Class Matters: Social Class Identity Profiles of Black Students and Implications for Psychological Adjustment to Predominantly White Institutions

by

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Dedication

In memory of my mother, Jacqueline LaRue Terry Keeles, a true class act.
Love you mom

Tyff (future PhD!). To my Howard University (The REAL HU!) Family – The Circle: Sheila, Marjorie, Born, Kamilah J., Rashida, Rachel, and Vinnette; Brooke Sylvester, PhD and Cameron. My friends/family I met while living in DC – Cousin Karen, Edwin, Kiddy, Serge, Karon and Jameeta. To my Miami family (SO many good times with you all) – Dr. and Mrs. Smith, Liana, Katie, Liz, Corina, Chris, Brandi, Stephanie, Keisha, Dr. Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Cole, Ms. TJ, Jide, and all of my Psychology and Black Experience students (love y'all!).

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Abstract

Scholarly discourse and empirical analyses of social class impacts in higher education tend to conflate race and social class, suggesting that Black students' outcomes can be largely explained by their higher proportions of economic and social disadvantage. This result of studies that do not consider the variation within class groups by race is the framing of Black students - explicitly or implicitly – as a monolithic group with common identities, preferences, experiences, and adjustment to higher education contexts. Drawing from social identity frameworks (i.e,, Social Identity Theory, Tajfel & Turner, 1986; and the Multidimensional Framework of Social Class Identity, Webb, 2014), the current dissertation explores how social class identity processes help explain individual variation in Black college students' psychological adjustment to predominantly White institutions. Using data from the College Academic and Social Identities Study (CASIS) I examined a sample of Black college students (n=375) over their first year of college and 1) identified latent profiles based on patterns of Black college students' social class centrality and social class affect (pride, shame, and guilt) upon matriculating into college (Time 1). I also investigated if individuals' social class self-identification was associated with membership in particular social class centrality and affect (pride, shame, guilt) profile groups in PWI contexts; 2) I examined how Black college students' social class centrality and affect profiles were related to their Time 1 and Time 2 psychological adjustment outcomes; and 3) analyzed whether Black college students' social class centrality and affect profiles moderated the associations between social class self-identification and psychological adjustment outcomes. Key findings show that Black college students vary in the extent to which they make meaning of the importance and emotions attached to their social class identity. There were significant differences by profile group in psychological adjustment outcomes. Profiles that

included students who reported high levels of negative affect (shame and guilt) reported lower levels of adaptive psychological adjustment. Social class centrality and affect profile that included students who reported high levels of social class pride reported more adaptive psychological adjustment to the PWI context. However, the relation between social class self-identification and psychological adjustment did not vary as a function of social class centrality and affect profile group.

Chapter I: Introduction

Higher education is noted for being a pathway to upward social class mobility that assists in the dissipation of differences and disparities across class lines and at the same time critiqued for reinforcing class inequities inherent in a class stratified society. Moreover, some researchers argue that level of educational attainment is one of the strongest indicators of social class position and that the real function of the bachelor's degree is to signify a marker of social class, not professional, certification (Krieger, Williams, & Moss, 1997; Soria, Stebleton, & Huesman, 2014). Upon entering institutions of higher education, structural markers of social class are present (e.g., luxury cars driven by students) and may prompt a reflective process during which students try and make meaning of their own social standing within this particular context (Radmacher & Azmitia, 2013). Thus, "the context of education is an ideal stage on which to watch the dynamics and contradictions of class play out in both individual and social psychology" (Ostrove & Cole, 2007, p. 678). Scholars that examine the educational experiences of college students often note the link between social class and a host of psychological and educational outcomes (e.g., sense of belonging, graduate school aspirations; Ostrove & Long, 2007; Ostrove, Stewart, & Curtin, 2011). For example, studies that operationalized social class using one or an aggregate of objective class indicators (i.e., parental income, occupation, and education) concluded that college students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are at higher risk for low self-esteem, depressive and anxiety symptoms, antisocial behavior, and psychological distress (Hertel, 2002; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010; Langhout et al., 2007; Samaan,

1998). Other researchers argue that social class conceptualized as a social/collective identity, the significance of the identity, and the emotions attached to it significantly and uniquely contribute to the variation in psychological and educational outcomes (e.g., adjustment, campus/extracurricular participation) of college students that may not be captured in studies that operationalize social class as a rank within a social hierarchy (Assari, Preiser, Lankarani, & Caldwell, 2018; Liu, 2012; Soria, Stebleton, & Huesman, 2013).

According to Garcia, Hallaham, and Rosenthal (2007), students' socioeconomic status (SES) is a strong indicator of virtually every measure of general satisfaction in college. Sociological frameworks (e.g., Bourdieu, 1987) have offered a view of social class that include the concepts of social and cultural capital (access to information, resources, valued knowledge, and internalization of cultural norms and practices necessary for social mobility in a society). These frameworks have been used to explain inequity and variation in outcomes among poor, working class, middle class, and upper class students (Langhout, Rosselli, & Feinstein, 2007; Lee, 2013; Noble & Davies, 2009). Scholars acknowledge that social class has traditionally been overwhelmingly conceptualized as a construct synonymous and used interchangeably with socioeconomic status (an objective position in a ranked system determined by individuals' economic value), as reflected in the broad range of quantitative studies that measure social class through variables such as education, income, and occupation/occupational prestige (Aronowitz, 2003; Fisher, 2007; Kim, 2014).

Extant research indicates that social class, as defined by higher or lower SES, has been shown to relate to college adjustment (e.g., academic fit, Johnson, Richeson, and Finkel, 2011). Less economically advantaged students often report feeling a dissonance between wealthy students as well as the overall context of an elite institution (Stephens, Townsend, Markus, &

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Phillips, 2012). This feeling of incongruence is linked to lower participation in extracurricular activities, lack of engagement with professors outside of the classroom, and limited interaction with their peers - key factors in adaptive academic and social adjustment to college (Martin, 2012). Poorer students use words such as "resentment", "anger", and "frustrated" (Rice et al., 2016; Wilkins, 2014) to express their emotional reaction to inter- and intraclass experiences (e.g., being on financial aid, mispronouncing words). Sometimes these emotions are linked to deleterious outcomes for students such as social disengagement, attrition, and lack of overall satisfaction with the college experience (Crisp & Nora, 2010; Pittman & Richmond, 2008).

Some scholars (e.g., Liu, 2001) contend that social class is more than the various forms of capital (e.g., cultural capital) and/or membership in a category defined by socioeconomic status (SES) factors listed above (e.g., income). Emerging research indicates that social class also includes attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and is a meaningful aspect of an individual's identity in a socioeconomic stratified society (Destin, Rheinschmidt-Same, & Richeson, 2017; Harley, Jolivette, McCormick, & Tice, 2002; Liu, 2001; Pope & Arthur, 2009). While research has linked lower and higher social class status (e.g., based on socioeconomic indicators) to differences in psychological adjustment, not all individuals from lower social class backgrounds experience negative adjustment, and not all individuals from more advantaged social class backgrounds experience positive adjustment (Day-Vines, Patton, & Baytops, 2003; Jack, 2014). Scholars that use psychological frameworks (e.g., Social Identity Theory; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) in their examinations of social class provide evidence that the meaning and value individuals ascribe to their social class (i.e., identity) also explains variation and differences in adjustment outcomes of college students, beyond self-identified social class (e.g., Sanchez, Liu, Leathers, Goins, & Villain, 2011; Reay, Corzier, & Clayton, 2009; Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). How

individuals make meaning of who they are in relation to societally valued categories has implications for their adaptation and adjustment as well. For example, in Jack's (2016) study, a low-income Black student at a PWI described how social class related to her adjustment to a culture where students are assertive towards faculty, a behavior privileged in White middle class educational contexts (Lareau, 2002), saying, "When you're poor *and* homeless, you get used to [taking] what is given. You don't complain…I've gotten better but it's hard for me to advocate for myself" (Jack, 2016, p. 9). Palomar-Lever (2014) found that participants classified as poor but did not "feel poor" (i.e., did not "consider" themselves poor) reported higher levels of overall subjective well-being compared to participants who identified as poor and "felt poor". Additionally, Demakakos, Nazroo, Breeze, and Marmot (2008) reported that study participants' subjective social status (an individual's perception of his/her own position in the social hierarchy; Jackman & Jackman, 1973) is an important correlate of mental health and suggests that dimensions of subjective social status may account for this relationship not captured by SES indicators. The above studies emphasize individual differences in the meaning making of social class identity within and across social class groups and ways in which this collective identity has implications for psychosocial adjustment outcomes (e.g., psychological distress, fit into elite PWI, psychological well-being).

The examination of social class identity may be particularly relevant in understanding within group differences in the experiences and adaptation of Black students at PWIs. These institutions have increasingly become stratified – racially and socioeconomically (Aisch, Buchanan, Cox, & Quealy, 2017; Baker, Klasik, & Reardon, 2018). As such, Black students from less advantaged social class backgrounds may experience double minority status (e.g., Jack, 2014), the experience of being both a racial numerical minority and viewing one's social class

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group as lower status than others, may lead to less social and psychological connectedness and integration with the college context than peers from more advantaged backgrounds. However, Black students from more advantaged social class backgrounds also may experience challenges to psychological adjustment (Assari, Preiser, Lankarani, & Caldwell, 2018). These students are similarly a numerical racial minority. But, given racial and socioeconomic tensions and segregation documented on many PWI campuses (Arcidiacono, Aucejo, Hussey, & Spenner, 2013; Armstrong & Hamilton, 2013), these Black students' higher social class status may not afford them the same entrée into college life as non-minority peers from advantaged backgrounds. In both examples, individual Black students' meaning making around their social class identity in relation to their personal identity can shape the nature of their adaptation (e.g., Jack, 2016). This meaning making entails how they define their social class identity as they enter college, the importance of the identity to how they define themselves, and the affective meanings they attach to their identity. However, such studies do not explain how individuals within particular social class strata vary in their adjustment (i.e., how/why individuals within particular social class strata may vary in experience and subsequent adjustment to distinct higher educational contexts). While social class may include socioeconomic factors, from a psychological perspective, it also can serve as an identity category, with identity beliefs functioning as a lens through which individuals compare their relative social status to others and make meaning about themselves and others in their shared contexts. Moreover, studies have also shown that social class is an identity composed of many elements (e.g., importance/meaning and emotions attached to the identity) and may operate uniquely for racial/ethnic minority groups (Cole, 2009; Destin & Debrosse, 2017; Ostrove & Cole, 2003; Thomas & Azmitia, 2014).

