MARGINALIZATION OF FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

By

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Abstract

Almost half of the students beginning postsecondary education in today's colleges and universities hold first-generation status (Choy, 2001). Despite first-generation students being more likely to hold underrepresented identities that often intersect across race and social class, the cultural experiences encountered by this student population as a whole have not been quantitatively explored. The current study surveyed 257 undergraduate college students across 30 different states to investigate feelings of marginalization according to Berry's acculturation model (1980) in first-generation college students (FGCS). The General Belongingness Scale (GBS; Langhout et al., 2007) was used to assess belongingness in regards to the family environment and the college environment. Independent t-tests and regression models were used to explore generation status differences and predictors of marginalization. FGCS reported significantly less belongingness with their family and college environments suggesting that they are in fact more likely to experience marginalization in the higher education setting than continuing-generation college students (CGCS). Despite these differences, results also suggest that generation status is not independently sufficient in predicting feelings of marginalization in college students. Across all college students, experiences with citational classism and having lower perceived access to resources were able to predict less belongingness with college friends and peers while lower parental household income was able to predict less belongingness with family and friends from home that did not go on to attend college. Generation status does seem to play a unique role in predicting family belongingness as it interacts with student experiences with citational classism (jokes and comments that belittle or mock those with lower social class identities). These findings come together to form the basis for understanding what predicts feelings of marginalization in higher education.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The definition of the typical college student has drastically shifted over the past century. (London, 1992). Our nation's universities were once made up of the rich, white sons of prestigious businessmen, professionals, and landowners. The few female students enrolled in postsecondary education were really only granted attendance in order to become teachers and were forced to forego their journey toward a degree if they chose to marry during the process. London describes how through the decades, the United States has changed in many ways. Through the urbanization and bureaucratic shifts of our society and the diversification of our population, many college students are now from working-class families and hold a wider range of racial and ethnic identities. In addition, female undergraduate students are now the majority as opposed to the minority.

Many of these students make up a unique population of students that are the first in their immediate families to seek out postsecondary education. These students, referred to as first-generation college students (FGCS), have specific pre-college characteristics that set them at a disadvantage for achievement and well-being before they are even enrolled at a higher education institution (Chen, 2005; Choy 2001; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Nunez, Cuccaro-Alamin & Carroll, 1998; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001).

Once these students step onto campus, they continue to have different experiences and characteristics than their continuing-generation peers. These students continue to be subjected to environmental, circumstantial, and behavioral disadvantages that negatively impact persistence and degree attainment (Choy, 2001; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Mehta, Newbold, & O'Rourke, 2011; Pascarella et al., 2004; Saenz & Barrera, 2007; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001).

While there is a growing body of literature devoted to understanding the college choices and decisions, academic achievement, and retention rates of this college student population, very little research has attempted to describe the psychosocial experiences of these students (Padgett, Johnson, & Pascarella, 2012).

Among the subjective experiences that are underrepresented in the literature are the cultural experiences of this unique student population. This is important because first-generation students are more likely to belong to various disadvantaged groups in our society (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001), but also because the academic environment of the higher education system is in many ways its own culture. When students are thrust into an environment that they and none of their family members have experienced before, an acculturation process takes place.

Acculturation is broadly defined as the psychological experience of two cultures coming together, usually a minority culture entering into a dominant culture. Berry (2006) theorizes that individuals have different acculturation orientations that are determined by the interplay between how an individual values or is able to form relationships with others in the new culture and how the individual values or is able to maintain the cultural identity and characteristics of their original culture. The acculturation orientation that seems to lead to the highest levels of stress is marginalization. Berry (1980) defines marginalization as individuals losing cultural and psychological connection with both their traditional culture and the larger society. First-generation students often have experiences similar to this description (London, 1992; Orbe; 2004) but no empirical research has been done to explore this idea. Researchers have not applied multicultural models or measured multicultural constructs within this population despite the parallels that have been theorized.

The present study will contribute to the literature that explores the subjective experiences of FGCS specifically through a cultural lens. The overall purpose of this study will be to quantitatively explore the nature and possible sources of marginalization experienced by FGCS. This study is an exploration of differences between FGCS and students with higher levels of parental education, often referred to as continuing generation college students (CGCS). Differences in feelings of marginalization and variables that may contribute to these experiences will be examined including type of postsecondary institution in attendance, membership to other underrepresented groups such as having racial and ethnic minority status or lower socioeconomic status, and experiences with various types of classism.

. First-generation students are more likely to enroll and persist in two-year institutions such as community colleges than in four-year institutions (Kojaku & Nunez, 1998). Thirty-six percent of community college students are first-generation students (American Association of Community Colleges, 2014) and these institutions accommodate the unique needs of first-generation students (enrollment flexibility, lower tuition and fees, and convenient locations). It makes sense that these students would be more likely to thrive in an environment that supports their needs in these ways. It is important also to see if there are differences in feelings of marginalization among FGCS that attend different types of institutions. First-generation students have different experiences of achievement depending on the type of institution they attend, so perhaps their psychosocial experiences differ as well. It is logical to explore the role of the type of institution when looking at feelings of marginalization experienced by FGCS.

As Engle and Tinto describe, first-generation students are "overrepresented by the most disadvantaged groups" in society (2008, p. 25). Many of the large studies on this student population gather information about these important student characteristics, but often only use it

to describe their sample or control for them in their data analysis (Padgett, Johnson, and Pascarella, 2012). Due to a fragmentation in the literature, it is difficult to clearly see how these characteristics (race, social class, and educational generation status) come together to create a student's experience. This study will intentionally explore how these variables come together to predict feelings of marginalization within the first-generation student population.

Of these demographic characteristics, lower socioeconomic class appears to be the most consistent societal barrier exhibited by FGCS. First-generation students often do not identity as such (Orbe, 2004) and the case is similar with individuals that experience classism. Even though most low socioeconomic status students report experiences that would qualify as experiences of classism, they often do not label it as so (Langhout, 2007). This is concerning considering the negative impact these experiences could potentially have on feelings of marginalization in the college environment. Because low socioeconomic status is the most consistent characteristic of this student population, it is important to explore factors related to it that might predict greater feelings of marginalization in first-generation students.

Statement of the Problem

The present study investigates the first-generation student population through the multicultural lens of an acculturation process, because marginalization is one acculturation orientation an individual can adopt. The main purpose will be to explore the feelings of marginalization for the first-generation student population. The study will also explore other variables that may contribute to or predict feelings of marginalization within this student population, including type of postsecondary institution, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and experiences with classism.

Research Questions

Question 1. Are there differences in feelings of marginalization between students with first-generation status and continuing-generation students?

Question 2. How does race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, type of institution in attendance, and experiences with classism relate to feelings of marginalization in first-generation college students?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

First-Generation College Students

As access to higher education has increased in the United States over the past several decades, students whose parents have no postsecondary education now have a substantial presence in higher education institutions across the country. Data from three nationally representative longitudinal studies shows that 47% of all students beginning postsecondary education are first-generation (Choy, 2001).

Pre-college Characteristics. It is important to understand that many students from families with no postsecondary education do not become college students at all. Using data from the National Center for Educational Statistics that followed a large group of 12th graders for eight years after high school, Chen (2005) found that 43% never even enrolled in college. This number is much higher than the 20% of students that did not enroll in higher education whose parent(s) had a bachelor's degree or higher. First-generation students are also significantly less likely to be encouraged to attend or supported in college decision-making by their families (Terenzini et al., 1996; Saenz & Barron, 2007).

The first-generation students that beat the odds and do enroll in postsecondary education display a specific set of characteristics even before they take their first step onto campus. First, they are more likely not to attend postsecondary education immediately following high school. They are more likely to be married and to be non-traditionally aged students, specifically over 23 years old (Chen, 2005; Choy 2001; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Terenzini et al., 1996). First-generation students are less academically prepared for college academics. They have lower college entrance exam scores, typically have a less rigorous course

history during their high school education than traditional college students, and are less likely to take college entrance and advanced placement exams (Choy, 2001; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001). It is possible, therefore, that they feel marginalized as a result of the differences in age and academic preparation between themselves and traditional students.

While the majority of first-generation students are white, racial and ethnic minority students, specifically Black and Latino students, are more likely to have first-generation status (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001). Between 1992 and 2000, 64% of students with first-generation status were white, while 84% of white students overall were from families with a parent(s) with a bachelor's degree or higher. The opposite effect was displayed for Black and Latino students. For example, 10.5% of first-generation students were Black while Black students only made up 5.3% of continuing-generation students. Racial and ethnic minority students are more likely to have first-generation status than their white peers. The impact of racial and ethnic minority status on marginalization is well established (Castillo, Cano, Chen, Blucker, & Olds, 2008).

Regardless of race and ethnicity, these students are typically from lower-income families (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Terenzini et al., 1996). In data collected from 1992 to 2000 across three nationwide studies, Choy (2001) found that family household income was less than $25,000 for 51% of high school graduates with parents that did not obtain more than a high school diploma. Only 8% of high school graduates came from this income level when one or more parent had a bachelor's degree or higher (Choy, 2001). Data from the U.S. Department of Education's 2004 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) examined low-income (family income below $25,000), first-generation students specifically. This data showed that

54% of low-income first-generation students are members of racial and ethnic minority groups (Engle & Tinto, 2008). This shows that while all first-generation students are more likely to be low-income, this is particularly true for first-generation students of color. Lastly, while female undergraduate students are the majority in higher education institutions, this trend remains true in the first-generation student population (Choy, 2001). All of these characteristics may interact to set the stage for marginalization as first-generation students are planning to attend college, but they also continue having unique characteristics and experiences once they enter postsecondary education.

  Postsecondary Characteristics. First-generation students are more likely to enroll in 2-year institutions and more likely to be enrolled part-time than their continuing-generation peers (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998, Terenzini et al., 1996). This student population continues to display specific disadvantages related to academic performance and degree attainment even after enrollment at four-year institutions. They work more hours each week outside of schoolwork and are more likely to live off campus, negatively impacting their academics and social integration (Pascarella et al., 2004; Saenz & Barrera, 2007). First-generation students exhibit lower grades their first semester and lower overall GPA at the end of their first year. Employment, living off-campus, and struggling academically may all contribute to marginalization of FGCS while in college.

