

"My parents came here to give me a better life": Familial Closeness, Identity Formation, and the Dynamics of Expectation among Immigrant Origin First-Generation College Students of Color



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Research Questions

1. How does familial closeness influence FGCS' internalization of familial responsibilities and life choices?
2. How does familial closeness and perceptions of familial responsibility shape FGCS' identities?

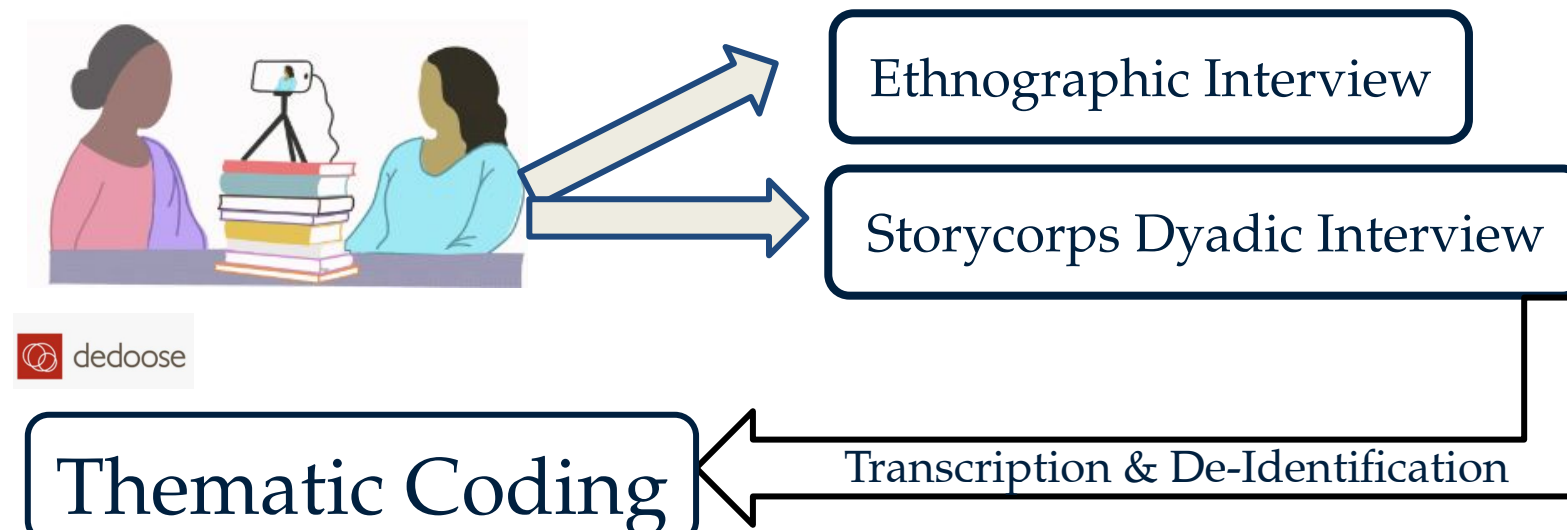
Methodology

Phase 1: Journaling

Participants submit monthly journal entries for 24 months



Phase 2: Interviews



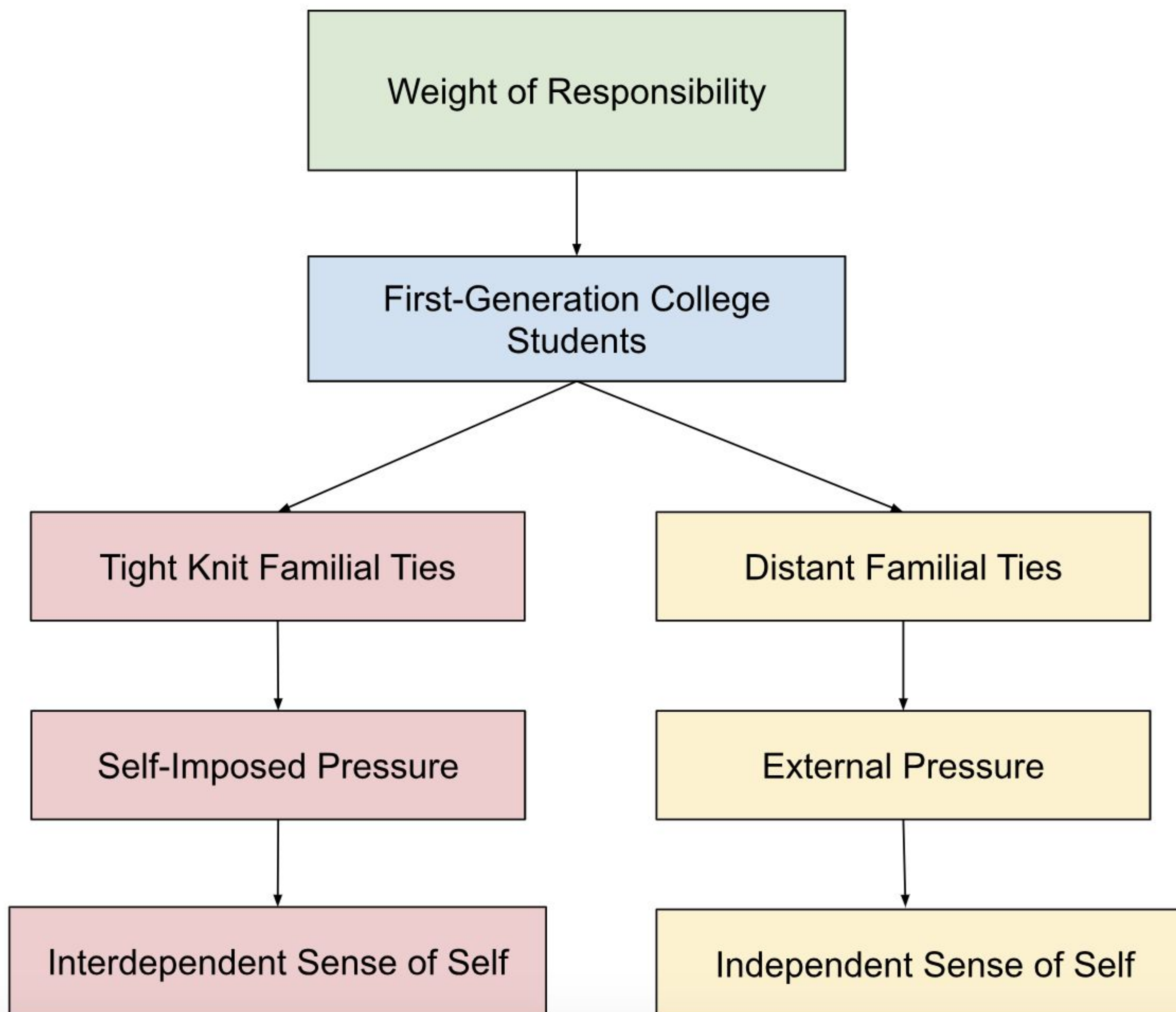
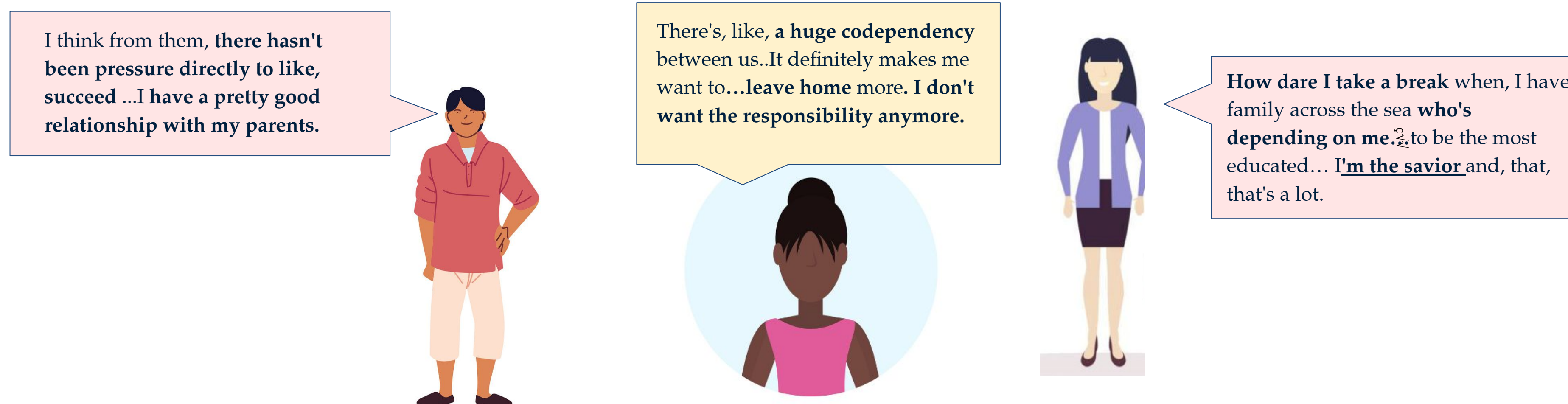
Sample

N=5
80% female
60% Hispanic/Latino
20% Asian and Pacific Islander
20% African American
Age Range: 18-20

Theoretical Framework

- Cultural (Mis)match Theory (Stephens et al., 2012)
- Immigrant Bargain (Louie 2012; Rodini 2016)
- Models of the Self (Markus & Kitamaya 2003)

Preliminary Findings



Discussion

- As their parents' aspirational proxy, many FGCS view **academic success as a reciprocal obligation to their parents** and the most that they could offer **in return for the sacrifices that their parents had made through years** (Rodini 2016)
- FGCS who had more **distant familial relationships** were more likely to endorse **independent motives at college**, seeing it as a place to grow as an **autonomous individual**.
- Conversely, those with more **tight-knit relationships endorsed more interdependent motive for attending college** (e.g., give back to my community, be a role model for people in my community). and therefore were **at a disadvantage in the university setting** (Covarrubias-et-al-2018, Stephan et al., 2012)

Limitations

1. Research finds that women are socialized and expected to partake in family roles consistent with caregiving more often than men (Arnett, 1995; Gilligan, 1982; Sy & Romero, 2008).
2. Published studies have predominantly sampled FGCS attending elite private institutions or top tier public universities— settings that lend themselves to social class disparities between upper- or middle-class students and working-class students (Chang et al., 2019)

Future Directions

- 1 Account for influence of immigrant origin on cultural (mis)match in the university.
- 2 Investigate familial closeness across different social classes and income levels
- 3 Provide culturally responsive programming that validates diverse family backgrounds and enhances campus integration and belonging

Work Cited

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4. Stephens, N. M., Townsend, S. S. M., Markus, H. R., & Phillips, L. T. (2012). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2012.07.008>