In the following sections, I will discuss social class identity as a multidimensional construct. Given the racial and class homogenous histories of PWIs, I will also briefly discuss the significance of the intersection of race and class for Black students' at PWIs. I then discuss the psychological adjustment implications associated with social class. Next, I introduce taking a person-centered approach in an examination of social class identity and highlight investigations of other social identities that employ this approach. I will conclude this chapter with a section of the dissertation study aims and goals.

Social Class as a Social Identity

Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) delineates psychological processes that result in individuals identifying with certain social groups that hold emotional significance and value to the self. In other words, people's social identity indicates who they are in terms of the groups to which they belong. Societal systems and structures determine which groups are privileged and those that are disadvantaged or marginalized. However, social class identity is mainly concerned with an individual's perception of his or her own position within a hierarchy stratified in class terms. Jones (1998) contends, that social class identity refers to a psychological sense that one is a member of a particular social class group and it has an affiliative dimension. Scholars (e.g., Liu, 2013) who draw from psychological frameworks to examine the construct posit that class identity is an individual's perception of his or her own position within the hierarchy of status or as one participant in Palomar-Lever's (2007) articulates, social class is "a 'psychological phenomenon', a feeling of belonging" (Palomar-Lever, 2007, p. 166).

Social class intersects with other social identities (e.g., race) and may relate to variation in outcomes (e.g., psychological adjustment) particularly in higher educational contexts where indicators of class and class status are omnipresent. For example, Torres (2009) reported that

although all Black students at elite PWIs are susceptible to negative-race based experiences, those who identified with more privileged class groups (e.g., upper-middle class) experienced less difficulty adjusting to their university due to similarities between their pre-college context (i.e., predominantly White and affluent) and their elite PWI. Although class self-identification was present in the narratives of the participants in Torres' (2009) study (e.g., "I'm poor, Black, and female…" p. 894) the author conceptualized social class as a status linked to an individual's level of cultural capital. The study's conceptualization was grounded in cultural capital frameworks, and thus did not consider the psychological processes that is the focus of the current study. However, Torres' (2009) study elucidates how Black students' membership in multiple social groups may relate to intraracial differences on psychosocial and educational outcomes.

According to Bowleg (2008), "despite an abundance of theories on social identity within psychology, the prevailing view of social identities is one of unidimensionality" (p. 13). However, some scholars suggest that similar to other social identities, social class identity is a multidimensional construct and not just categorical membership. Charmaraman and Grossman (2010) note that self-identification is not the sole component of an identity and individuals' within the same social group may attribute their group membership to different underlying reasons and hold worldviews that differ from other group members. Building from SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) developed a multidimensional framework for understanding the different elements of an identity which include self-categorization, importance of the identity to one's self-concept, and attitude (positive or negative) towards group membership.

More recently, Webb (2014) proposed a multidimensional social class identity model, in which social class identity was conceptualized to have three different aspects: self-identification,

centrality, and affect. *Identification*, refers to the social class label (e.g., middle-class) individuals use to self-define their social class. *Centrality,* is the importance or significance of social class to an individual's self-concept. Social class *affect* is the emotion associated with an individual's social class. This conceptualization of social class identity parallels other social identity frameworks (e.g., *Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity*, Sellers et al., 1998; *Gender Self-Socialization Model,* Tobin et al., 2010) that emphasize one or more of the dimensions in Webb's framework (i.e., self-categorization, significance of identity, and emotions linked to the self-label). I use the dimensions highlighted in Webb's (2014) and Ashmore et al. (2004) theoretical framework of social class identity and collective identity, respectively, in the current study.

Recent social class scholarship provides examples of different dimensions of social class identity. For example, in Thomas and Azmitia's (2014) study the authors' identified three dimensions of social class identity – self-identification, centrality (i.e., the relative importance of social class to an individual's self-concept and other social identities), and affect (i.e., emotions linked to one's social class identity). In their conceptualization of social class, Destin, Rheinschmidt-Same, and Richeson (2017) posit there are different aspects of this status-based identity (e.g., self-label) that together assist in an individual's current construal of their social class. Reay (2005) also argues that social class identity is multifaceted and includes dimensions such as affect (e.g., guilt). Extant research implicates identification, importance, and emotions attached to the identity (e.g., Rice et al., 2017 and Wilkins, 2014) where students described emotions connected to their inter- and intra-group social class identity experiences. However, this research does not explicitly examine those different identity dimensions and their implications for student adjustment.

Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) note that examining different dimensions of an identity at the individual level may provide additional information in the relation between an identity and particular outcomes of interest. Thus, this study will add to the emerging body of literature that examines how social class operates as a social identity through investigating how the different dimensions of individuals' social class identity in the aggregate relate to adjustment outcomes within the context of higher education.

Significance of Social Class for Black Students at Predominantly White Institutions

Black students may be disproportionately from lower SES backgrounds compared to non-URM students, which may mean that issues of social class marginalization may compound racial marginalization for those from less affluent backgrounds. As such, current literature tends to conflate race and social class often relegating Black students to lower status groups (Allen, 2010). This research has contributed to the conceptualization of Black students as a monolith and overlooks the variation in Black students' pre-college sociodemographic backgrounds and psychological processes associated with their class identification and identity. However, Black college students at PWIs vary in their social class background and identity, yet few scholars have examined the role of this construct in Black students' experiences in and adjustment to these racial and socioeconomic homogeneous contexts. Torres (2009) argues that in addition to race, less privileged Black students' limited exposure to and engagement in middle class White spaces may feel pushed "further to the margins of campus life, particularly at schools that have traditionally catered to affluent students" (p.888). In other words, less privileged Black students' social class background may compound experiences related to their racial minority status because of their unfamiliarity of the class-based cultural styles of middle class educational contexts. Moreover, less privileged Black students' perception of fit may also be challenged at

institutions where the student body is predominantly White and affluent because racial inequality is likely exacerbated by overlapping socioeconomic inequality (Martin, 2012).

Black students from more advantaged backgrounds may better adjust to the social class mores of White affluent educational environments (Torres & Massey, 2012). More privileged Black students' may also grapple with making meaning of their social class identity when within class differences surface that are perceived to be based on race (e.g., leisure activities) challenges their self-ascribed social class label (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). This is illustrated in Thomas and Azmitia's (2014) study of college students' social class identity at a state PWI, for instance, in the remarks of a middle class African-American student who expressed surprise in how others identified as/defined "middle class" by stating, "There's different middles to the middle class" (p. 202). The authors note that the above quote demonstrates that many students, including those from more privileged backgrounds, may reevaluate their social class identity when interacting with others who identify with the same social class group but noticeably differ in SES indicators of social class status (e.g, size of home/type of neighborhood, parental occupation; Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). The awareness of race and class, and their intersection, has implications for identity-related processes for Black students at PWIs. DeCuir-Gunby (2016) contends that the context of predominately White and affluent educational spaces helps to shape African American students' sense of identity. In these distinct spaces, Black students from both privileged and disadvantage social class groups may be self-assured in their various social identities while others may grapple more with making meaning of one or many of their collective identities.

Even among Black students with the aptitude and motivation to succeed at PWIs, experiences at highly selective/elite institutions can heighten the salience of class group membership and illuminate cultural differences across class groups. For example, Jack (2016)

notes that Black and Latino "doubly disadvantaged" (from low-income background and under resourced/distressed high school) students observed how they interact and engage with university faculty and administrators differed from their more affluent peers. The Black and Latino students from more privileged backgrounds and/or graduated from "elite" high schools (i.e., boarding, day, and college prep schools) were more assertive, confident, and comfortable engaging with university authority figures. The above traits are often linked to positive academic achievement outcomes and adaptive adjustment to middle-class educational contexts (Lareau, 2015). Findings from similar studies (e.g., Torres, 2009; Walpole, 2008) provide further evidence of the link between Black students' social class origins and their adjustment to PWIs.

In addition to observable indicators of middle class culture at many PWIs (e.g., manicured lawns), person-level interactions between students may also contribute to the link between social class and adjustment outcomes. For example, conversations about family leisure activities (e.g., discussing summer vacation destinations/plans) is common among students and can magnify differences in class background (Kraus, Park, & Tan, 2017; Ostrove, 2008). During these conversations, social comparisons between peers often occurs which may elicit emotions, positive and/or negative, tied to one's social class background/self-label (Smith & Azmitia, 2014). These emotional responses to class-laden interactions and events may also relate to self-esteem (Swati & Moola, 2017), challenges to social integration (Jury et al., 2017), and self-distancing from social interactions and the university environment (Smith & Moore, 2000). For Black students, both race and class may play a part in their social interactions with non-Blacks due to the assumption/stereotype that Blacks come from lower status backgrounds and culture (e.g., non-Blacks exaggerated use of African American Vernacular English when speaking to Black people) (Torres, 2009). Assumptions of Black students' class origins and its impact on

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social interactions at PWIs also can occur intraracially. Smith and Moore (2000) observed affluent Black students mock their Black peers who exhibited aspects of Black culture considered "ghetto" (e.g., hip hop music, clothes). These interactions resulted in many economically disadvantaged Black students feeling resentment and subsequently distancing themselves from their higher status Black peers.