  Not only do FGCS at four-year institutions have lower grades, but they are less likely to complete their degrees (Lohfink & Paulsen, 200; Mehta, Newbold, & O'Rourke, 2011; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001). The first year of higher education appears to be particularly difficult as these students are twice as likely to drop out of a four year institution following the first year than their continuing-generation peers (Choy, 2001).

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Subjective Experiences. As illustrated, FGCS literature tends to focus on persistence, achievement and degree attainment in the academic world. With all this discussion on the disadvantages this student population faces in the higher education system, there is a surprisingly limited collection of research that explores the actual experiences of these students. As recently as 2012, Padgett, Johnson, and Pascarella, leading researchers in the field of higher education, pointed out this gaping hole in the literature and found that first-generation students have significantly lower levels of well-being compared to continuing-generation students. Jenkins, Belanger, Connally, Boals, and Duron (2011) explored the mental health of this student population finding that first-generation students displayed more PTSD and depression symptoms along with lower life-satisfaction. The research shows us that these students are disadvantaged, struggling, yet less likely to disclose stressful college experiences to others (Barry, Hudley, Kelly, & Cho, 2009). Terenzini et al. (1996) included social experiences of students in a large, nationwide study on persistence in first-generation college students, and found that this population is less likely to receive encouragement from their peers to continue their enrollment and also experienced more discrimination than traditional college students. This finding regarding experiences with discrimination is an example of the need for research that examines this group of students from a cultural perspective, an essential aspect of subjective experiences that the literature seems to be missing.

Cultural Experiences. Looking at this student population through a cultural lens is essential to truly understanding the experience of this large, diverse group of students in the higher education system. This is especially important, because these students belong to many racial and ethnic minority groups and less affluent social classes making this a very heterogeneous group.

The earliest look at the cultural experiences of first-generation college students was London's (1989) small collection of case studies that conceptualized first-generation students and their family dynamics using psychoanalytic and systems approaches. These interviews were the first to illustrate the cultural nature of the shift these students experience when stepping out of their family of origin environment and into the unique environment of the higher education system. While limited, some researchers have also quantitatively looked at the experiences of these students through a cultural lens. Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, and Covarrubius (2012) developed what they call a cultural mismatch theory to explain some of the disadvantages of first generation college students. There is a "cultural mismatch" between the norms in the academic environment that focus on independence while the focus of most first-generation students, who often come from working class environments, focus on interdependence. Their work shows that this culture of independence that higher institutions exhibit undermines the academic performance of first-generation students, and that academic performance is significantly better when this cultural mismatch does not exist. While the findings are interesting, the focus of this work is still been on achievement outcomes rather than attempting to understand the cultural experiences of the students. It seems possible, however, that this cultural mismatch contributes to first-generation college students' feelings of marginalization.

Higher Education Induction as an Acculturation Process

Like the unique population of first-generation college students, the higher education system also has its own set of cultural characteristics. Stephens et al. (2012) describe how the college environment establishes a climate of independence for all involved. Bledstein (1976) dedicated an entire book to exploring ways in which the rise of the higher education system carried out the values and ideals of the new middle class, based on those of white, well-off men.

The university established and enforced the new societal values of professionalism, mobility, and merit that are common expectations of modern American society. The higher education system was not designed to be inclusive; it was designed for a small section of society. This environment was not designed for first-generation students that now make up a large segment of the higher education student population, considering how many of them are from racial and ethnic minorities and underrepresented social classes. Tierney (2000) argues that the lower academic success exhibited by FGCS is the result of cultural incompatibility with the institutional culture of the university setting. He insists this is not the fault of the student but instead an injustice by the nation's institutions that continue to fail to create an environment that is sensitive to the varied needs of its students. DeRosa and Nadine (2014) call for the higher education system to start accepting its role in the limited success of these students. Taking these viewpoints into account, it is apparent that when a first-generation student is thrust into this environment that they and none of their family members have experienced before, an acculturation process takes place.

   Acculturation. Acculturation has been a core construct explored in social science research since the early twentieth century. (Chun, Balls Organista, & Marin, 2003) and some argue the study of this construct to be one of cross-cultural psychology's most important contributions (Berry, 1997). While anthropologists and sociologists originally began exploring this construct on a macro-level by looking at the changes that occur to cultures as a whole that are involved in the process (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936), it was soon realized that adaptation and change were also occurring at the individual level. Researchers began to pay attention to how individuals engaged in new behaviors and new forms of relationships as acculturation took place (Graves, 1967). It was psychologist John Berry that began to develop a

model for researching the psychological perspective of acculturation (1974). It was important to Berry to explore the many ways individuals adapt, evolve, and cope with this process. This psychological context provided by Berry's model of acculturation is helpful for conceptualizing first-generation student experiences through a multicultural lens.

Individual experiences of the acculturation process can differ greatly depending on various environmental and individual factors. Berry (2003) theorizes that there are three different ways that individuals navigate acculturation, which he calls acculturation strategies. These include acculturation attitudes, behavioral shifts, and acculturative stress. Acculturation attitudes are how an individual wishes to acculturate and behavioral shifts are the activities or steps an individual engages in throughout the acculturation process. Acculturative stress is one of the most common features of acculturation. It is defined as a reduction in health (including mental health, medical conditions, and social issues) related to acculturation (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). Some researchers have discussed the idea that first-generation students experience a type of academic acculturative stress during their transition to college but it has never been explicitly studied (Jenkins et al., 2001; Miville & Constantine, 2006).

While acculturative stress is common among individuals experiencing acculturation, it is not inevitable. There are many factors that affect the amount of acculturative stress experienced by an individual (1998). Berry (1980) theorizes that an individual's acculturation orientation plays a part in an individual's susceptibility to acculturative stress. These orientations are determined by the interplay between how an individual values or is able to form relationships with others in the new culture and their value in or ability to maintain the cultural identity and characteristics of their original culture. Berry et al. (1987) theorizes there to be four distinct acculturation orientations: integration, assimilation, separation/segregation, and marginalization.

Integration occurs when individuals maintain their original cultural identity and become an integral part of a larger society, like a mosaic. Assimilation occurs when individuals relinquish (either by choice or force) their original cultural identities to make way for a single uniform culture. Separation occurs when individuals choose not to fully participate in the larger society while segregation is when the larger society keeps groups separate as a way to keep individuals "in their place." Lastly, marginalization occurs when individuals do not identify with their traditional culture or the larger society they've entered into.

In addition to these acculturation orientations held by the groups navigating these transitions, Berry's model also evolved to identify four specific strategies used by host cultures to influence a group's acculturation orientation (Berry, 2003). Multiculturalism is a strategy exhibited by a society that values and fosters diversity and often sets the stage for integration. A melting pot strategy seeks all members within the society to assimilate, segregation is a strategy used by a culture to force separation among groups, and exclusion provokes isolation and prompts marginalization.

Marginalization

Individuals who experience marginalization as their acculturation orientation experience the highest levels of acculturative stress (Berry, 1987). This is the case because all other acculturation orientations still promote the maintenance a cultural identity whether it is old or new. However, this is not the case for individuals experiencing marginalization. They are isolated from both their original culture and the new culture they have encountered. Individuals who have this orientation forced upon them experience even more acculturative stress. While the experience of marginalization has not been objectively examined in the first-generation student population, London (1989, 1992) describes student experiences that very much fit this

description. He was the first to capture the essence of marginalization in the experiences of these students in case studies and even went as far as stating that first-generation students exist "on the margin" of two cultures (1992, p. 7). Other researchers have also described first-generation student experiences using this type of language (Brooks-Terry, 1988; Orbe, 2003). Surprisingly though, this multicultural model has not explicitly been used to illustrate the experience of first-generation student status nor have these ideas been formally quantified.

Researchers have established that individuals who experience marginalization also experience high levels of acculturative stress. These issues include a wide range of medical concerns and mental health issues (Castillo et al., 2008). It is not surprising that these are some of the same findings found in the mental health outcome research for FGCS (Jenkins et. al, 2011). It is easy to see how marginalization is an important construct to explore in the experiences of first-generation students. Marginalization research and measures have only explicitly been used in reference to the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities. There is a small collection of researchers, however, that have explored feelings of belongingness with this population, mostly towards their academic institution. Feelings of marginalization could be described as the lack of belongingness to both the college environment and the student's family of origin. Measures of marginalization, however, have not been developed that clearly quantify this construct. Instead, belongingness measures may have promise for quantifying feelings of marginalization if administered in reference to both feelings about family of origin and the college environment.

Belongingness

Belongingness is feeling connected and as if one is a part of an environment or a community and has been thoroughly studied as its own construct. It is important for many

aspects of well-being and life-satisfaction (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Many social

psychologists agree that the need for belonging is one of the most important needs of all students

to function well in all types of learning environments (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Deci & Ryan,

1991; Finn, 1989; Osterman, 2000). The feeling of belonging may have a direct and powerful

influence on students' motivation (Goodenow, 1993). Belonging may be especially important

for academic motivation, engagement, and performance of adolescents coming from racial and

ethnic minorities and students from families with low socioeconomic status (Goodenow, 1992).

Existing research also suggests that students who feel that they belong to their academic

institutions report higher enjoyment, enthusiasm, happiness, interest, and more confidence in

engaging in learning activities, whereas those who feel isolated report greater anxiety, boredom,

frustration, and sadness (Furer & Skinner, 2003).

Undergraduate persistence researchers have also demonstrated the importance of sense of

belonging to students completing their degree (Morrow & Ackermann, 2012). Ostrove and Long

(2004) specifically explored the relationship between undergraduate student social class

membership and feelings of belongingness, which is the closest this construct has gotten to being

applied to FGCS. They found that sense of belonging mediated the relationship between social

class and adjustment to college. Belongingness is also linked to one of the most studied

constructs in the higher education literature, engagement.

Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) define engagement is a multidimensional

construct that includes behavioral, cognitive, and emotional components. Many other

researchers also identify belongingness as an indicator of emotional engagement (Appleton et al.,

2006). Finn (1989), the first to conceptualize emotional engagement, identified emotional

engagement as how a student identifies with the institution, which included feelings of belongingness and how much value the student places on achievement at the institution.

The literature shows how important engagement is for college success (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010). FGCS are in the most need of help to get engaged in the academic environment as a result of the many disadvantages they face. However, first-generation students have lower levels of engagement in high school and continue to be less engaged overall once they enter the higher education system (Terenzini et al., 1996). Levels of engagement and belongingness may differ based on the type of institution FGCS attend.

Type of Postsecondary Institution

Students experience higher education in a variety of ways in the United States. Along with the traditional four-year institutions are the community colleges of our nation. Admissions data tells us that FGCS are more likely to enroll and persist in two-year institutions (Kojaku & Nunez, 1998). First-generation students are more likely to leave a four-year institution after their first year, but these same odds don't seem to exist for the first year at institutions such as community colleges (Marti, 2008). We know that community colleges are lower cost options, which appeal to the large number of first-generation students coming from families with low socioeconomic status. The community college setting is very diverse. It is anticipated that by 2050, 50% of students enrolled in community colleges will be students of color (American Association of Community Colleges, 2014). This diversity also extends to age and income level. These are all student populations that are more likely to hold first-generation status. Perhaps there is more to the story about why first-generation students are attending and persisting in this environment though. First-generation students' have different experiences of achievement depending on the type of institution they attend, so perhaps their psychosocial experiences differ

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as well. It is logical to explore the role of the type of institution when looking at the marginalization of FGCS.

Intersectionality of Race/Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status

Attempting to illustrate the experiences of first-generation student is a complex undertaking considering the characteristics that make this student population unique and diverse. While the literature provides us with statistics and percentages to state the fact that most first-generation students are members of more than one underrepresented group, it provides little to no guidance in painting a picture of how these characteristics come together to orchestrate the psychosocial experiences of first-generation students in the academic environment.

When exploring marginalization of first-generation college students through feelings of belongingness, it cannot be ignored that many are students of color and/or have low-socioeconomic status. As Engle and Tinto describe, first-generation students are "overrepresented by the most disadvantaged groups" in society (2008, p. 25). One cannot study the subjective experiences of FGCS without also factoring in other characteristics that most likely have an additive or multiplicative effect to their experience with the construct. The fragmentation of the literature makes it difficult to clearly see how these characteristics (race, social class, and generation status) interact to shape a student's experience of college.

Researchers that do explicitly explore these characteristics as variables often recognize an ethnic minority or social class group is underrepresented in the literature and they then make it their quest to explore various constructs in relation to that specific minority group. While these findings are extremely important to the research community, these many narrow lines of research have left it difficult to draw broad conclusions about the interplay of race and social class on how various constructs relate to these students. It is important to integrate these findings to get a

broader picture of how race and ethnicity and socio-economic status work together to mold experiences and identity of first-generation students.

Lohfink and Paulsen's (2005) study is a rare but excellent example of how this approach to studying FGCS provides important insights. Their study determined that first-to-second year persistence is even more problematic for FGCS that are also either Latino, have lower family income levels, or are female. This is an example of how being in more than one underrepresented group may impact outcomes for this student population. It illustrates the importance of designing and carrying out research that takes intersectionality into account. Intersectionality is defined as "the complexity that arises when the subject of analysis expands to include multiple dimensions of social life and categories of analysis" (McCall, 2005, p. 1772). It's a concept that emerged from scholarly reflections on how the feminist movement mistakenly believed it could speak universally for all women and seems to be first identified by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989). Given the unique and complex characteristics of FGCS, research that seeks to understand this student population to also take intersectionality of their identities into account is critical.

Socioeconomic Status and Classism

According to the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, there are approximately 4.5 million low-income, first-generation college students enrolled in postsecondary education. This specific group of first-generation students makes up approximately 24% of the general higher education student population (Engle & Tinto, 2008). Coming from a low-income family is possibly the most consistent characteristic among FGCS and it is a barrier consistently experienced by first-generation students of all races and ethnicities. Low-income, first-generation students are at more risk for not obtaining their degree than just being low-income or having first-generation status alone.

Socioeconomic status (SES) is measured in many different ways. A meta-analysis of higher education literature related to social class showed that this data is usually measured in three ways: parental education (45.71%), parental income (25.71%), and any combination of parental education, income, occupation, household items, and so forth (37.14%; Rubin, 2012). While the majority of studies seem to use a single-variable measure of SES, there are benefits for combining multiple components to measure SES (Cowan et al., 2012). SES is typically understood as having multiple factors that include family income, parental education, and parent occupational status. Therefore, treating SES as only one of these is not capturing the true definition of the construct. Notice though that all of these are considered objective measures. It is subjective experience of SES, or subjective sense of social class that has been neglected in the literature of FGCS. This study will intentionally explore subjective experiences that may contribute to feelings of marginalization.

First-generation students often do not identity as such (Orbe, 2004) and the case is similar with individuals that experience discrimination, including classism. Even when students have experiences that would qualify as discrimination, they may not label them as such. It is particularly true of student's experiences with classism. In a study on undergraduate student experiences with classism, Langout (2007) found that over 80% of study participants endorsed an objective instance of classism, while only 6% labeled their experience as such. However, implications of these experiences with classism have not been explored often in the literature. This is a reflection of the class blindness and lack of a dialogue in reference to social class and classism in our nation. This is concerning considering the negative impact these experiences could potentially have on feelings of marginalization in the college environment. Langhout, Drake, Roselli (2009) seem to be the first to explore these outcomes. They found that even after

controlling for social class, experiences with classism are associated with lower levels of college belonging (supported by the results of the current study), negative psychosocial outcomes (decreased well-being, psychological distress, anxiety, depression, and difficulty in social adjustment), and intentions of leaving college. It is important, therefore that subjective experience of classism be included in this study on marginalization.

Distance from Privilege

The college student literature neglects the subjective experiences of the first-generation student population. This includes research that focuses on subjective barriers to persistence. Noble, Subotnik, and Arnold's (1999) developed a model to predict the persistence of women in STEM careers. While there are now more women acquiring postsecondary education, women continue to be underrepresented within these majors and career paths. This model explores how the context of an individual's life can have an impact on their success. More specifically, Noble and colleagues examined how an individual's relative distance from privilege (DFP), or how they feel they differ from the dominant culture across various domains, plays a role in their persistence potential.

Kerr et al. (2012) expanded this model using Hay's (2008) ADDRESSING model of identity, which takes into account identities across many domains including age, disability, religion, ethnicity, social status, sexual orientation, indigenous heritage, national origin, and gender. Kerr et al. also developed instruments to measure DFP across these domains. First-generation students, much like women seeking STEM majors in postsecondary education, are less likely to enroll and persist in postsecondary education. Therefore, this model could provide interesting insights into the subjective experiences of first-generation students.

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Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. First-generation college students will experience significantly greater feelings of marginalization, as measured by the General Belongingness Scale, than continuing-generation college students.

Hypothesis 2. The literature has not quantitatively explored feelings of marginalization in this student population, let alone attempted to explain factors that predict marginalization. It is hypothesized that while many of these factors may be correlated with each other, type of institution, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and experiences with classism will account for a large and unique portion of differences in feelings of marginalization in first-generation college students.

Chapter 3: Method

Participants

Characteristics. A total of 257 undergraduate students at four-year institutions and community colleges across the United States participated in this study. Thirty-two percent ($n = 81$) of the sample identified as first-generation college students (FGCS), indicating that neither of their parents had any type of education beyond the high-school level. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 47 ($M = 22.08$) with most participants being traditionally college-aged between 18 and 22 (82%). The majority of participants identified as female (female 80%; male 20%; other 1%) and heterosexual (heterosexual 88%; LGBTQ+ community 12%). The majority of participants also identified as White, Non-Hispanic (White, Non-Hispanic 58%; Black/African-American 25%; Hispanic/Latino 12%, Asian 5%, American Indian or Alaska Native .4%). The median parental household income was $35,000 to $49,999 with a range from less than $20,000 (25%) to $200,000 or more (3%).

Most participants attended four-year colleges or universities (92%) while some attended community colleges (9%). Participants attended higher education institutions from 30 different states across the United States with Missouri having the highest response rate (25%). The majority of participants were full-time students enrolled in 12 credit hours or more (94%) but were quite varied on their year in undergraduate education (first 19%; second 23%; third 29%; fourth 25%, fifth or more 4%) and their location of residence (on-campus 41%; off-campus with roommates or alone 40%; off-campus with family 20%).

Among the FGCS participants ($n = 81$), participants ranged from age 18 to 46 ($M = 23.7$) and were mostly traditionally college-aged (69%). Most of the participants were also female

(75%), heterosexual (86%), and identified as White (White, Not Hispanic 51%; Hispanic/Latino 25%; Black/African-American 16%; Asian 7%; American Indian or Alaska Native 1%). The parental household income for FGCS ranged from less than $20,000 (40%) to $150,000 to $199,999 (1%) with a median parental income of $20,000 to $34,999.

FGCS were mostly enrolled full-time (84%) but varied on their location of residence (on-campus 31%; off-campus with roommates or alone 41%; off-campus with family 28%). They also varied on their year in undergraduate education (first 17%; second 28%; third 21%; fourth 28%; fifth or more 5%).

Recruitment. Recruitment efforts targeted currently enrolled undergraduate students at universities and community colleges nationwide. Approximately 200 cold emails were sent out to faculty members, administrators, TRiO Student Support Services directors, and Multicultural Center directors at universities and community colleges across 35 states (see Appendix A). These emails requested these professionals to forward on participation information to students they serve (see Appendix B). Facebook ads with the survey link were also used to recruit participants. The Sona Systems participant pool system at the University of Kansas was another recruitment method used. This system assisted in the dissemination of participation information to students who are often enrolled in courses that require participation in research for course credit.

