Description: As the representation of first-generation college students has increased in recent years, a growing literature has focused on the qualities first-generation students bring to college (e.g., academic preparedness). Yet, in elite colleges, first-generation students are enrolled in campuses where a majority of students come from affluent backgrounds. Working with Sherelle Ferguson, an advanced doctoral student at Penn, this study is based on over 40 in-depth interviews with first-generation students on two college campuses. Our findings draw a contrast between a pattern of economic disparities among college students, what we term class marginality, with direct denigrations of working-class experiences -- what we term “classist microaggressions.” Furthermore, we find that classist microaggressions surface in interactions among African-American college students and Asian-American college students as well as white students. We call for increased attention to classist microaggressions.

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