Literatures highlight how Black students from lower SES/less advantaged backgrounds face more challenges (e.g., struggle with social integration in a relatively affluent student body) compared to those from more affluent backgrounds (Lehmann, 2009). Results from empirical studies also suggests that more affluent Black students may have unique social class and adjustment experiences in predominantly White and middle to upper-middle class educational contexts (Tatum, 2004; Lacy, 2007). These findings illuminate important within-group processes for Black students across social class groups (most often assessed by reported SES factors). But, they do not investigate how or why individuals from the same social class backgrounds may vary in their adjustment, which is a key reason for examining social class identity as an individual difference factor. The conceptual and practical rationale for studying social class as a social identity, including gaps in knowledge that would be benefitted by such an approach, the need to consider the multidimensionality of a social class identity as an important means of understanding within-group variation in the experience of the identity (that is, while an SES focused approach relies on pre-determined indicators of social class statuses), individuals vary in how they label their own social class categories, as well as the importance and meanings they attach to that identity. Furthermore, variation in both importance and meaning may be relevant in understanding the roles and functions of that identity (thus warranting person oriented approaches that consider within group variation in individuals' patterns across label, importance,

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and meaning).

The social integration and adjustment of college students is important for their academic success and personal well-being (Imaginario & Neves de Jesus, 2013). Due to race and class differences at many PWIs, it is critical for Black students to positively adjust and integrate for educational success, social mobility, and psychological well-being (Griffin, Jayakumar, Jones, & Allen, 2010; Tinto, 1993). Additionally, the context of a PWI can operate as a socialization agent where implicit and explicit messages about who "fits" and contributes to the maintenance of the race and class status quo are communicated and internalized by the students (DeCuir-Gunby, 2016). It is evident that Black students' social class background and self-label has implications for their experiences at PWIs. Therefore, it is imperative that research continues to explore how these experiences contribute to identity and identity related outcomes.

Research on social class is in its nascent stage and can benefit from additional studies that address the conceptual and methodological gaps in the literature. For example, social identity scholars (e.g., Liu, 2001; Destin, Rheinschmidt-Same, & Richeson, 2017) argue that there is a need for more research that examines social class identity from a psychological/phenomenological perspective as a means of understanding variation in adjustment (across and within social class). Additionally, some researchers contend that social class is a multidimensional identity that differs within and across social class groups (Aries & Seider, 2004; Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). Yet, most current social class studies do not account for individual differences within each social class group variation (e.g., use a variable approach) which limits the allowance of a holistic analysis of individuals' social class identity. Different conceptualizations of social class identity may be different depending on what one is trying to understand and why. That is, if trying to understand how poverty or affluence relates to access to

resources, then an approach to studying social class identity that reflects structural and social factors may be very relevant and the most "accurate" way of capturing the construct in relation to that question. In contrast, if trying to understand individual differences in how people make meaning of their identities, how they view themselves and others, and potential coping and adaptation, then a psychological approach to social class identity is a more applicable and an "accurate" approach to capturing that identity in relation to that question.

This study attempts to fill the gap in the literature on social class identity by conceptualizing social class as a social identity (Destin, Rheinschmidt-Same, & Richeson, 2017; Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). More specifically, this study draws from psychological frameworks in the conceptualization of social class as a multidimensional collective identity. This study also recognizes that "the psychological experience of social class cannot be meaningfully understood outside the context of race" (Ostrove & Cole, 2003, p. 682) and that social class identity varies within racial groups. Therefore, this examination of the multidimensionality of social class identity and its association to the psychological adjustment uses a racially homogeneous sample (i.e., Black college students).

Dissertation Aims and Goals

The focus of this study will be on Black students' social class identity, defined as, "a subjective experience of and affiliation with a particular social class [group] and the meaning social class holds for one's sense of self" (Radmacher & Azmitia, 2013, p. 314), who attend predominantly White institutions (PWIs). Social identity frameworks inform my conceptualization of social class identity as a multidimensional construct. I draw from identity frameworks that emphasize social/collective (Stryker & Serpe, 1994; Turner et al., 1978) and multidimensional (Ashmore et al., 2004) approaches to identity. Specifically, I frame social class

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identity as a multidimensional construct, composed of dimensions that reflect a phenomenological perspective and individuals' constructions of the importance and meaning around their self-defined social class group. In Webb's (2014) study of social class identity, she puts forth three distinct dimensions of social class identity: identification, centrality, and affect. *Identification*, refers to the social class label (e.g., middle class) individuals use to self-define their social class. *Centrality,* is the importance or significance of social class to an individual's self-concept. Social class *affect* is the emotion associated with an individual's social class. This conceptualization of social class identity parallels other social identity frameworks (e.g., *Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity*, Sellers et al., 1998; *Gender Self-Socialization Model,* Tobin et al., 2010) that emphasize one or more of the dimensions in Webb's framework (i.e., self-categorization, significance of identity, and emotions linked to the self-label). I use the dimensions highlighted in Webb's (2014) and Ashmore et al. (2004) theoretical framework of social class identity and collective identity, respectively, in the current study.

The current study has specific aims. First, using a within-group design, the present study aims to provide evidence that Black students entering college vary in their social class identity (centrality and affect) in ways that relate to differences in their psychological adjustment outcomes latent in race comparative studies. I investigate this variation by looking at identity profiles using a person-oriented approach via latent profile analysis. Second, I will examine if individuals' social class self-identification is associated with membership in particular social class identity centrality and affect profile groups. Next, I will examine the associations of Black students' social class identity centrality and affect profiles with a variety of psychological adjustment outcomes (perceived ethnic threat, psychological well-being, distress) during the first and second semester of their freshman year at PWIs. Lastly, I will investigate the impact of

social class identity centrality and affect profiles on the association between social class

identification and psychological adjustment during the course of Black students' freshman year.

Chapter II: Literature Review

I begin this chapter by presenting an overview of social class in U.S. higher education, as it is important to understand how this class-saturated context relates to social class identity processes. In the next section, I define social class. Next, I present two prominent approaches – sociological and psychological – to the conceptualization of social class. I then discuss the conceptual frameworks that inform my examination of social class identity within the context of higher education. Next, I discuss literature that highlights the intersection of race and social class. I focus on studies that examine the different ways the intersection of the aforementioned social constructs relate to within racial group variation of social class self-label, identity, and experiences within the higher educational context. Next, I describe how social class relates to psychological adjustment. I then review person-oriented approach and its use in the examination of other closely aligned collective identities (e.g., race and gender). Lastly, I briefly revisit the current study and conclude with my research questions and hypotheses.

Social Class in the Context of Higher Education

Higher educational contexts are often described as "class saturated" environments in which students both observe and "feel" the impact of social class on their academic and social educational experiences (Ostrove & Cole, 2003). Additionally, institutions of higher education are also highly stratified by social class making colleges and universities ideal for studying the dynamism of social class (Sacks, 2007). At many predominantly White institutions, indicators of class status (e.g., cars, clothes, items in dorm room, speech) are often explicit and further

illuminate differences between students' social class origins. Low-income students more readily

notice class differences and feel class marginality due to colleges catering to more affluent,

advantaged populations, whose social mores exacerbate and magnify class differences

(Schwartz, Donovan, & Guido-DiBrito, 2009). This can result in students from less advantaged

backgrounds on elite college campuses feeling intimidated by and morally inferior to their more

affluent peers (Aries, Seider, 2005; Bratt, 2012). A recent study by Lee (2016) provides evidence

of the significant relationship between class background and college enrollment, *type* of

institutions students attend (e.g., elite/highly selective), as well their adjustment to the college

context. This suggests that social class may shape individuals' perceptions of who "fits" in

college and at what kind of institution (Byron & Lightfoot, 2012; Stephens, Brannon, & Markus,

2015).

In recent decades, college matriculation and completion rates have remained stagnant for

students from the lowest income bracket but continue to increase for their more affluent peers

(Bailey & Dynarski, 2011). Administrators at prestigious colleges and universities around the

U.S. have expressed concern about the prevalence of wealthy students and the dearth of students

from less affluent backgrounds at their respective institutions (Aries & Seider, 2005). At Duke,

for example, only 4% of undergraduate students come from "blue collar" families (Park &

Denson, 2013). For students from "blue collar" families or similar backgrounds (e.g., working

class, poor) attending a selective university may be their first time interacting with others with

drastically different pre-college exposures and experiences. Many elite undergraduate institutions

have responded to this disparity by implementing measures during the admissions process to

admit and retain a more economically diverse student population (Jack, 2014**;** Rimer, 2007).

Highly selective universities employ strategies such as recruiting students from disadvantaged

backgrounds to make the importance of socioeconomic diversity on parity with race and ethnicity diversity. Additionally, many prestigious private and state flagship universities (e.g., Harvard University and the University of Michigan) now offer free tuition for students from families where the parental income is less than $60,000 per year and/or the total of their assets do not exceed $100,000 (Jackson & Rice, 2017; Kozlowski, 2017).

The impact of social class in higher education surfaces as early as the application process and remains evident in post-baccalaureate educational and occupational pursuits. These differences are particularly pronounced at the nation's most selective and "elite" schools which are often criticized for perpetuating social class stratification rather than being a meritocratic institution. Scholars note that in addition to individual drive and motivation, parental socialization and family resources significantly result in interclass differences in educational aspirations and opportunities (Brimeyer, Miller, & Perrucci, 2006; Martin, 2012). For example, only 50% of valedictorians from lower- or working-class backgrounds applied to the most selective universities in the country compared to 80% of valedictorians from upper-middle and upper-class families (Radford, 2013). Once students are admitted, the enrollment numbers at many of the nation's colleges/universities mirror those of Radford's (2013) study. For example, in Aud et al. (2012), students from affluent backgrounds matriculated directly into college after high school at a significantly higher rate (82%) than those from less advantage families (52%). Moreover, per a recent study (Aisch, Buchanan, Cox, & Quealy, 2017), one in five students at elite universities come from households that fall in the top 1% of the income scale (i.e., household income < $650K).