Procedures

Permission to conduct the current study was granted by the Institutional Review Board for the use of Human Subjects at the University of Kansas. Students completed the measures associated with the present study via Qualtrics, an online survey software tool. Participants were first presented with a screen containing the appropriate components of informed consent (see Appendix C). They were provided with information regarding the nature and broad purpose of

the study. The nature participant participation was described, which consisted of responding to a series of items via an online survey. It was made known to participants that their participation was voluntary and they could cease participation at any time. Once participants electronically consented to participate, the participant was guided through the measures. Upon completion of the measure items, participants were thanked for their participation and provided with contact information to follow-up with any questions or concerns.

Instruments

Generation Status. One survey item provided four options to choose from to determine student generation status (see Appendix D). While first-generation status is defined as neither parent of the student having a four-year degree, research has shown that even one parent having some postsecondary education can act as a protective factor against some of the cognitive and psychosocial disadvantages experienced by first-generation students (Padgett, Johnson, and Pascarella, 2012). For this reason, neither parent having any education beyond high school defined first-generation status in this study. Instructions read, "Select the following statement that best describes the level of education of your parents. Please only include information regarding parent(s) or guardian(s) that you have consistently spent time with and that have you have been consistently influenced by in your life." Response options included: both of my parents hold bachelors' degrees or higher, at least one of my parents holds a bachelor's degree or higher, at least one of my parents has some education after high school, or neither of my parents has more than a high-school diploma.

Race and Ethnicity. Participants were asked to select all that apply for their race/ethnicity to acquire an objective measure of this characteristic (see Appendix D). Options included White Non-Hispanic, Hispanic/Latino, Black or African-American, Asian, American

Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. An item taken from the Distance from Privilege (DFP) scale (Kerr et al., 2012) was used to measure subjective experience of participant race and ethnicity (see Appendix E). The item was in a "ladder" format that asks participants to place themselves on the rung that corresponds with how much race and ethnic privilege they believe themselves to have. The DFP scale has been found to be consistent over time as well as good internal reliability ($\alpha = .70$) and construct validity. Items were tested separately to examine item validity related to group differences in perceived privilege. Item responses corresponded with expected results based on previous research regarding social class and race.

Socioeconomic Status. Multiple variables were used to assess different aspects of SES. Parental household income was assessed using categories ranging from less than $20,000 up to $200,000 (See Appendix D). Another ladder item from the DFP scale (Kerr et al., 2012) was used to examine subjective experience of participant social class (see Appendix E). Participants were asked to select the rung on a ladder they felt corresponded with their level of social class privilege. Kerr et al.'s (2012) Access to Resources scale was also administered to assess participants' perceived financial and social capital (see Appendix F).

Feelings of Marginalization. Feelings of marginalization were assessed using a measure of belongingness. All measures that explore marginalization as an acculturation orientation focus on race and ethnicity or other ethnic cultural characteristics that would not necessarily translate to the academic environment or be salient for all FGCS. The General Belongingness Scale (GBS; Malone, Pillow, & Osman, 2012) was used to measure belongingness (see Appendix G). Because marginalization includes feelings of belongingness in reference to two different environments in a student's life, participants responded to the GBS twice, once in reference to

their family of origin and pre-college peer group and a second time in reference to their academic environment and college peer group. This measure was shown to have strong reliability ($\alpha = .94$) and convergent and predictive validity. Factor analyses confirmed the theoretical foundations in which this measure was developed (CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .059, SRMR = .040).

Scale instructions were adapted, and prompts were added before each GBS administration. Instructions for GBS administration in reference to the college environment read, "Please select the circle indicating how much you agree with the following statements in reference to your peers and friends you've met in the college/university setting." Instructions for the GBS administration in reference to the family environment stated, "Please select the circle indicating how much you agree with the following statements in reference to your family members and the friends you had before college who did not attend college."

Experiences with Classism. Participant experiences with classism were measured using Langhout Rosselli, and Feinstein's Classism Experiences Questionnaire – Academe (CEQ-A; 2007). This measure is 34 items and contains three subscales that assess different types of classism experiences. These three types of classism are institutionalized classism, citational classism, and interpersonal classism via discounting. Institutionalized classism is occurs due to organizational structures, policies and procedures of an institution. Citational classism occurs when jokes or stories are told that refer to negative stereotypes about individuals with lower socioeconomic status. Interpersonal classism via discounting includes behaviors that seem to be dismissive of an individual's social class or socioeconomic status. Langhout et al. (2007) used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to support their theoretical foundations. Absolute fit indices confirmed this three-factor model (CFI = .989; TFI = .994; RMSEA = .036; SRMS = .068).

Data Analysis

Feelings of Marginalization and Generation Status. Differences in feelings of marginalization between FGCS and CGCS were explored using independent sample t-tests. These analyses determined if there were significant differences in feelings of marginalization (measured by feelings of belongingness toward family and college environments) between students with varying generation statuses.

Predicting Feelings of Marginalization. Two multiple regression models were conducted using the univariate general linear model function to explore the unique variance that each of these variables account for in the prediction of feelings of marginalization (as measured by feelings of belongingness toward family and college) in college students. One model explored predictors for differences in family belongingness while the other model explored predictors for differences in college belongingness.

Each model included main effects for generation status (fixed factor), race (fixed factor), parental household income (fixed factor), distance from privilege: race (covariate), distance from privilege: social class (covariate), perceived access to resources (covariate), institutional classism (covariate), citational classism (covariate), and discounting classism (covariate). Interactions between generation status and all variables were included in the models to explore how differences in these variables depend on generation status. This allowed results to distinguish variables that predict family and college belongingness (main effects) in all students in the sample from variables whose predictive powers are dependent upon a student's generation status.

Due to multicollinearity, backward elimination, a stepwise regression procedure, was used to remove variables whose absence improved the model. Each time a variable with the highest p-value was removed, the model was refitted.

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Chapter 4: Results

Statistical Analyses

Independent t-tests were conducted to first determine if FGCS experienced significantly

weaker feelings of college and family belongingness (which combine to determine if FGCS

experience more marginalization). G*power, a statistical power analysis computer program,

indicated that a total sample of 140 participants (70 FGCS and 70 CGCS) was needed to detect

large effects (d=.8) with 90% power with alpha at .05 showing the actual total sample size of 257

participants was more than adequate. Two multiple regression models were then conducted using

the general linear model function to explore which variables were able to predict these

differences. One model examined independent variable relationships with college belongingness

and the other examined independent variable relationships with family belongingness. The

combined results of these two models provide insight into what predicts feelings of

marginalization in first-generation college students. A priori power analysis using G*power

indicated that a total sample of 75 participants was needed for both initial models to detect effect

sizes of .33 with 80% power with alpha at .05 showing that the actual total sample size of 257

participants was more than adequate.

Hypothesis 1: Differences in Marginalization

It was hypothesized that FGCS experience significantly stronger feelings of

marginalization, as measured by two administrations of the GBS, than CGCS. Independent t-test

confirms (Table 1) that FGCS reported significantly stronger feelings of belongingness with their

peers and friends they've met in the college setting (M =4.91, SD = 1.46) than continuing

generation students, (M = 5.55, SD = 1.26), $t(255)$ = 3.60, p = .000. Another independent t-test

(Table 1) confirms that FGCS also reported significantly weaker feelings of belongingness toward family members and friends from home that did not attend college, $t(139.62) = 1.99$, $p = .049$. These combined results suggest that FGCS do in fact experience more marginalization than CGCS.

Table 1

Independent t-test: Differences in feelings of marginalization

| | Generation Status | | | |
| | First-Generation | Continuing Generation | | |
	M (SD)	M (SD)	t	df
Family Belongingness	5.44 (1.45)	5.81 (1.29)	1.99*	139.62
College Belongingness	4.91 (1.46)	5.55 (1.26)	3.60**	255

*Note. * = p < .05, ** = p < .01.*

Post hoc power analyses were completed using G*Power. For the t-test exploring differences in college belongingness, post host analysis revealed that on the basis of the mean, between-groups comparison effect size (d = .47), and an alpha level of $p < .05$, the statistical power for this test was .91. Thus, showing a more than adequate amount of statistical power. For the t-test exploring differences in family belongingness, post host analysis revealed moderate statistical power on the basis of the mean, between-groups comparison effect size, (d = .247), and an alpha level of $p < .05$. The statistical power for this test was .64.

Hypothesis 2: Predicting Feelings of Marginalization Among FGCS

It was hypothesized that generation status, race and ethnicity, perceived distance from privilege (in regards to social class and race), socioeconomic status, and experiences with classism will account for large and unique portions of differences in feelings of marginalization in college students. Both models initially included main effects for generation status, parental

household income, perceived distance from social class privilege, race and ethnicity, perceived

distance from racial/ethnic privilege, and experiences with citational, discounting, and

institutional classism and interaction effects for generation status across all independent variables

in the model (See Tables 2.1 and 2.2). Type of institution was not included as a predictor in the

models due to low variability in the sample.

