
COMPARATIVE RESIDENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL
STATUSES OF CERTAIN RURAL ADULTS WHO
WERE CHILDREN IN OKLAHOMA

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INTRODUCTION

This paper compares the residence and occupational statuses in 1943-44 of 2145 white adults who were children in selected rural families in southwestern and southeastern Oklahoma. The sample comprises open-country and village children and includes all who had become 18-years old and those under that age who had left home. The children were about equally divided between the two areas.

RESULTS OF STUDY

Nearly one-half of the children from the open country and three-fifths of those from villages now live in more populous communities. Higher proportions of children from villages than from the open country have come to reside in cities. These facts suggest the principle that the open country holds its native population to a greater degree than the village.

As between the two areas surveyed, relatively more children have migrated away from the open country in southwestern than in southeastern

Oklahoma, but with reference to village children the relationship is reversed.

The children whose parents lived in southwestern Oklahoma have achieved higher occupational statuses generally than those whose parents were in southeastern Oklahoma. Twenty-four percent of 373 children from southwestern Oklahoma who have a tenure status in agriculture have become farm owners as compared with 18.0 percent of 345 children of the same status in southeastern Oklahoma. Among 565 children from the former area reported in nonfarming occupations, 36.8 percent are now professional people, proprietors, salespersons, and clerical workers. Of 543 children from the latter area, only 24.9 percent now have these occupations. In explaining these relationships, it can be stated that the occupational statuses and amounts of schooling of the children's parents are higher in southwestern than southeastern Oklahoma. Also, the children themselves have had more schooling in the former than in the latter area.

Another important fact revealed by the data of this study is that children of village families have acquired higher occupational statuses generally than those of open-country families. This difference persists when adjustments are made for age. At least two factors account for this situation. First, village children have had more schooling than open-country children, and second, since differences in occupational composition between villages and cities are fewer than between the open country and cities, it is relatively easier for village than for open-country children to advance, especially in the nonfarming occupations.

Daughters have attained through marriage or employment higher occupational statuses than sons in both the open-country and village populations studied. This is true because, first, the daughters more frequently than the sons have tended to marry up occupationally; second, the daughters possess more schooling than the sons and have probably married men who are better educated than are the sons; and, third, since the daughters are known to have left their parental homes and married at earlier ages than the sons, it is possible that the earning lives of their husbands started at earlier ages than did those of the sons.