It is evident that social class plays a critical role in the adjustment and overall experience of college students. The studies above suggests that colleges/universities are socioeconomically

stratified in ways that likely make social class and social class identity very salient and are contexts in which individuals explore and develop their many identities (Hinz, 2016; Ostrove & Cole, 2003). Extant research indicates that social class, as defined by higher or lower SES, has been shown to relate to college adjustment. However, these studies do not explain how individuals within particular social class strata vary in their adjustment (i.e., how/why individuals within particular social class strata may vary in experience and subsequent adjustment).

Social Class Defined

There are a variety of terms to denote social class (e.g., socioeconomic status/SES, income, class position) and the definitions of the construct are similarly numerous and varied. In their content analysis on the inclusion of social class as a variable of examination, Liu et al. (2004) found that over 400 different terms were used to indicate, infer, or describe social class. The authors note that social class research is growing in psychology but lack of agreement on its definition creates confusion around what is being measured. Additionally, the inconsistencies in nomenclature for the same construct pose theoretical and methodological issues (Liu et al., 2004). In other words, this "lack of conceptual clarity" (Oakes & Rossi, 2003, p, 771) contributes to the contention regarding how to appropriately and effectively define, operationalize, and include social class as a construct of study.

Aries and Seider (2007) note social class is often conceptualized in the literature as a position in a socioeconomic hierarchy based on "economic and material resources, income, education, and occupation" (p. 138). This definition is useful when examining issues related to systemic and structural inequities (e.g., classism, poverty) but restrictive in describing the subjective experience(s) of being in or identifying with a class group. Liu et al. (2004) argue that

defining social class only using SES indices limits our understanding of complex developmental processes (e.g., self-identity) linked to subjective class experiences.

Although the discussion around the definition of social class is ongoing, many scholars across disciplines agree that it includes both facets of social stratification (e.g., income/wealth, education, occupation) and meaning-making processes (Liu, 2004 et al., Markus & Fiske, 2012; Palomar-Lever, 2007; Reay, 2005). The lack of agreement on the definition of social class likely reflects the fact that it is actually not one thing but rather a complex construct involving social, structural, psychological, and even historical factors. Because social class is a complex construct, in making decisions on how to define and study it, it is less important that researchers reach a consensus on the "right" definition, than to delineate the aspects of social class relevant to the researchers' questions and phenomena of interest. For example, Pieterse et al. (2013) state that "social class refers to norms of behavior and values that reside within SES categories characterized by one's income, financial stability, economic standing, and education level" (p. 2). Pieterse and his colleagues' further note that though social class has historically been defined by markers of socioeconomic status, there is a subtle but growing recognition of social class as a psychological variable (Pieterse, 2013).

In this study, I focus on social class identity among Black students in the context of PWIs and define social class identity as a psychological phenomenon linked to one's social position within a stratification system that shapes individuals' view of their overall identity (e.g., social class self-identification/label) and the importance/significance and affect/emotions associated with an individual's membership/self-categorization within a social class group.

Approaches to Social Class and Social Class Identity

Social class theories are numerous, controversial (Savage, Silva, & Warde, 2010), and continue to evolve in tandem with the shifts of the societal structure/hierarchy. The ebb and flow of the development of social class theories and frameworks is attributed to a number of issues or "controversies". Some scholars are dissuaded from delving into the realm of social class theory because of the "messiness" associated with disentangling the construct. Additional researchers posit that the dearth of social class theories are also related to the idea that class is a mutable identity (Jones, 1998), the construct is of little relevance in post-industrial societies (Reay, 1998), the United States and other Western countries are a classless society (Reay, 2005), and the intersection of other competing social identities (Jones, 1998). Yet, other scholars posit that the deceleration of theoretical work on social class is a result of the assumption that people are no longer concerned with social class as a construct or identity (Haddon, 2014). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) went as far as contending that class and class identity are "dead". However, a recent resurgence of social class theories and frameworks in the social science literature counters the notion that social class is no longer a construct of interest or concern.

Social class theories and frameworks often stem from two approaches of conceptualizing the construct, the sociological approach or the psychological approach. The sociological approach seeks to describe and explain group-level stratification processes and has roots in seminal social class theories by scholars such as Marx (1967[1867])) and Bourdieu (1987). The sociological approach emphasizes objective measureable indicators of status such as education, occupation, and income/wealth and how one or all three in combination determines an individual's position in a socially stratified society. This approach also emphasizes the influence of societal structures and systems on the delegation of people into various social class stratum.

Many scholars continue to conceptualize and examine social class as a social status defined by education, occupation, and income/wealth (Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2009). Other stratification researchers acknowledge the influence of objective indicators to social class but also recognize the emotions and psychic responses to class, class inequities, and classism (Reay, 2005). Current psychological scholarship acknowledges that SES and the outcomes associated with the construct is both a result of objective indicators and subjective processes that together inform individuals about their position in the stratification system and how they make sense of their status and group membership. Sociological approaches often can be distinguished from psychological approaches by their "units" of analyses. That is, the former seeks to describe and explain group-level stratification processes, while the latter is concerned with explaining individual differences across and within groups and subgroups.

In addition to the discussion of the different conceptualizations of social class, scholars contend there are additional issues that need to be considered/addressed in order to have a more robust understanding of the dynamic nature of social class as a social identity. For example, choosing to either use a sociological or psychological approach to conceptualizing social class is contingent upon the type of information and insights the researcher(s) is interested in related to the complex construct and experience that is social class. Social class is often operationalized as a group variable implying within group homogeneity on the various elements of the identity. However, a primary premise within social identity theory is that individuals vary in their identification with their various social group categories. Few but emerging studies have put forth evidence that possessing similar characteristics with members of a social group does not guarantee that one identifies with that particular group. Further, once someone claims a domain of identity, it is likely there is in-group variation on the importance/significance and meaning of,

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as well as emotions attached to, that identity. In their study on the centrality and meaning of social class identity, Thomas and Azmitia (2014) concluded that social class identity does not hold the same importance for individuals across and within class groups. Further, the authors put forth evidence that emotions related to class identity vary and may be distinct to an individual's class self-label. Reay (2005) also notes there is an affective component to social class identity which includes self-conscious emotions such as pride, anger, guilt, and embarrassment. Additionally, Smith and Mackie (2015) argue that emotions linked to group membership are rarely experienced separately, rather it is typical that individuals experience different levels of several emotions simultaneously.

Sociological Approach. Marx and Bourdieu, as well as other sociologists (e.g., Weber), attempted to make sense of and explicate the different positions individuals hold in a social hierarchy defined by power, proximity to the means of production, politics, economic resources, social networks, and cultural mores. Marx scholarship broadly focused on the formation of classed groups, and the relationships and interactions between the groups. Specifically, Marx was concerned with the relation between people, and labor and labor-power (Mohandesi, 2013). In other words, Marx examined how an individual's role in the labor market determined their social standing in an industrial capitalistic society. For example, the proletariat (Marxian nomenclature for members of the working class) was composed of laborers who exchanged manual and mental labor for a wage. Their social position was determined by their function in the labor market. Members of the bourgeoisie, or the present day elite/"one percent", controlled the means of production and maintained their position through the exploitation of the proletariat. Marx's theory provided evidence of the link between an individual's societal position and how this position is internalized (e.g., identify with the proletariat). Although Marx wrote about this

nexus between objective position and subjective awareness primarily to describe the class-consciousness of individuals who resided in the subordinate/exploited stratum, recent scholars argue that the link between the two is not class specific. That is, one's ability to connect their social position to their self-label is not exclusive to working class individuals or others from similar marginalized class subgroups (e.g, poor). This notion supports the current study's examination of social class identity as beliefs around importance and meaning of identity are relevant across social class groups.

Post-Marx structural/sociological approaches to social class focus on how individuals appraisal of their levels of objective class indictors relate to their position in the class structure (e.g., Mohandesi, 2013; Reay, 2005). For example, concepts/ideas such as "class-consciousness" and demolishing capitalism were not a central focus or feature in these frameworks. In other words, there was a shift away from the emphasis on the sociopolitical undertones of social class. Scholars such as Bourdieu (1987) challenged the pre-deterministic nature of Marx's theory arguing that one's class status and related disposition is not solely predetermined (objective) or free will (subjective) but a combination of both. The historical context in which Bourdieu developed his theory is critical to his conceptualization of social class. In a post-industrial society, power/social dynamics between the "haves and have nots", as well as an individual's status or positon in society was not solely linked to proximity to the means of production, which added a layer of complexity to the conceptualization of the construct. Bourdieu's framework considered other defining factors of social class such as sociocultural assets (i.e., different forms of capital) and the mechanisms for intergenerational class reproduction which are not emphasized in the works of Marx. Moreover, Bourdieu's theory more explicitly considered the inextricable relation between objective structures and personal subjective experiences.

Bourdieu posited that social class is an aggregate of economic, social, and cultural capital. Economic capital is the monetary resources available to an individual. Income is often the main source of economic capital; social capital includes relationships with institutional agents and the networks that connect and control these institutions (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Social capital explains the colloquialism, "it's not what you know, but who you know". Cultural capital is familiarity with and knowledge of symbols and cultural practices of the dominant class (Langhout, Rosselli, & Feinstein, 2007). The various levels of all three forms of capital in combination relate to the characteristics that compose each class in the social structure. Individuals' membership in a class group is contingent on a comparison of their acquired capital to the accumulated capital of the dominant society (Langhout, Rosselli, & Feinstein, 2007). Individuals make similar assessments when self-identifying as a member of a particular social class group. The three capitals of social class are very relevant to the current class structure in the United States. Accumulating economic capital and social capital is essential for class reproduction especially for individuals who are the most vulnerable to an economic downturn. The institutionalized cultural capital is important to consider in class discourse as social networks are developed and/or strengthened in higher educational contexts. Coleman (1988) provides a conceptualization of social capital specific to educational contexts. He posits that social capital can be operationalized to examine/explain differences in educational outcomes (e.g., achievement). However, this conceptualization does not account for vertical inequities, class stratification, class reproduction, and how social capital is a factor in "what makes a social class" - all concepts that are integral to understanding the ways social class as a status operates and influences how individuals make meaning of their own social class identity. Moreover, Coleman's work does not seem to allow for an examination of how social capital factors into

how individuals make sense of their status (i.e., social class label/identification) within a hierarchical/stratified society.