Table 2.1

Univariate General Linear Model, Initial: College belongingness

	Tests of Between-Subjects Effects							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	97.862[a]	19	5.151	3.280	.000**	.208	62.328	1.000
Intercept	111.965	1	111.965	71.310	.000	.231	71.310	1.000
Race	.674	1	.674	.429	.513	.002	.429	.100
Generation Status	.122	1	.122	.077	.781	.000	.077	.059
Income	.058	2	.029	.019	.982	.000	.037	.053
Access to Resources	8.224	1	8.224	5.238	.023*	.022	5.238	.625
DFP: Class	1.631	1	1.631	1.039	.309	.004	1.039	.174
DFP: Race	.682	1	.682	.434	.511	.002	.434	.101
Institutional Classism	.033	1	.033	.021	.885	.000	.021	.052
Citational Classism	16.565	1	16.565	10.550	.001**	.043	10.550	.899
Discounting Classism	.795	1	.795	.506	.477	.002	.506	.109
Race * Gen Stat	2.185	1	2.185	1.391	.239	.006	1.391	.217
Gen Stat * Income	6.877	2	3.439	2.190	.114	.018	4.380	.445
Gen Stat * AtR	.169	1	.169	.107	.744	.000	.107	.062
GenStat * DFP: Class	1.939	1	1.939	1.235	.268	.005	1.235	.198
GenStat * DFP: Race	1.270	1	1.270	.809	.369	.003	.809	.146
GenStat * Inst Classism	.005	1	.005	.003	.954	.000	.003	.050
GenStat * Cit Classism	.547	1	.547	.348	.556	.001	.348	.090
GenStat * Disc Classism	.503	1	.503	.320	.572	.001	.320	.087
Error	372.117	237	1.570					
Total	7816.676	257						
Corrected Total	469.979	256						

a. R Squared = .208 (Adjusted R Squared = .145)
b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 2.2

Univariate General Linear Model, Initial: Family belongingness

	Tests of Between-Subjects Effects							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	76.672[a]	19	4.035	2.457	.001**	.165	46.676	.996
Intercept	187.109	1	187.109	113.909	.000	.325	113.909	1.000
Race	.228	1	.228	.139	.710	.001	.139	.066
Generation Status	.878	1	.878	.534	.465	.002	.534	.113
Income	10.867	2	5.434	3.308	.038*	.027	6.616	.623
Access to Resources	.253	1	.253	.154	.695	.001	.154	.068
DFP: Class	.151	1	.151	.092	.762	.000	.092	.060
DFP: Race	.000	1	.000	.000	.990	.000	.000	.050
Institutional Classism	3.254	1	3.254	1.981	.161	.008	1.981	.289
Citational Classism	4.964	1	4.964	3.022	.083	.013	3.022	.410
Discounting Classism	.377	1	.377	.229	.632	.001	.229	.076
Race * Gen Stat	.071	1	.071	.044	.835	.000	.044	.055
Gen Stat * Income	4.152	2	2.076	1.264	.284	.011	2.528	.273
Gen Stat * AtR	1.337	1	1.337	.814	.368	.003	.814	.146
Gen Stat * DFP: Class	.020	1	.020	.012	.913	.000	.012	.051
Gen Stat * DFP: Race	.000	1	.000	.000	.990	.000	.000	.050
Gen Stat * Inst Classism	.033	1	.033	.020	.888	.000	.020	.052
Gen Stat * Cit Classism	11.021	1	11.021	6.709	.010*	.028	6.709	.732
Gen Stat * Disc Classism	3.608	1	3.608	2.197	.140	.009	2.197	.315
Error	389.301	237	1.643					
Total	8802.37	257						
Corrected Total	465.973	256						

a. R Squared = .165 (Adjusted R Squared = .098)
b. Computed using alpha = .05

Both models were reduced to contain only independent variables that make a significant, unique contribution to predicting belongingness in each model. To arrive at the final regression models, effects with the highest p value were identified and removed one at a time. The variable was entirely removed from the model if neither its main effect or interaction effect with generation status were significant. The order of the removal of variables for both models can be examined in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, and the final models are displayed in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

Table 3.1

College belongingness: Order of variable removal and corresponding p-values for reduced model

	Main Effect p	Generation Status Interaction Effect p
Institutional Classism	.89	.95
Discounting Classism	.44	.52
Parental Household Income	1.09	.13
Distance from Privilege: Race	.52	.34
Race and Ethnicity	.52	.41
Distance from Privilege: Social Class	.82	.28

Table 3.2

Family belongingness: Order of variable removal and corresponding p-values for reduced model

	Main Effect *p*	Generation Status Interaction Effect *p*
Distance from Privilege: Race	.99	.99
Access to Resources	.76	.91
Institutional Classism	.16	.91
Race and Ethnicity	.32	.80
Distance from Privilege: Social Class	.80	.28

Table 4.1

Univariate General Linear Model, Final: College belongingness

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects								
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent Param.	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	83.345[a]	5	16.669	10.821	.000**	.177	54.107	1.000
Intercept	252.057	1	252.057	163.634	.000	.395	163.634	1.000
Generation Status	.021	1	.021	.013	.908	.000	.013	.052
Access to Resources	15.762	1	15.762	10.233	.002**	.039	10.233	.890
Citational Classism	25.531	1	25.531	16.575	.000**	.062	16.575	.982
Gen Stat * AtR	.124	1	.124	.081	.777	.000	.081	.059
Gen Stat * Cit Class	.901	1	.901	.585	.445	.002	.585	.119
Error	386.634	251	1.540					
Total	7816.68	257						
Corrected Total	469.979	256						

*Note. * = p < .05, ** = p < .01.*

a. R Squared = .177 (Adjusted R Squared = .161)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 4.2

Univariate General Linear Model, Final: Family belongingness

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	67.959[a]	9	7.551	4.686	.000**	.146	42.174	.999
Intercept	1191.228	1	1191.23	739.26	.000	.750	739.26	1.000
Generation Status	.592	1	.592	.368	.545	.001	.368	.093
Income	15.528	2	7.764	4.818	.009**	.038	9.637	.795
Citational Classism	4.990	1	4.990	3.097	.080	.012	3.097	.418
Discounting Classism	3.729	1	3.729	2.314	.129	.009	2.314	.329
Gen Stat * Income	5.273	2	2.636	1.636	.197	.013	3.272	.344
Gen Stat * CitClass_M	9.989	1	9.989	6.199	.013*	.024	6.199	.699
GenStat2 * DiscClass_M	6.104	1	6.104	3.788	.053	.015	3.788	.492
Error	398.014	247	1.611					
Total	8802.373	257						
Corrected Total	465.973	256						

*Note. * = p < .05, ** = p < .01.*
a. R Squared = .146 (Adjusted R Squared = .115)
b. Computed using alpha = .05

Predictor descriptives. Descriptive statistics for predictor variables are displayed in

Tables 6.1 and 6.2.

Table 6.1

Frequencies for categorical variables

	Frequency			Percent			Cumulative Percent		
	FG	CG	T	FG	CG	T	FG	CG	T
Parental Household Income									
Less than $20,000 to $34,999	45	54	99	56	31	39	55	31	39
$35,000 to $74,999	27	48	75	33	27	29	89	58	68
$75,000 and more	9	74	83	11	42	32	100	100	100
Race									
White	41	108	149	51	61	58	51	61	58
Student of Color	40	68	108	50	39	42	100	100	100
Generation Status	81	176	257	31.5	68.5	100	100	100	100

Table 6.2

Descriptives for continuous predictor variables

Generation Status		Access to Resources	DFP: Social Class	DFP: Race	Institutional Classism	Citational Classism	Discounting Classism
Continuing	Mean	2.8100	4.70	3.66	1.9214	1.5884	2.3448
	Std. Dev	.77018	2.113	2.607	.87722	.79135	.87942
	Std. Error	.05805	.159	.197	.06612	.05965	.06629
First-	Mean	2.2778	6.35	4.72	2.2882	1.8355	2.5740
Generation	Std. Dev	.68590	2.276	2.803	.98485	.99674	1.08373
	Std. Error	.07621	.253	.311	.10943	.11075	.12041
Total	Mean	2.6423	5.22	3.99	2.0370	1.6663	2.4170
	Std. Dev	.78351	2.293	2.710	.92645	.86705	.95241
	Std. Error	.04887	.143	.169	.05779	.05409	.05941

Correlations. All correlations between continuous variables are displayed in Table 7.

Top portion of the correlation matrix displays variable relationships within the FGCS sample

with the bottom portion of the matrix showing variable relationships across all students.

Table 7

Correlation matrix

	Family GBS	College GBS	Income	AtR	DFP: Class	DFP: Race	Inst Class	Cit Class	Disc Class
Family GBS	1	.245*	.186	.090	-.105	-.068	-.205	-.343**	-.182
College GBS	.275**	1	.039	.259*	-.305**	-.223*	-.170	-.361**	-.227*
Income	.219**	.247**	1	.325**	-.355**	-.306**	-.196	-.169	-.071
AtR	.180**	.328**	.552**	1	-.453**	-.283*	-.445**	-.291**	-.417**
DFP: Class	-.202**	-.281**	-.475**	-.595**	1	.535**	.306**	.326**	.332**
DFP: Race	-.092	-.166**	-.281**	-.295**	.503**	1	.302**	.318**	.223*
Inst Class	-.257**	-.218**	-.319**	-.401**	.360**	.228**	1	.397**	.699**
Cit Class	-.215**	-.307**	-.153*	-.234**	.206**	.145*	.427**	1	.657**
Disc Class	-.236**	-.219**	-.163**	-.334**	.278**	.193**	.642**	.625**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Generation status. Despite significant differences in family and college belongingness between FGCS and CGSC, main effects in both models for generation status suggest that generation status alone is not able to predict feelings of marginalization in college students. The results from the college belongingness model (Table 3.1) do not indicate a significant main effect for generation status $F(1, 251) = .01$, $p = .91$). The results for the family belongingness model (Table 3.2) also do not indicate a significant main effect for generation status $F(1, 247) = .37$, $p = .54$). The combined main effect results from these models suggest that generation status alone is not able to predict feelings of marginalization in college students.

Predicting college belongingness. The univariate general linear model function was used to conduct a regression analysis to investigate the contributions of perceived access to resources, perceived distance from privilege (social class and race), and experiences with institutional, citational, and discounting classism to feelings of belongingness scores in reference to college friends and peers. The model's main effects determine each variable's ability to

predict college belongingness in the college student sample as a whole, while the interaction effects included in the model determine a variable's ability to predict college belongingness depends on generation status. The final model (Table 3.1) included main effects for generation status, perceived access to resources along with the interaction between generation status and access and the interaction between generation status and experiences with citational classism.

The model was statistically significant (Adjusted R^2 = .16, F [5, 251] = 10.82, p < .01) with observed power of 1, which is more than adequate. The model results indicate main effects for perceived access to resources, F [5, 251] = 10.23, p < .01, η^2 = .04, and citational classism, F [5, 251] = 16.58, p < .01, η^2 = .06. These variables were able to predict college belongingness regardless of generation status. No significant interaction effects in the model were significant indicating that differences in the variables did not depend on generation status.

