, Kang & O’Neill 2013).

My findings, reveal there is more going on with adolescents’ perceptions of their abilities to succeed than what appears at first glance. This study contributes to the growing literature that is interested in examining how children and adolescents plan for their futures. This is an intersectional study, focusing on aspects of inequality and how influential these inequalities are when students form their expectations of how far they intend to go in school; through using qualitative framing in a unique way, it is evident that policies and practices need to reflect these complexities. While policy tends to favor individualized solutions, it is evident with this study and many others that institutional factors are also important in both supporting and further marginalizing students’ expectations of how far they expect to go in school. This study not only looks at the characteristics of students, but also school characteristics, to paint a broader picture of what shapes students’ perceptions of their own academic abilities. A lot of research has looked at career planning, but academic planning is equally
integral because of the close connection between higher education, better employment, and class mobility.

**Limitations**

Using an intersectional framework to answer a quantitative question remains difficult because quantitative analysis can miss detail and nuance that is often captured using other methodology. For this study in particular, there were several constraints in the data that made answering the research question arduous. Gender was also not able to be examined fully, and while the model included student sex, the results cannot be generalized to broader findings about gender. Students of all non-white ethnicities were under-represented, and there were more male respondents than females; this was especially interesting because of the over-representation of females at all levels of higher education. Future research should address these issues by using a multi-methods framework and including in-depth interviews or focus groups with students.
Table 1: Random - Intercept Ordinal Logistic Regression of 11th Grader's Scholastic Expectations and Control Variables, Odds Ratios Reported (n = 18,459)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
<th>z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Lunch</td>
<td>0.987</td>
<td>-6.73</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%White</td>
<td>0.962</td>
<td>-3.27</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Resources</td>
<td>0.931</td>
<td>-2.1</td>
<td>0.036**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Conflict</td>
<td>0.891</td>
<td>-3.03</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Tension</td>
<td>1.032</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Counselors</td>
<td>1.035</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.006***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>0.563</td>
<td>-6.33</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.433</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Plan</td>
<td>0.991</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Plan</td>
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<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
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<td>0.589</td>
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<td>0.083</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.484</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black×Sex</td>
<td>1.436</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.002**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific×Sex</td>
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<td>1.74</td>
<td>0.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natiñve×Sex</td>
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<td>0.002**</td>
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<td>FreeL×Hisp</td>
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<tr>
<td>LL Model of Fit</td>
<td>-12391.03</td>
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*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black/African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1,323</td>
<td>6,110</td>
<td>1,282</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>10,457</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,349</td>
<td>6,242</td>
<td>1,332</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>10,697</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,672</td>
<td>12,352</td>
<td>2,614</td>
<td>1,782</td>
<td>1,263</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>21,154</td>
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### Table 3: 11th Grade Participants by Sex and School Type (n = 18,459)

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>8,251</td>
<td>6,830</td>
<td>15,081</td>
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<td>Private/Religious School</td>
<td>1,774</td>
<td>1,604</td>
<td>3,378</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10,025</td>
<td>8,434</td>
<td>18,459</td>
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Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Variables in the Multivariate Model

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<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
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<th>Maximum</th>
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<td>25.277</td>
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<td>0.847</td>
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<td>2.396</td>
<td>0.812</td>
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<td>Racial Tension</td>
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<td>1.782</td>
<td>0.633</td>
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<td>21,154</td>
<td>0.314</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


Saunders, Jeanne; Davis, Larry; Williams, Trina; Williams, James Herbert (2004). Gender differences in self-perceptions and academic outcomes: A study of