Overall, frameworks that conceptualize social class as a societal rank provides insight on how class groups are formed and how the characteristics, as well as the level of those characteristics, makes each class subgroup distinct. And although frameworks like Marx's (1967[1867]) primarily relies more on views of social class emphasizing structural and societally-defined markers, there are subjective elements embedded in many of these theories that relate to the psychological experience of class. For example, although Marx's theory concentrates on the influence of power and production on status, at least one aspect of his theory implies a psychological process associated with one's ascribed status (i.e., class-consciousness). The result of class-consciousness is an individual's adoption of behaviors, attitudes, and ideologies that are representative of both group membership and group norms. Bourdieu's theoretical concept of habitus also hints at the psychological process of a component of social class. According to Bourdieu (1987), habitus is the result of the interaction between objective structures and personal subjective experiences or histories and is engendered by an individual's position in the social structure. These "objective" structures are not absolute but are based in subjective consensus (e.g., what forms and types of the capitals are valuable, more prestigious, etc.). The individual internalizes the social structure and their place in it and subsequently assesses their life chances; this results in the development of aspirations and practices germane to their societal position (Dumais, 2002). The internalization process described above entails the individual making sense of the societally defined hierarchy in their internalization and subsequent beliefs systems around their social positions. This seems to directly implicate psychological identity (meaning making) as a part of this process. Moreover, this suggests that

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sociological approaches provide important insights into psychological social class identity processes, although they do not explicitly focus on individual identity.

Psychological Approach. Scholars that conceptualize social class as a socially constructed identity focus on the process of self-identifying/categorizing and the subjective experiences(s) that relate to the self-label. Psychologists from various areas (e.g., developmental, social, counseling) have developed theoretical frameworks around this conceptualization. For example, Palomar-Lever's (2007) findings offer evidence that social class identification is influenced not only by societally defined indicators of social status, but also other elements that are psychological and social in nature. In her study, she reported that factors such as self-esteem and perceived social support related to the differences in/inflation of some poor participants' subjective class identity and socioeconomic status (measured with objective class indicators). Early writings by social psychologist Richard Centers (1949; 1953) pushed forward the notion that social class is not just a position in a socioeconomic caste system but also a subjective identity that involves psychological processes. Centers (1949) argued that feeling a sense of belonging to a particular social class group is critical to one's self-categorization. Psychologists have employed many approaches that draw attention to the various facets of the subjective nature of social class and how individuals make meaning of their social class as a social identity.

Ostrove and Cole (2003) note that there is a "psychological experience of social class" (p. 682) that is absent in theoretical frameworks from other disciplines. Indeed, Liu et al. (2004a) contend that sociological conceptualizations of social class assume that individuals within a particular class share the same "worldview, attitudes, values, and beliefs" (p. 9) an assumption he challenges in his is Social Class Worldview Model (SCWM-R; 2002, 2015). The SCWM-R is grounded in social identity frameworks and was developed to move away from structural

sociological stratification approaches and provide psychologists with a theoretical model that explores the subjective social class experiences of individuals. Liu (2015) argues that a macro-approach to the study of social class assumes that individuals within the same class group view their status/position similarly and discounts the diverse intragroup worldviews. Further, he posits that people come to understand social class phenomena through their worldview which is influenced by interpersonal relationships and expectations. An individual's worldview influences their social-class behaviors, lifestyle considerations, and relationship to material objects. Overall, the SCWM aims to model, frame, and understand social class behaviors, attitudes, and cognitions (Liu, 2015).

According to Destin, Rheinschmidt-Same, & Richeson (2017), more recent social psychological research has conceptualized social class through one of two main approaches: the social cognitive approach and the cultural approach. The social cognitive approach emphasizes the link between SES and basic psychological tendencies such as prosocial behaviors and attention to external/internal forces. The bulk of research that uses this approach illustrates the relation between an individual's status and their subjective experiences related to their position in the social hierarchy (e.g., the way individuals view and interact with the world). The cultural approach to social class considers the influence of institutions (e.g., schools), contexts (e.g., neighborhoods), and circumstances (e.g., financial resources) on an individual's self-construal of their identity. This approach is useful for investigating the outcomes of individuals who cross social class boundaries and enter spaces/contexts that are culturally different from their former context (e.g., a student from a working class family matriculating into an Ivy League university). Destin, Rheinschmidt-Same, & Richeson (2017) argue that this "cultural mismatch" may "initiate processes that reshape or reinforce individuals' sense of self". Although the above

example of the cultural approach to social class focuses on students from more disadvantaged backgrounds entering more affluent spaces, this framework is useful for understanding how sociocultural factors impact the development and reshaping of people's sociocultural selves (part of an individual's self-concept influenced by the bidirectional relationship between the individual and social structures) across class backgrounds (Stephens, Markus, & Fryberg, 2012).

Drawing from narrative identity, social identity, and future identity research, Destin, Rheinschmidt-Same, and Richeson (2017) developed another approach to capture the subjective understanding, meaning, and value that people ascribe to their socioeconomic status called status-based identity. According to their framework, individuals make sense of their fluid and changing position within the socioeconomic hierarchy. The scholars propose that an approach centered on the concept of status-based identity is poised to guide, foster, and expand this emerging investigation of people's fluid understandings of their own SES. In sum, the above approaches acknowledge that an individuals' experience of social class is influenced by objective structures and other markers that indicate status/position in a socially stratified society and help to inform the research foci of the current study (i.e., meaning making of social class in a distinct context).

Questions related to individual variation in outcomes based on individual differences in meaning making around one's social class position require an examination of social class that centers how people define and attach meanings to their own social class position. For example, while structural indicators of social class (income, education) matter for psychological adjustment, how individuals define their own social class identification (implicating their perceived positioning relative to others) and their own feelings of attachment and emotion around their defined group also have unique relevance for how they fare psychologically.

The emphasis of sociological approaches on structural factors or "objective" indicators of social class also highlight that some objective indicators are consensus based (i.e., societal definitions of what is considered higher or lower status). Under this approach, individuals internalize these indicators in ways that influence their own group definitions and beliefs. Similarly, psychological approaches focus on individual differences in meaning making, but that meaning making must be considered in the context of structural and "objective" reality. That is, individuals come to view their social class status relative to others within a society that is stratified based on societal norms (historically and currently) and to the objective structural constraints and affordances based on these norms.

Conceptual Framework

The current study focus is on Black students' experience of their social class identity, but an examination of such a topic requires an understanding and acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of social class and race in the lives of Black Americans. As such, this study and conceptualized processes of focus draw on theories and research emphasizing the intersections of social class and race. An intersectional framework can elucidate how psychological processes associated with the meaning making in one domain of identity (e.g., social class) may become more complex when another identity domain (e.g., race) "is introduced into the theoretical and empirical discussion (Azmitia & Thomas, 2015).

Social identity frameworks and approaches have traditionally focused on the development of a singular identity (Ferguson, 2007). This absence of models and approaches that consider multiple identities is problematic and presents theoretical as well as methodological issues for scholars who have an interest in studying the intersection of multiple identities. Ferguson (2000) contends singular identity models "often omit experiences related to the

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convergence of multiple identities within one individual [and] few individuals define themselves with a single identity" (p. 9). Although intersectional conceptual models (e.g., Reynolds & Pope, 1991) were developed to investigate multiple identities years before Ferguson's (2000) assertion above, current identity literature shows an uptick in the development of intersectional frameworks that acknowledge the interplay of individuals' various social identities. For example, Jones and McEwen (2000), developed the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (MMDI) which describes the construction of personal identity and the influence of changing contexts on the relative salience of the intersection of an individual's multiple social identities (e.g., race, social class, gender). The MMDI also underscores the notion that no one social identity (referred to as "identity dimension" in the model) can be understood singularly; rather they can only be understood in relation to each other (Jones & McEwen, 2000). In the revised MMDI (Abes, Jones, and McEwen, 2007) the scholars added a "meaning-making filter" component to the model which further explicates and highlights how valuation of contextual influences relates to qualitative differences in identity salience and perception among individuals as well as the relationship between the intersection of multiple social identities and the self-concept.

Intersectionality and Intersecting Identities

Intersectionality acknowledges the unique experiences of individuals who are members of multiple marginalized socially and culturally constructed categories (Crenshaw, 1989) and is often used to examine how the multiple identities of individuals interact and relate to societal inequities and social injustice (Reimers & Stabb, 2015). This conceptualization of intersectionality was developed within legal studies and highlights the intricacies and nuances of oppression. Social scientists often incorporate this conceptualization in their studies as well and contend that an intersectional framework and/or approach is useful to both an examination of

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multiple marginalizations as well as studies that investigate the ways in which privileged and marginalized identities intersect to inform an individual's experiences who hold membership in both advantaged and disadvantaged social groups (e.g., Black and upper-middle class; Jones, 2009; Nash, 2008). Syed (2010) notes that early intersectional frameworks such as Crenshaw's (1989) that focuses on the relation between intersecting identities and structural oppression and societal inequities presents a challenge for psychological researchers who examine human behavior and/or mental processes. Thus, Syed (2010) argues for an intersectional approach or framework that considers how "individuals come to an awareness of the role of their intersecting identities in their own lives" (p. 61). Day-Vines, Patton, and Baytops (2003) note the necessity of an intersectional lens, specifically for race and class, when investigating how Black students make meaning of their identity and how the interplay of these two constructs shape one's self-concept. The authors further posit that race does not function independently of class for Blacks in the United States. Rather, the two identities interlock and relate to the overall functioning of Black people (Day-Vines, Patton, & Baytops, 2003). This research suggests that for Blacks, the meaning making of their social class identity, and its relevance to their daily lives, maybe uniquely tied to their membership in a societal stigmatized collective group.