Predicting family belongingness. The univariate general linear model function was also used to conduct a regression analysis to investigate the contributions of the study's independent variables to FGCS feelings of belongingness scores in reference to family members and friends from home that did not go to college. The model's main effects determine each variable's ability to predict family belongingness in the college student sample as a whole, while the interaction effects included in the model determine a variable's ability to predict college belongingness when accounting for generation status. The final model (Table 3.2) included main effects for generation status, parental household income, citational classism, and discounting classism along with the interaction effects between these three variables and generation status.

The model was statistically significant (Adjusted R^2 = .12, F [9, 247] = 4.69, p < .01) with observed power of 1, which is more than adequate. There was a significant main effect for

parental household income, $F[2, 247] = 4.82$, p < .01, $\eta^2 = .04$. Results indicate that parental

household income predicts family belongingness regardless of generation status. The interaction

effect between generation status and citational classism was also significant, $F[5, 251] = 10.23$,

p < .01, $\eta^2 = .02$. This indicates that differences in family belongingness predicted by

experiences with citational classism depend on generation status and is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1
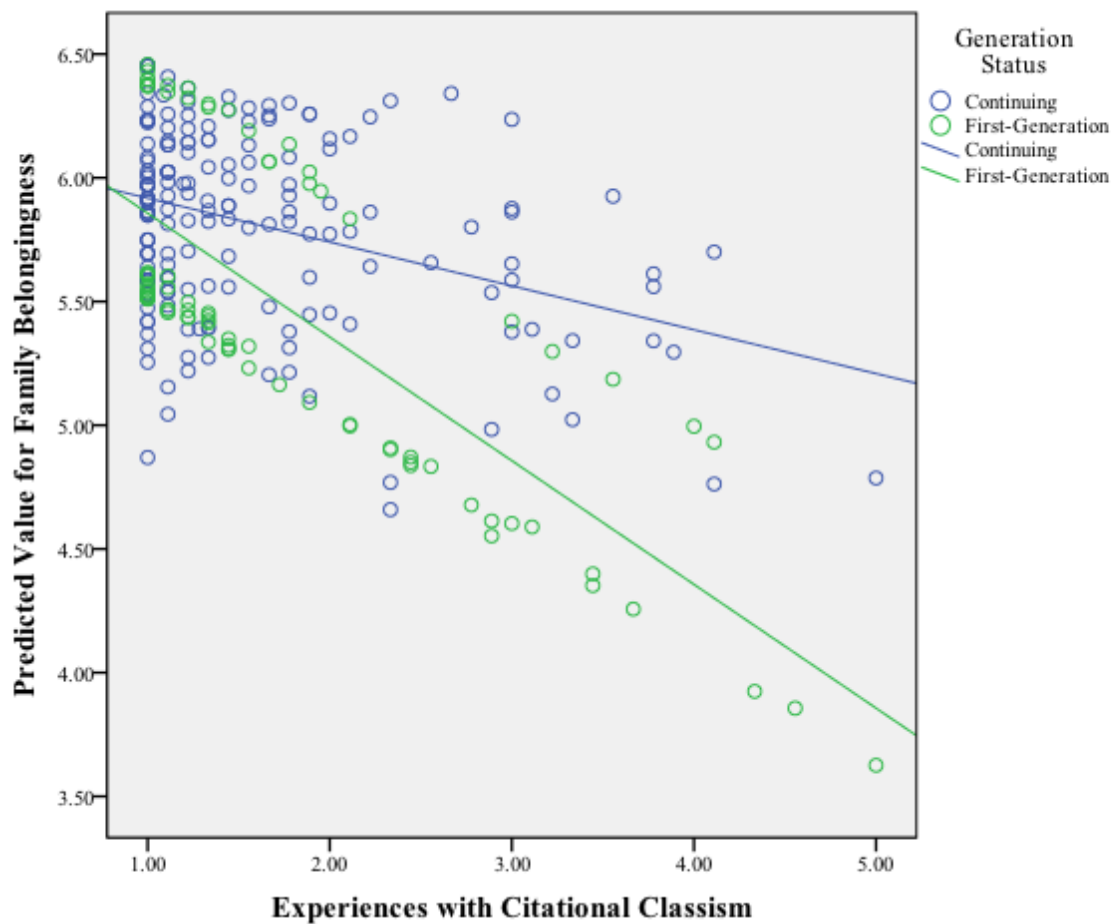
Chapter 5: Discussion

Summary of Results

Almost half of the students beginning postsecondary education in today's colleges and universities hold first-generation status (Choy, 2001). Despite first-generation students being more likely to hold underrepresented identities that often intersect across race and social class, the cultural experiences encountered by this student population as a whole have not been quantitatively explored. The current study surveyed 257 undergraduate college students across 30 different states to investigate feelings of marginalization according to Berry's acculturation model (1980) in first-generation college students (FGCS). The General Belongingness Scale (GBS; Langhout et al., 2007) was used to assess belongingness in regards to the family environment and the college environment. Independent t-tests and regression models were used to explore generation status differences and predictors of marginalization. FGCS reported significantly less belongingness with their family and college environments suggesting that they are in fact more likely to experience marginalization in the higher education setting than continuing-generation college students (CGCS). Despite these differences, results also suggest that generation status is not independently sufficient in predicting feelings of marginalization in college students. Across all college students, experiences with citational classism and having lower perceived access to resources were able to predict less belongingness with college friends and peers while lower parental household income was able to predict less belongingness with family and friends from home that did not go on to attend college. Generation status does seem to play a unique role in predicting family belongingness as it interacts with student experiences with citational classism (jokes and comments that belittle or mock those with lower social class

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identities). These findings come together to form the basis for understanding what predicts feelings of marginalization in higher education.

Sample representation

The literature has thoroughly explored characteristics of the FGCS population in the United States (Choy, 2001; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Pascarella et al., 2004; Saenz & Barrera, 2007; Terenzini et al., 1996; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001). Many of these characteristics were assessed in the current study's sample by gathering demographic information and show this study's FGCS sample to be representative of the population. The majority of the FGCS in the study's sample were white (51%, 61% for CGCS), female (77%, 81% for CGCS), from low-income households (56% had a parental household income less than $20,000, 30% for CGCS), and living off-campus (69%, 45% for CGCS). FGCS in the current study were also less often traditionally college aged (69%, 88% for CGCS), less often enrolled full-time (91%, 96% for CGCS), and more often attending two-year institutions (16%, 5% for CGCS).

Discussion of Results

Few studies before have explored the internal experiences of FGCS (Padgett, Johnson, and Pascarella, 2012). More specifically, the complicated cultural experiences of first-generation college students have not been thoroughly explored in the literature despite many writings on the sociological history of the university setting (Stephens et al., 2012; Bledstein, 1976). Universities were not born with intention of inclusivity and instead were designed to extend the values and customs of the upper class to a new, idealistic middle class. Tierney (2000) argues that the lower academic success exhibited by FGCS is the result of incompatibility with the institutional culture of the university setting. When the immersion of first-generation college students into the higher

education setting is framed this way, it is logical to understand why some researchers have discussed the idea that first-generation students experience a type of academic acculturative stress during their transition (Jenkins et al., 2001; Miville & Constantine, 2006). Surprisingly, the acculturation process for first-generation college students has not been formally explored until the present study.

Individual experiences of the acculturation process can differ greatly depending on various environmental and individual factors. Berry (1980) theorizes that an individual's acculturation orientation plays a part in an individual's susceptibility to acculturative stress. One of these orientations, marginalization, occurs when individuals lack cultural and psychological connection with both their traditional culture and their host culture. Marginalization is associated with the highest levels of acculturative stress (Berry, 1987). While the experience of marginalization has not been objectively examined in the first-generation student population before this study, London (1989, 1992) describes student experiences that very much fit this description in a series of case studies. Students in his interviews describe having to renegotiate relationships with family members who are not able to identify with their college experiences while also never feeling fully accepted on their college campuses. Through this lens, the academic environment serves as the host culture while the family environment serves as the traditional culture. Students begin this acculturation process once they are immersed into the higher education setting.

Feelings of marginalization have been associated with high acculturative stress and a wide range of medical concerns and mental health issues in students of color (Castillo et al., 2008). It is not surprising that these are some of the same findings found in the mental health outcome research for first-generation students (Jenkins et. al, 2011; Ward & Kennedy, 1994;

Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). It is important to examine the first-generation student population

through a multicultural lens in order to better understand their experiences but also to better

serve them and begin the process of moving toward a more inclusive model of higher education.

This study was the first to attempt to quantitatively explore feelings of marginalization in first-

generation college students as a whole, which is an important step toward these goals.

Marginalization

The results suggest that first-generation college students do experience more feelings of

marginalization than continuing generation students, which support London's (1992) case study

accounts of first-generation college students transitioning into the culture of higher education. He

describes accounts of first-generation college students who experience strain on relationships

with family and friends while also struggling to fit into an academic environment that wasn't

created for them. Common themes associated with this wedge between first-generation college

students and their families include subtle accusations of disloyalty, development of conflicting

ideologies and interests, and the threatening nature of upward social mobility. London insists that

these students "live on the margin of two cultures," and he documents personal accounts like that

of this first-generation college student (London, 1992, p.6).

> It's really hard for me at home. It's like living in both worlds. I come here and
>
> I'm one person, and I go home and I'm the other person that they knew, but not
>
> really. I think everybody is kind of wary and leery of me— my younger brothers,
>
> my sisters, my father and mother, old boyfriends, more people I still socialize
>
> with when I go home. It's no the same, because, well, I'm not the same… It
>
> makes it real hard. The other day I put some classical music on the radio *on*
>
> *purpose*. I like it, and I put it on in my room once in a while, but this time I was in

the living room. *I wanted to see what would happen.* First thing I get is someone says, "Shit, oh Jesus, you're going to go to poetry readings next, ooooh!" We won't be able to talk to you anymore." My sister, she really went nuts. There were a couple of friends there, too, having fits. They were looking at me, like, "What's the matter with this kid?" (p. 8).

