

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis investigates how student identity of college students whose parents do not have university degree is constructed. Aim is to find out how they reflect their past and current experiences in order to understand the meanings they attribute to subjectively important decisions and breakthroughs in the context of university studies, and to capture processes that play a crucial role in constructing their identity focusing the influence of family support and interest. In the theoretical part, I introduced the concept of social class in psychology and the basic theories of social reproduction and mobility within education. Furthermore, the specifics of the Czech education system are characterized, with a particular focus on tertiary education, values gained by family and school, and first-generation university students. Last but not least, I deal with identity, its definition from the point of view of mainstream and social constructivist psychology and its formation in the period of emerging adulthood and during the transition to university.

In the empirical part, semi-structured interviews were utilized to collect data. The obtained data is processed qualitatively within interpretative framework using thematic analysis. The studied sample consists of six first-generation university students (between 18 and 30 years of age, balanced ratio of female and male participants) attending various universities, from the 1st to the 4th year of bachelor degree program. These students turned out not to have only one identity. Rather, they have multiple identities whilst their student identity competes with emerging working identity. Students in my research do not live full student and university life and they do not see themselves as the typical university students. They are afraid of failure and their aspirations within university choice are low. Parents care about their future and try to support them financially but leave them to be independent learners, information seekers and decision makers in term of their right educational path.

KEYWORDS

First-generation college students, tertiary education, social class, social mobility, student identity