In an attempt to capture the association between social class and race, scholars (e.g., Cole, 2008) have integrated intersectional approaches in their research to illuminate the interplay between these two social identities. For example, Fouad and Brown (2000) developed the Differential Status Identity (DSI) model as an attempt to understand and predict how race and social class operate together in the psychological development of individuals. The model draws from intergroup relations (Tajfel, 1982), social standing theory (e.g., Centers, 1949), and suggests that this multidimensional and psychological framework helps to explain how

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individuals "who share the same income bracket…and may qualify as a member of a particular class based on income, do not necessarily have a psychological or emotional identification with that class" (Thompson & Subich, 2007, p. 229). In this study, this would suggest, that class categories have different meanings for members of different racial and ethnic groups (i.e., Black students; Cole, 2003).

Multidimensional Framework of Social Class Identity.

The current study's framework for examining social class as a multidimensional construct was informed by a conceptual framework of social class identity developed by Webb (2014). The Multidimensional Framework of Social Class Identity (MFSCI; Webb, 2014) builds from Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) collective identity framework as well as other frameworks on collective and social identity (e.g., Identity Theory; Stryker & Serpe, 1982, 1994; Social Identity Theory; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Using the MFSCI allows us to examine how the different dimensions of social class identity relate with one another as well as how the various elements of the identity in the aggregate form collective identity profiles. Moreover, this model positions us to assess the various dimensions of collective identity using a person-centered approach and considers the influence of context in the relation between elements of collective identity and chosen outcomes (e.g., well-being).

Ashmore et al. (2004) define collective identity as a person variable composed of individual elements or dimensions of collective identification (e.g., race and class). It is a declaration of a categorical membership that is shared with others who (or are perceived to) possess characteristics similar to other in-group members. Collective identity is subjective in nature and is defined by the individual "whose identity is at stake". In other words, collective identity is only activated when an individual acknowledges the identity as a definitive

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aspect/facet of the self-concept. Group membership does not require confirmation or assurance from in-group members that one is an actual member of the category; rather, identifying oneself as a group member is an individual psychological state.

The collective identity framework used for this study builds from other similar theories of collective identity which include self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987); social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and identity theory (IT; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Briefly, SCT describes the socio-cognitive processes that result in an individual identifying with a social category or group and the group processes and behaviors associated with group membership. SIT was developed to examine the interplay between an individual's personal identities (i.e., the individual self) and their social identities (i.e., membership in a collective group) and the circumstances in which one shifts between the two identities. Social identity theorists (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1988) also propose that there is a link between cognitive processes and behaviors associated with group membership. In Identity Theory (IT; Stryker & Syrpe, 1982, 1994), an individual categorizes the self as an occupant of a role (e.g., teacher, student) and incorporates the meanings and expectations associated with that particular role into the self. Stets and Burke (2000), further note that these associated meanings and expectations "form a set of standards that guide behavior" (p. 225) as well as interaction with others (Andriot & Owens, 2012). As noted above, other identity theories (e.g., SIT and IT) provide varying but related conceptualizations of identity (e.g, Tajfel, 1978; Thoits & Vishurp). Although these frameworks of identity vary, the common thread that links these different conceptualizations is the notion that an individual's awareness and acceptance of group membership is based on meaningful characteristics, values, and emotions attached to the group. However, the collective identity framework is unique due to its emphasis on the individual rather

than the group. As Simon and Klandermans (2001) explain, a collective identity is an individual's identity as a member of a particular group and not the identity of the group itself.

Again, a key element in this framework is that a collective identity is multidimensional and is composed of many parts. Scholars who investigate other socially constructed identities (e.g., race and gender) have long argued for the use of frameworks that capture other elements of an identity that extend beyond the subjective self-label (e.g., Chung & Katayama, 1996; Egan & Perry, 2001; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Kraus, Park, & Tan (2017) note that, "because of its many facets, it is helpful to conceptualize social class (like race) as a 'bundle of sticks' that can be disaggregated and studied based on its specific elements" (p. 425). Conceptualizations and examinations of collective identities do not include/highlight all possible dimensions of the identity. Moreover, although there is consensus among scholars that collective identities are multidimensional there is less agreement on which aspects to include and are important, as well as how to define and assess the different dimensions of a collective identity. This lack of unanimity as it relates to social class is partially due to the relative novelty of studies that conceptualize and subsequently examine social class as a multidimensional collective identity. Recent frameworks and examinations of social class have also put forth evidence that this identity is made up of different parts. For example, Destin, Rheinschmidt-Same, & Richeson (2017) posit that an individual's status-based identity attached to their socioeconomic status is composed of the subjective meaning and value of their self-label. In Thomas and Azmitia's (2014) study, the researchers primarily examined two dimensions of social class identity – self-identification and the centrality/relative significance of this identity. However, the results of their study elucidated additional elements of social class identity which include the emotion/affective nature tied to one's subjective identification.

Webb (2014) also noted that social class identity is a multifaceted identity. Specifically, in her framework she posits that the dimensions relevant to an examination and further understanding of social class within a higher educational context are identification, centrality, and affect. Webb's (2014) multidimensional framework (Multidimensional Framework of Social Class Identity; MFSCI) draws on other collective identity models (e.g., MMRI; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). The MFSCI undergirds the notion that individuals within the same context (e.g., higher education) who share the same collective identity (e.g., middle-class) can endorse varying beliefs, attitudes, and emotions linked to their identity. Thus, the MFSCI allows for a within-group examination of variation across social class identity dimensions, which can provide information on the ways in which Black college students construct and make meaning of their social class identity in a distinct context (i.e., a PWI). The MFSCI does not specify what social class identity beliefs are adaptive and maladaptive. Rather, it grants researchers the ability to describe psychological aspects of social class relevant to an individual's social class identity.

In this study, I draw from Webb's (2014) framework in which she contends that identification, centrality, and affect are essential elements of social class identity. This framework is particularly appropriate for my interest in how Black college students' psychological adjustment and social class related experiences relate to how they think about their social class identity as they transition into their college context.

Identification. Identifying oneself as a member of a group, or self-categorization, is the most basic and essential element to collective identity and is necessary for other dimensions of an identity to be activated (Ashmore et al. 2004). According to self-categorization theory, individuals have the tendency to take disorganized stimuli (e.g., other individuals) and sort them

into groups or categories based on relevant similar or distinct characteristics (Ashmore et al., 2004). Individuals are constantly exposed to an array of stimuli that can be categorized. During categorization the defining characteristics of a group, or how an individual groups the stimuli, may depend on different goals and motives that are salient in that moment. The characteristic(s) that an individual uses as the basis of their categorization is dependent on a number of factors such as the situation, how the individual perceives the unorganized stimuli, and the context in which the categorization occurs. For example, an incoming freshman at an "elite" university may observe the material goods (e.g., clothes) or other indicators of social status (e.g., speech style/pattern; Brown, 2006) of other students and subsequently group their peers based on the perceived similarities and differences of these signals of status. In addition to placing other stimuli into categories, SCT posits that people place themselves into categories they perceive to be most congruent with relevant aspects of the self. The process of self-categorization results in an almost instantaneous attachment to the group and gives meaning to the collective identity that is emotionally significant to an individual's self-concept. When an individual begins to view themselves in terms of defining characteristics of the in-group they become depersonalized which strengthens an individual's attachment and identification with the group (Hogg, 2006). In other words, simply self-identifying with a group is enough to elicit norms, beliefs, behavior, and feelings that are prototypical of the in-group.

According to the MFSCI, the dimension of *identification* relates to an individual's social class self-label or how they define their social class. The identification dimension of an identity is critical to understanding the role one's self-label plays in their lived experience of that identity, especially in contexts where that identity is made salient. With regard to social class, one's identification with a social class group provides information pertinent to an understanding of

associated beliefs, behaviors, cognitive process, and motivation (Ellemers, 2010). In many

educational studies individuals are often ascribed a social class label by the researcher based on

one or a combination of objective indicators of class status (i.e., parental income, occupation,

education; Walpole, 2008). However, given that individuals' views of their own social class

status may be informed by their assessments of SES and non-SES factors (e.g., race; Lacy,

2004), relative status to others in their proximal contexts, among other factors, one may not

identify with the social class category to which they were assigned. Additionally, there may be

disagreement among in-group members on the definitive characteristics of the group as well as

the nomenclature for labeling the group. For example, an individual may believe that going on

family vacations is an indicator of their class status while another individual from the same class

group argues that it is not *if* you take vacations but *where* you go that makes one a member of

their particular class (Bourdieu, 1987; Fouad & Brown, 2000; Katz-Gerro & Shavit, 1998).

Indeed, Aries & Seider (2007) observed intraclass differences among students who reported

similar objective indicators of social class (e.g., parental level of education) but varied in their

perceived social class self-label/identification. The above demonstrates that individuals from

similar socioeconomic backgrounds/groups may differ in their social class identification.

Social class conceptualized as a status determined by objective structural indicators

relates to an individual's *current* socioeconomic standing and may shift throughout the lifetime

contingent upon upward or downward changes to one or more indicators (e.g., unemployment);

on the other hand, subjective social class identification is linked to one's sociocultural

background and typically remains stable (Rubin et al., 2014). Thus, it is not uncommon for

people's objective class position to not cleanly align with their subjective class self-label. Many

individuals in the U.S. identify as "middle class" although there is considerable variation within

the middle class across traditional objective markers of social status (Adair, 2001; Sosnaud, Brady, & Frenk, 2013). For example, in Lacy's (2004) examination of social class within the Black community, participants who identified as middle class included individuals with advanced degrees (e.g., M.D. and J.D.) and the median income of the sample was approximately $72,000. Even when accounting for inflation-adjusted income between the years of the respective studies, it is clear there is a portion of Blacks who self-identify as middle class but are upper-middle to upper class based on their socially determined markers of SES. The misalignment between Blacks' (and other racial/ethnic minorities') SES-based social standing and their social class self-label may relate to the ahistorical and acontextual nature of some social class frameworks as well as measures that do not consider the influence of other intersecting collective identities (Rubin et al., 2014). Lacy's (2004) study and similar examinations of social class, provides support for the idea that self-identified social class may be based on individuals' backgrounds of origin, to which they feel attachment and affective connection. Even upwardly mobile Blacks are more likely to be "first generation" middle to upper class, relative to Whites, who are more likely to have multiple generations in more privileged SES groups. The research above provides additional evidence that Black students' own social class definitions are often rooted in experiences that are not necessarily tied to traditionally assessed SES characteristics and that even SES-based categorization of social class can vary for Blacks.