Other students report how changes in their clothing, food, and ideologies present to their families as signs of loss and separation with defensiveness that stems from beliefs they are being left behind as first-generation college students navigate changes in their self-presentations. These accounts also reflect the prejudice experienced, acculturative stress, and energy it takes to learn a new set of social rules in the college environment. This study is the first to quantitatively examine these complex experiences for first-generation college students.

The findings of this study support speculation by Stephens et al. (2012) that there may be a culture mismatch for first-generation college students in the higher education environment. If the experiences of first-generation college students are able to fit Berry's acculturation model (specifically the acculturation orientation of marginalization), then is logical to believe the transition to college is likely a multicultural experience for first-generation college students. Lastly, these results show that FGCS are potentially at risk to experience acculturative stress, given the research showing marginalization to be the acculturation orientation leading to the highest levels of acculturative stress (Berry, 1987; Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999).

Predicting marginalization. While the results do suggest that first-generation college students experience stronger feelings of marginalization than continuing generation students, the

results of this study tell us that it often isn't generation status that is independently predicting

feelings of marginalization. Results suggest lower parental household income predicts less

family belongingness regardless of a student's generation status. These results provide an

interesting perspective on the research that suggests first-generation college students family

relationships can experience unique types of strain when they attend college. London's (1989)

case studies suggest this decrease in belongingness is sometimes due to what he calls,

"breakaway guilt" (p.153). He theorizes that first-generation college students at some level feel

as if they've done something wrong by leaving their home culture to attend college. Somers,

Woodhouse, and Cofer (2004) describe this decrease in belongingness with family and friends

from home as "survivor guilt" (p. 431), which refers to the guilt first-generation college students

experience for the opportunities and chance for upward social mobility provided by college that

may not have been possible for their friends and other family members. This study suggests that

rather than generation status alone predicting this decrease in family belongingness, a part of it

can actually be attributed to lower parental household incomes. While this effect occurs across

all college students, it's still a particularly important finding for the first-generation college

student population considering they are more likely to be low-income than continuing-generation

college students. However, this also suggests that continuing-generation college students from

low-income families might also be at risk for stronger feelings of marginalization.

Perceived access to fewer resources and more experiences with citational classism are

able to predict less belongingness with college friends and peers. A growing stance in social

class research suggests that traditional measures of social class (i.e. income) may not be

capturing the full impact of social class on individual psychological experience (Fouad, 2000;

Kerr et al., 2012). The current study supports this idea. While lower family income was not a

predictor of less college belongingness, subjective experiences like perceiving less access to resources and having more experiences with citational classism were able to predict less college belongingness. Similar to family belongingness, generation status alone was not able to predict differences in college belongingness. This further suggests that the complicated intersectionality of identities and experiences of the first-generation college student population predict feelings of marginalization. While these predictors hold true regardless of generation status, it is important to keep in mind that students with these characteristics are more likely to also hold first-generation college student status. These results add to the increased awareness of the strong impact of economic inequity, which is echoed in the current political climate and growing social movements across the United States.

Results suggest there is a common denominator that appears to have predictive power for both family and college belongingness, thus being able to predict feelings of marginalization from both sides of the cultural divide. The more experiences with citational classism that students experienced, the less they felt belongingness with their college peers and friends regardless of generation status. Generation status does seem to play a unique role in predicting family belongingness as it interacts with student experiences with citational classism. The ability of experiences with citational classism to predict lower belongingness with family depends on a student's generation status implying that these experiences have more power to influence belongingness (and contribute to feelings of marginalization) if the student experiencing them is a first-generation college student.

Citational classism occurs when jokes or stories are told that refer to negative stereotypes about individuals with lower socioeconomic status. Examples of citation classism run rampant in American mainstream media including news interviews with poor Americans going viral and

then auto-tuned and synthesized into catchy songs or reality TV shows designed to entertain the masses by exploiting and mocking the working poor such as Honey Boo-Boo or MTV's Teen Mom. As modern American mass media continues down this road, it turns its back on the historical precedent set by writers and humorists of the late18[th] century like Peter Finley Dunne. While most known for his Mr. Dooley sketches that used satire to reflect on political and social issues of his time, he seems to be most remembered for setting a precedent for the use of satire in mass media (Fanning, 2014). He's quoted as making the important distinction that the job of the newspaper, which was the main source for delivering satire to the public during that time, was to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." Today, this precedent is often anecdotally referred to as "punching up" rather than "punching down" among comedy circles. When the media partakes in the exploitation of the poor and mocks generational poverty, it is most certainly not comforting the afflicted as Dunne urges. With modern mass media modeling this type of humor that "punches down," it's not surprising that citational classism is present on campuses across the country. One example occurs as students line up each year for some fraternity's annual "white trash party." Citational classism also occurs on a more micro-level on college campuses. Examples include students in the union making remarks about Wal-mart clothes or students in residence halls labeling their outdated accommodations as "ghetto."

Surprisingly, little research exists on outcomes associated with student experiences with classism. Langhout, Drake, Roselli (2009) seem to be the first to explore these outcomes. They found that even after controlling for social class, experiences with classism are associated with lower levels of college belonging (supported by the results of the current study), negative psychosocial outcomes (decreased well-being, psychological distress, anxiety, depression, and difficulty in social adjustment), and intentions of leaving college. The current study results

support these findings that experiences with classism have more power than realized to predict various outcomes in college students. Results of the present study also illustrate the unique power of citational classism to relate consistently to feelings of marginalization in college students, particularly first-generation college students. These findings illustrate the power that jokes and mindless comments have to negatively impact the well-being of others.

Limitations

As with any research study, the current study is not without limitations. While demographic information shows the sample to be somewhat representative of the unique characteristic of FGCS, a convenience sample was used which can make it difficult to generalize or replicate the study's results. Another limitation of the study is that students were heavily recruited via campus agencies that work closely with FGCS including TRiO programs and multicultural centers. This means that many participants were already connected with resources on campus that could serve as a protective factor. The study was also limited by not recruiting enough community college students for type of institution to serve as independent variables in the models. Lastly, the t-test exploring differences in family belongingness had only a moderate level of statistical power meaning the chances were higher of making a Type II error when interpreting the results of this particular statistical test.

Implications

These findings have many implications for those who are serving the first-generation college students by dedicating their careers to teaching, supporting, and counseling these students in the higher education setting. While work being done that focuses on academic performance, retention rates, and engagement are important for the first-generation student population, there is a layer of multicultural experiences also at play that deserves attention.

Issues associated with acculturative stress include a wide range of medical concerns and mental health issues (Castillo et al., 2008), some of which overlap with the findings found in the mental health outcome research for FGCS (Jenkins et. al, 2011).

It is important for higher education professionals and counseling center psychologists to have a better understanding of these complex experiences for first-generation college students, including what predicts first-generation college students to feel this way. Considering the univariate relationships between generation status and belongingness, it is clear that first-generation college students are experiencing significantly more feelings of marginalization. However, the results also paint a more complex picture suggesting that first-generation college students are at risk when they hold certain identities and have certain experiences associated with less belongingness in the college and family settings rather than generation status independently accounting for these differences.

These findings suggest the importance of preventing citational classism across all agencies and courses on college campuses, considering the negative outcomes that appear to be associated with these experiences. Greek leaders and residential life staff can use these findings to see the importance of creating cultures void of citational classism to make their organizations and spaces more inclusive and supportive of all students. Counseling psychologists in university counseling centers can also use these results to realize the importance of processing and providing support to students, particularly first-generation college students, who have experienced citational classism or have other characteristics linked to stronger feelings of marginalization. Most importantly, the results stress the importance of university counseling centers to provide space for low-income and first-generation college students to process their experiences, family relationships, and adjustment to the academic culture. Operating from a

social justice framework would help counseling psychologists foster self-advocacy skills and a sense of empowerment within students experiencing marginalization. Counseling centers might also be a resource for helping students learn to identify instances of citational classism as the literature suggests students often do not identify classist events as instances of classism (Langhout et al., 2007). While it's important to use this research to fuel awareness and decrease instances of classism on college campuses, it's also important to acknowledge that the lack of research on this topic makes it difficult to understand why experiences with classism (particularly citational classism) have the power that they seem to have in predicting more feelings of marginalization.

Predictors of these two types of belongingness come together to provide pieces to the complex puzzle of feelings of marginalization in this student population. Labeling students as first-generation seems to not be as important as identifying the identities a student has that are associated with first-generation students (income, race, etc.). Exploring the intersectionality of a variety of identities and experiences with generation status among this student population allowed the study to show where these differences originate.

Future Directions

The current study opens up a multitude of future directions for research. Studies need to be done at more diverse institutions in order to acquire a more culturally diverse sample including larger numbers for various racial and ethnic groups and individuals from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. Future research could also expand to explore other experiences of oppression other than classism (i.e. racism, homophobia, ableism, etc.). Further exploration of what predicts reduced feelings of family belongingness could also be important for understanding what predicts this distance between first-generation college students and their

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families (i.e. differing ideologies, acquisition of critical thinking skills that come with educational privilege, a family's level of tolerance and acceptance, or how strongly a student's values align with their family).

Future directions for research also include a critical analysis of the ways higher education institutions themselves could be marginalizing its low-income and first-generation college students. As previously discussed, universities were not built with the intention of inclusivity and instead were designed to extend the values and customs of the upper class. Berry's model of acculturation suggests that societies that carry out the acculturation strategy of exclusion increase the marginalization its incoming members. The results of the current study illustrate the importance of exploring how the institutions themselves could be contributing to the marginalization of their students, and the importance of discovering ways of creating more inclusive, welcoming environments for first generation students.

Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Email to Student Support Services and Multicultural Center

Directors

Dear [Director Name],

I am Carrissa Phillippe, a doctoral candidate at the University of Kansas. A decade ago, I was a first-generation college student navigating my first year of higher education. I am now giving back by creating my dissertation around feelings of belongingness in first-generation college students to better understand and serve this student population. I am also particularly interested in the field better understanding the intersectionality of race/ethnicity and first-generation student status. **I am hoping that as Director of [Office Name] at [University Name], you will consider helping disseminate the link to my online survey.**

My dissertation will explore the theory that some first-generation students struggle to feel as though they belong in the higher education environment, while at the same time, their experiences in the university setting might also create a wedge between them and their family of origin and high school friends that did not go on to college. This might possibly leave students feeling as though they exist in the margin when it comes to feelings of belongingness. *While the study is specifically targeting first-generation college students, students with varying generation statuses are also encouraged to participate.*

I hope you will consider sharing the link with the students you serve and other colleagues that might also be interested in sharing the link to support research on the experiences of first-generation college students. It is a one-time survey and is completed entirely online. The survey is brief and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. Perhaps it would be exciting for students to help out a fellow first-generation college student with the dissertation process. I've provided a brief message that can be forwarded to students below. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Carrissa Phillippe, M.S.
Doctoral Candidate in Counseling Psychology
The University of Kansas
Email: carrissa@ku.edu

Appendix B: Recruitment Email to Students

Dear Students,

I am Carrissa Phillippe, a doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology at the University of Kansas. I invite you to participate in a short dissertation study that is investigating feelings of belongingness in college students. The study is specifically targeting first-generation college students, but all students that are currently enrolled in a four-year college/university or community college are encouraged to participate.

Participation involves completing a one-time, online survey that will take approximately 10 minutes. Your participation is anonymous and completely voluntary. No identifying data will be collected. The study is being supervised by Dr. Barbara Kerr and has been approved by the University of Kansas IRB (#00002397). If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Dr. Kerr or myself.

To participate in this study, click on the following link or copy and paste the URL into your web browser: http://kuclas.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eb7daALhQSJNFYh

Thank you,

Carrissa Phillippe, MS
Principal Investigator
University of Kansas
carrissa@ku.edu

Barbara Kerr, PhD
Faculty Advisor
University of Kansas
bkerr@ku.edu

Appendix C: Information Statement and Informed Consent

Undergraduate students across the country, we would like to better understand your feelings of belongingness. You are invited to participate in a dissertation study exploring feelings of belongingness. While the study is specifically targeting first-generation college students, we encourage students with varying generation statuses to also participate. This study is being conducted by Carrissa Phillippe, Counseling Psychology Doctoral Candidate, in the department of Psychology and Research in Education at the University of Kansas.

Participation will take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. You will be asked to complete an online survey that contains questions about your demographics, feelings of belongingness, and your social experiences. Please be sure to take it in one sitting while you are undisturbed and can privately answer the questions. Your decision to participate or decline participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the right to change your mind and end your participation at any time without penalty. You may skip any questions you do not feel comfortable answering. The content of the survey should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life. Participation in this research will be completely confidential, no identifying data will be collected, and all data will be averaged and reported in aggregate. It is possible, however, with internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may see your response. The information that we do gather will be kept on an encrypted flash drive that only the researchers will have access to. If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call (785) 864-7429 or write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, email irb@ku.edu.

Sincerely,

Carrissa Phillippe, MS
Principal Investigator
Psychology and Research in Education
Joseph R. Pearson Hall
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045
carrissa@ku.edu

Barbara Kerr, PhD
Faculty Advisor
Psychology and Research in Education
Joseph R. Pearson Hall
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045
bkerr@ku.edu

○ I have read and understand the above Information Statement, I certify that I am 18 years old or older and, I indicate my willingness to voluntarily take part in this study by advancing to the next screen to begin the survey.

Appendix D: Demographic Items

Age:

Gender (select all that apply):
- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Transgender
- ○ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Sexual Orientation:
- ○ Heterosexual
- ○ Bisexual
- ○ Gay
- ○ Lesbian
- ○ Other: _____

Are you a citizen of the United States?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Race/Ethnicity:
- ○ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ○ Asian
- ○ Black/African-American
- ○ Hispanic/Latino
- ○ White, Non-Hispanic
- ○ Pacific Islander

Parental Household Income:
- ❍ Less than $20,000
- ❍ $20,000 to $34,999
- ❍ $35,000 to $49,999
- ❍ $50,000 to $74,999
- ❍ $75,000 to $99,999
- ❍ $100,000 to $149,999
- ❍ $125,000 to $149,999
- ❍ $150,000 to $199,999
- ❍ $200,000 or more

Type of Higher Education Institution You Currently Attend:
- ❍ Four-Year College or University
- ❍ Community College
- ❍ Other (please describe) _____

Location of Your College/University:

Year in Undergraduate Education:
- ❍ 1st
- ❍ 2nd
- ❍ 3rd
- ❍ 4th
- ❍ 5th or more

Your Enrollment Status:
- ❍ Full-time (12 credit hours or more)
- ❍ Part-time (less than 12 credit hours)

Your Location of Residence:
- ❍ On-campus
- ❍ Off-campus with roommates or alone
- ❍ Off-campus with family

Select the following statement that best describes the education level of your parent(s) or guardian(s).
- ❍ Both my parents hold bachelors' degrees or higher
- ❍ At least one of my parents holds a bachelor's degree or higher
- ❍ At least one of my parents has some education after high-school or GED
- ❍ Neither of my parents has more than a high-school diploma or GED

Appendix E: Distance from Privilege Ladder Items (Kerr et al., 2012)

Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in our society. At the top of the ladder are the people whose race and ethnicity are the most understood, accepted and valued in our society. At the bottom of the ladder are the people whose race and ethnicity are the least understood, accepted and valued in our society. The higher up you are on this ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top and the lower you are, the closer you are to the bottom. Where would you put yourself on the ladder?

○ _____ Most understood, accepted, valued race/ethnicity
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____ Least understood, accepted, valued race/ethnicity

Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in our society. At the top of the ladder are the people whose social class (income level, occupation, and education level) is the most ideal, accepted, and valued in our society. At the bottom of the ladder are the people whose social class is the least ideal, accepted and valued in our society. The higher up you are on this ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top and the lower you are, the closer you are to the bottom. Where would you put yourself on the ladder?

○ _____ Most ideal, valued, accepted social class
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____
○ _____ Least ideal, valued, accepted social class

Appendix F: Access to Resources Scale (Kerr et al., 2012)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have been/am a member of a country club.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am at least a second-generation member of my sorority/fraternity.	○	○	○	○	○	○
My parent(s) often hosted parties that were primarily for business associates.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The women in my family have traditionally been in sororities.	○	○	○	○	○	○
We had multiple residences at the same time when I was growing up. (e.g., a main house and a lake house, two homes in different areas of the country, and so on).	○	○	○	○	○	○
My parent(s) were/are on the school board.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I was expected to contribute to the family income when I was able to make money.	○	○	○	○	○	○
My family did not own their own home.	○	○	○	○	○	○
My parent(s) do not have a retirement fund.	○	○	○	○	○	○

I had to use public transportation to get to the places I needed to go when I was growing up.	○	○	○	○	○	○
There were times when I was growing up that my parent(s) were unemployed and looking for work.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix G: General Belongingness Scale (Malone et al., 2012)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
When I am with my family and friends from home, I feel included.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have close bonds with my family and friends from home.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel accepted by my family and friends from home.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have a sense of belonging among my family and friends from home.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have a place at the table with my family and friends from home.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel connected with my family and	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

friends from home.							
I feel like an outsider when around my family and friends from home.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel as if my family and friends from home do not care about me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because I do not belong with my family and friends from home, I feel distant during the holiday season.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel isolated from my family and friends from home.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am with my family and friends from home, I feel like a stranger.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

My family and friends from home do not involve me in their plans.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix H: Classism Experiences Questionnaire – Academe (Langhout et al., 2007)

During your time in college, have you ever been in situations where:

	Never	Once or Twice	Sometimes	Often	Many Times
You could not take a class (e.g., music, science, film) because you could not afford the fees for the class (for materials, travel, etc.)?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
You could not join a sports team because you could not afford the associated expense?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
You could not join an activity because you consistently had to work during activity meetings/events?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
You could not afford social activities (e.g., events at the Fine Arts Center) because of the fees?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
You had to live in the dorms because you could not afford another housing option?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
You felt the food and/or social options provided at your college/university were different from what you would have independently chosen?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A faculty member did not put books on reserve for a class?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Told stories or jokes about people who are poor?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Made stereotypic remarks about people who are poor?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Made offensive remarks about people who are poor?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Made offensive remarks about the appearance of people who are poor?	○	○	○	○	○
Made offensive remarks about the way people who are poor act?	○	○	○	○	○
Made offensive remarks about the way people who are poor speak?	○	○	○	○	○
Made statements suggesting that poor people are inferior?	○	○	○	○	○
Made statements suggesting that rich people are superior?	○	○	○	○	○
Pressured you to behave consistently with a socio-economic class stereotype?	○	○	○	○	○
Assumed that you were from a lower socio-economic class because of your appearance?	○	○	○	○	○
Assumed that you were from a lower socio-economic class because of something that you said or did?	○	○	○	○	○
Assumed that you were from a higher socio-economic class because your appearance?	○	○	○	○	○
Assumed that you were from a higher socio-economic class because of something that you said or did?	○	○	○	○	○
Made offensive remarks about people on welfare?	○	○	○	○	○
Made offensive remarks about people on financial aid?	○	○	○	○	○
Assumed you were from a lower socioeconomic class because of the way you speak?	○	○	○	○	○

Encouraged you to shirk your employment responsibilities?	○	○	○	○	○
Were dismissive of your financial situation?	○	○	○	○	○
Invited you to events/outings that you could not afford?	○	○	○	○	○
Didn't seem to appreciate your financial burdens?	○	○	○	○	○
Encouraged you to purchase things you couldn't afford?	○	○	○	○	○
Assumed you could afford things that you couldn't?	○	○	○	○	○
Assumed you could charge things on your student account and that someone else would pay the balance?	○	○	○	○	○
Assumed that you could provide your own method of transportation?	○	○	○	○	○

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