

ABSTRACT

This master thesis investigates how student identity of college students whose parents do not have university degree is constructed and further developed. The aim is to find out what meanings, factors, resources, actors and identities enter and influence the process of building and developing their student identity. It focuses on turning points, which are accompanied by a change in their own identity and uncertainty in their own social and cultural world. The theoretical part of the work is focused on defining and describing the specific characteristics of college students with parents without a college degree, the problem of a deficit perspective on them and the specifics of first-generation students in more prestigious fields of study. The following sections deal with social and educational inequalities from a historical point of view in the Czech context and from the point of view of critical social psychology. The conclusion is devoted to identity, which is viewed from three theoretical perspectives, namely from the perspective of social identity theory, from the perspective of social constructivism, and from the sociocultural developmental perspective on identity changes.

In the empirical part, repeated semi-structured in-depth interviews and photo diaries were used to collect data. The obtained data are processed qualitatively in the interpretive tradition through reflexive thematic analysis. The examined sample consists of fifteen first-generation university students (in the age range of 20-28 years, in the ratio of 8 women to 7 men) full-time studying less and more prestigious fields (such as medicine and law) in the 2nd to 5th year of university studies. It turned out that their educational aspirations were high and related to their goal of achieving upward social mobility and a certain professional identity. They are characterized by an instrumental approach to secondary and higher education. Some of them take on the secondary role of a student on the educational periphery, and the formation of their student identity is influenced by many other identities. On the other hand, some managed to overcome their disadvantages and difficulties in their studies and create a student identity that instills in them a sense of competence and thanks to which they become more integrated university students.

KEYWORDS

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