Thomas & Azmitia (2014) state that social class poses a problem for social identity theory as well as self-categorization theory. The scholars contend that social class categorical membership is ambiguous, the associated self-label is mutable, and that delineation of class groups is not clear resulting in individuals being resistant to committing to a category (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). Although, SIT and SCT has limitations, assessing individuals' self-

identification provides a basis for further understanding processes linked to how people construct their identity relative to others as well as the opportunity to examine how this dimension relates to other facets of social class identity.

Scholars note that social class self-identification impacts students' experiences and outcomes in educational contexts. Additionally, students who identify with socially disadvantage groups, and/or have negative evaluations of their group membership regardless of the group's social status, may be more vulnerable to less than favorable experiences and adjustment in an environment where markers of class are prevalent. For example, in Torres and Massey's (2008) study a participant recalled how her awareness of her disadvantaged social class status related to some of the challenges she faced adjusting to the educational context/classroom environments. The student stated:

> I just felt like nobody could sympathize with me, or nobody could understand me as a black person, nobody could understand me as a - not poor, but a lower middle class person, you know what I mean, like nobody could understand that. (Torres & Massey, 2012, p. 8)

The above quote also elucidates how identifying with a group viewed as devalued (such as being lower middle class at PWIs) can be isolating. Moreover, the student comments also seems to suggest stress at being unrecognized due to being a poor Black person (which may be the typical conception of a Black person in such contexts) and not being from an advantaged social class background. Students who identify with more advantaged class groups (e.g., middle class) also express how their social class self-label uniquely contributes to their educational experiences (e.g., Stuber, 2006). Self-identified upper-middle class students in Stuber's (2006) study remarked that their social class identification played a significant role in many aspects of their extracurricular/social life which included selecting dating partners from similar backgrounds and their involvement in Greek life (e.g., selecting which organization to pledge based on cues of

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social class of current members social class status and/or reputation of house catering to affluent students). Some of the upper-middle class students noted that interacting with other affluent students elucidated the heterogeneity within their class group. For example, many of the upper-middle class students in Stuber's (2006) study distinguished themselves from their similarly privileged peers based on differences in values (e.g., not flaunting wealth via material goods) and moral dignity (e.g., minimizing privilege/being grateful for one's privilege). Assessing individuals' self-identification provides a basis for further understanding processes linked to how people construct their identity relative to others as well as the opportunity to examine how this dimension relates to other facets of social class identity. It is documented that social class self-identification choices impact students' experiences and adjustment to college (e.g., Aries & Seider, 2007; Stuber, 2006) and therefore is useful in investigating its relation to the psychosocial adjustment of Black students at PWIs.

The majority of educational literature that examines the relation between students' social class and their adjustment to college employs structurally-based measurements of class that, some scholars argue, assesses students' *socioeconomic status* and not their *social class identity* (Johnson, Richeson, & Finkel, 2011; Langhout, Drake, & Rosselli, 2009; Rubin et al., 2014). Although many researchers use the terms interchangeably their impact on the same outcome may differ. For example, many scholars report that students from lower SES backgrounds have difficulty adjusting to elite colleges relative to their more affluent peers (Langhout, Drake, & Rosselli, 2009; Lee, 2013; Lehmann, 2009; Walplole, 2003). This finding is even more pronounced for Black students as well as other racial/ethnic minority students (Sanders, 2012; Schwartz, Donovan, & Guido-DiBrito, 2009; Torres, 2009). Ostrove and Long's (2007) study also elucidates how socioeconomic status and subjective class identity relate differently to the

same outcome. Although the authors reported a moderate correlation between students' SES and social class self-label, only students' self-identified social class predicted social adjustment to college whereas SES did not (Ostrove & Long, 2007). Other identity scholars (e.g., Jetten, Iyer, Tsivrikos, & Young, 2008) argue for conceptualizing social class as a social identity, particularly in studies that include student participants and/or if the study is done within an educational context. They contend that a student's subjective social class self-identification "taps into students' assessment of their own social status more than objective measures of their parents' education, income, and occupation do" (Ostrove & Long, 2008, p. 381).

Suggested methods of assessing a collective identity include open-ended questions which allows individuals to simply write-in their identification (e.g., "I consider my social class background to be ____") as well as closed-ended questions that present a prompt asking participants to select from a list of predetermined options (e.g., poor, middle class; Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). These measures provide important information regarding a person's self-selected social category (i.e., unidimensional measure of social class identity). However, self-identification alone does not provide information on other aspects of that categorization such as the meaning and importance of that category.

Centrality. The second element of the MFSCI, *centrality*, focuses on the importance or significance membership in a social class group is to an individual's overall self-concept (Ashmore et al., 2004). Research on collective identity provides evidence that individuals assess the importance of their membership in social groups and that the importance of a shared collective identity varies among in-group members (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1995; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). In the current study, centrality is the degree to which a person normatively defines him or herself with regard to social class. According to Ashmore et al.

(2014) there are two parts to this dimension of a collective identity – *explicit importance* and *implicit importance*.

In the MFSCI framework, the conceptualization of social class centrality is akin to *explicit importance*. The explicit importance of an identity is the subjective significance individuals place on a collective identity as it relates to their overall sense of self. In other words, it is the level (high or low) of importance of one's self-defined social class group entity to one's overall self-definition. Historically, social identity theory articulates the self as composed of numerous identities (e.g., upper-middle class, Black, student) that are hierarchically arranged relative to their level of significance by and to the individual (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Although the concept of centrality was based in Social Identity Theory positing hierarchical organization of identities, the current examination of Black students' centrality does not reflect this assumption. Black students' view of their social class identity may be grounded in their race and social class rather than distinct (e.g., being a lower class Black student in a PWI is a unique experience) as social identities are often experienced in conjunction with each other (Ostrove & Cole, 2003). Stryker and Serpe's (1994) framework also makes the case that higher centrality may be a function of an identity being made salient frequently (i.e., chronic salience). Given the above, it is conceptually plausible that social class centrality may function uniquely for Blacks who are in contexts where both race and class are salient. Studies conducted by identity scholars (e.g., Aries & Seider, 2005) describe and assess dimensions of social class identity beyond self-identification, such as centrality, that may account for within-group differences in experiences and adjustment among individuals in educational contexts.

Research on other social identities demonstrate variation in individuals' centrality. For instance, in Charmaraman's & Grossman's (2010) study of Black, Latino, Asian, and Multiracial

adolescents', participants' level of centrality (i.e., significance of their race and ethnicity) is not uniform across or within racial-ethnic minority groups. The scholars reported that the significance of individuals' racial and ethnic identity vary within their respective racial/ethnic groups. Additional identity research demonstrates how the level of identity centrality may fluctuate in tandem with other elements of a collective identity (e.g., Richardson et al., 2014; Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter, 2008; Worrell, Vandiver, Schaefer, Cross, & Fhagen-Smith, 2006). For example, Carter (2015) found that the degree to which a deaf individual normatively defines him/herself with regard to being deaf (i.e., deaf centrality) varied within the sample of deaf participants. The differences in levels of deaf centrality were partially influenced by the levels of other dimensions of deaf identity such as severity of hearing loss and the age when an individual becomes deaf. Similarly, in the current study the level of social class centrality may also be influenced by the level of another dimension. Scholars that have investigated the centrality dimension of a collective identity report its influence on psychosocial outcomes in educational contexts (e.g., sense of belonging, distress, well-being; Brittian et al., 2013; Perry et al., 2016; Settles, O'Connor, & Yap, 2016). Further, scholars posit that higher levels of centrality of a particular identity may relate to individuals being more attuned to and subsequently focus on certain cues during interpersonal interaction and social events (Carter, 2015; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997; Szymanski & Lewis, 2016). The awareness of social cues linked to heightened levels of centrality also has implications for one's emotional response to the event/cue or social interaction (e.g., Martin, 2015; Radmacher & Azmitia, 2013; Thomas & Azmitia, 2014).

Scholars have assessed the centrality (i.e., explicit importance) of a collective identity to an individual in various ways. Some researchers operationalize centrality with one item that

questions participants on the importance of a particular identity to their self-concept (e.g., "How important to you is your race/ethnicity in describing who you are?"; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009). These type of questions are usually assessed via a Likert-type response scale that uses bipolar nomenclature such as "not at all important" to "very important" to anchor each side of the scale. Measures of centrality in other collective identity studies ask people to rank multiple identities (e.g., race, gender, religion, sexual orientation) in order of relative importance to their sense of self (e.g., Turner & Spears, 2007). In the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI), racial centrality is assessed with multiple items that tap into Black individual's attachment to their racial group as well as the extent to which being Black is important to the definition of the self (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). In the MFSCI, centrality subscale of the developed social class identity measure was adapted from conceptually similar measures (i.e., MIBI, Sellers et al., 1997; CSES, Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) of collective identity to assess the extent to which social class is an important part of an individual's self-concept. Other studies have measured the centrality of other collective identities using similar assessment approaches and tools (e.g., gender, Szymanski & Lewis, 2016; religion, Dezutter, Luyckx, Robertson, & Hutsebaut, 2010).

Recent identity literature demonstrates that social class is one of the most important facets of identity formation during emerging adulthood (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). Empirical research that includes an examination of social class centrality is limited but provides essential information on this element of social class identity. In their study of the significance and meaning of social class identity, Thomas and Azmitia (2014) examined how important social class is to college students' self-concept relative to their race and gender identities. The scholars' reported that regardless of class background, participants rated social class as significantly more

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important than their gender and ethnicity. Moreover, the descriptive results of their study displayed that the majority of middle- to upper-class students rated social class as very significant to their daily-lived experience while only one student from a less privileged background rated social class at this same level of importance. The participants in the study identified with various racial backgrounds. However, the authors did not disaggregate the sample by race so it is unknown if social class being more central than race is significant for each racial group. Aries and Seider's (2007) examination of social class provided results similar to Thomas and Azmitia (2014) such that participants across class backgrounds rated social class as a very important identity, with affluent students rating social class significantly more important to their identity than their less affluent peers. Interestingly, the findings of both studies related to social class being of more importance to affluent/privileged students compared to their more disadvantaged peers counters an assumption of social identity theory (i.e., less privileged social status associated with higher significance of a particular social identity). Other studies indicate that social class is also significant to the self-concept of students from lower social strata. For example, in Hurst's (2007) study, a working-class participant expressed that "not a day goes by" that she does not think about class and the stark differences between her background and those of her more affluent classmates. Similarly, Schwartz, Donovan, and Guido-DiBrito (2009) observed that less affluent participants in their study noted how the importance of class surfaced during the formation of social and professional relationships (e.g., friendship choice, interacting with faculty). The aforementioned studies provide conflicting results which may partially be linked to differences in sample characteristics (e.g., all White vs multiple races) and how centrality was operationalized and measured. That being said, they provide information on the variation of

social class centrality among college students as well as differences within and between class groups on this dimension of social class identity.

Although studies that examine social class centrality is scant, there are a few examples from literature on other social identities (e.g., race) that provide evidence of the link between the importance of a particular identity (e.g., racial centrality) and how individuals perceive and adjust to distinct educational contexts. For example, in Chavous' (2000) examination of the association between African American undergraduate students' perception of congruence between their ethnic cultural background and the context of a PWI, she found that students with higher levels of racial centrality experienced a stronger feeling of "fit" between their ethnicity and their institution. Sanchez, Bentley-Edwards, Matthews, & Granillo (2016) investigation on the relation between Black adolescents' racial identity and perceptions of identity threat (operationalized as perceived racial discrimination) provided additional evidence of the influence of identity centrality. Using profile analysis of racial identity, the researchers found that racial identity profile groups that reflected strong racial group identification perceived their school environment as more discriminatory. Research also found that strongly identifying with one or more marginalized social identities (i.e., Black, gay, Black and gay) related to study participants' perception of compatibility with, and subsequently decision to attend, either an HBCU or a PWI (Squire & Mobley, 2014). These studies demonstrate that the extent to which one perceives a collective or social identity to be central to their self-concept can influence their perception of congruence between their cultural background and educational institutions.

Within the identity literature, the importance/significance of one's identity has also been linked to an individual's psychological well-being. Scholars who have examined the direct association between identity centrality and psychological well-being report divergent results. For

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example, in Perry et al. (2015) study results revealed that higher levels of racial centrality increased the levels of maladaptive outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and perceived stress. French and Chavez (2010), on the other hand, found that among the Latino participants in their study higher levels of ethnic centrality was associated with lower levels of depression (one of three elements the researchers conceptualized and operationalized as a measure of psychological well-being). Yet, other scholars (e.g., Settles, O'Connor, & Yap, 2016; Kertzner, Meyer, Frost, & Stirratt, 2009) report no significant relation between centrality of a collective identity (e.g., gender centrality and LGBTQ centrality) and well-being.

In addition to centrality being operationalized as a stand-alone element of a collective identity that has a direct influence on psychological adjustment outcomes, scholars have also conceptualized that this dimension simultaneously operates with other facets of identity that relate to individual differences on selected outcomes. The bulk of these studies conceptualize individuals possessing varying levels of selected identity characteristics (e.g., centrality) who are then matched and subsequently grouped with other individuals with similar characteristics. These profile groups are then assessed for their distinctiveness from each other as well as how they relate to variation in outcomes. For example, Banks and Kohn-Wood (2007) conceptualized racial identity as a multidimensional collective identity and operationalized the construct via profile groups. The researchers found significant differences in racial centrality between each profile group. Notably, the profile group with the lowest level of racial centrality resulted in a significantly stronger association between perceived discrimination and depressive symptoms relative to profiles with higher levels of centrality. Again, it is not my contention that centrality was the sole contributor to the relationship between discrimination and depressive symptoms.

However, these studies highlight how varying levels of centrality, alone or in combination with other identity dimensions, may play a unique role in identity related processes.

Qualitative and mixed-methods studies provide evidence that individuals may not always be immediately aware or conscious of the importance or significance of social class to their self-concept or everyday lived experiences. Interviews from other studies also indicate that constant exposure to and engagement in certain campus events and environments in which class may become salient also relates to how individuals assess the importance of their own social class. Armstrong and Hamilton (2013) note that the social experiences and events in college, particularly in residential halls and with sorority/fraternity life, are class-saturated aspects of student life. The authors observed that the social interaction in dorms often involved conversations and observations of peers that illuminated differences between students (e.g., family vacations, designer clothes) and resulted in many individuals thinking more about their own class background and identity, and how it relates to their perception of "fit" into the college milieu. Many of the participants also discussed how class played a significant role in navigating Greek life, an aspect of college participants deemed critical to one's overall social experience.

Affect. The third dimension of the MFSCI is social class identity *affect* - the emotion(s) linked to one's social class. Webb (2014) describes this element of social class identity as being akin to the affective dimension in Ashmore et al. (2004) collective identity framework, an extension of earlier conceptualizations of collective identity frameworks (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, and Broadnax, 1994; Sellers et al., 1998). The scholars cited above (e.g., Crocker et al., 1994) contend that individuals assess their collective identity, positively or negatively, which may result in emotions (e.g., pride) attached to their collective group(s). In other words, there is an evaluative process inherent in social class identity affect such that emotions (e.g., guilt)

connected to group membership is partially a result of one's evaluation, favorable or

unfavorable, of the group itself. For example, an affluent individual who experiences feelings of

guilt attached to their membership in a privileged social group likely harbors some negative

perceptions (e.g., ungrateful, self-serving, morally impoverished; Stuber, 2006) related to the

group. These negative perceptions that relate to guilt are prevalent in the narratives of affluent

individuals who struggle with their contribution to societal inequities via their monetary

inheritance and social standing (Kasperkevic, 2015; Perry, 2003). The majority of the literature

on emotions, specifically self-conscious emotions, focus on how events and situations trigger an

evaluative process that results in positive or negative feelings. In addition to the evaluative

process of social class identity affect Webb (2014) contends that this dimension also considers

"the *extent* [emphasis added] that individuals derive positive or negative affect/emotion from

their group membership" (p. 30). In the MFSCI, Webb proposes three sub-dimensions to

examining social class identity affect: *pride, shame, and guilt*.

The social class identity affect sub-dimensions are also known as self-conscious

emotions. Self-conscious emotions are a distinct class of emotions that assist in one's ability to

successfully navigate various social contexts and environments. Moreover, this category of

emotions helps monitor our interactions with others in an attempt to maintain socially acceptable

behavior (Muris & Meester, 2013; Tracy & Robbins, 2006). Self-conscious emotions often come

to the fore during identity-relevant events and situations during which an "individual perceives

and evaluates the self from the perspective of another person using some kind of internalized

ideal standard" (Muris & Meester, 2013, p. 21). Briefly, identity-relevant events are situations

that trigger a self-evaluative process in which the individual is concerned with the perspective of

others regarding social acceptance and status (Muris & Meester, 2013). When an individual

perceives the evaluations of others as positive, he/she will feel positive emotions such as pride; when the evaluations are perceived as negative, the individual will experience negative emotions such as shame and guilt. The difference between the self-conscious emotions examined in this study is that one is conceptualized as positive (*pride*) and the others as negative (*shame and guilt*).

Additional frameworks also inform the conceptualization of the social class identity affect element of the MFSCI. Specifically, Webb (2014) cites Intergroup Emotion Theory (IET; Mackie, Smith, & Ray, 2008) as an essential framework for understanding the emotions one experiences as a function of their affiliation or membership in a social group. The IET framework (Mackie, Smith, & Ray, 2008) stems from other social identity perspectives and frameworks such as social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner et al., 1987), and appraisals theory of emotion (Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 1984) in order to understand intergroup behavior via group-based emotional reactions. Smith and Mackie (2015) contend that when people psychologically identify with a group identity that becomes salient, membership in that group becomes an extension of the self and individuals perceive themselves less as an individual and more as member of a group (i.e., deindividuation), their emotional response to an event is reflective of their group membership/extended self. Moreover, situations or events that remind individuals of a valued collective identity will influence their emotions. Examples of situations in which this process occurs include intergroup conflict, commemorative days (e.g., 9/11), social comparison, and class-based social movements like Occupy Wall Street (Smith & Mackie, 2015).

According to IET, emotional self-stereotyping and intergroup appraisal are two mechanisms responsible for what intergroup emotions are experienced (Mackie, Smith, & Ray,

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2008). Emotional self-stereotyping is when an individual perceives themselves as an in-group member and expresses emotions typical of the collective group (e.g., President Obama's remarks about the murder of Trayvon Martin). Intergroup appraisal explains how an individual who identifies themselves as a member of a collective group cognitively appraises a situation or event based on the implications for their in-group. The type of emotions (positive or negative) an individual experiences is contingent upon his/her evaluation of the situation and if the situation or event has negative/positive implications for their in-group. For example, a working-class Latina student described the anger she felt when one of her classmates accused a student on financial aid of spending "her [classmate] parents' tax money" on what the classmate considered a luxury/nonessential item (a digital camera; Radmacher & Azmitia, 2013). In her retelling of the event the Latina student stated, "Right away if they think you're a Latina, they think you're poor. So, I think that's what angered me the most . . ." (p. 321)

Prior scholarship provides evidence that support the assumptions and tenants of IET. For example, in their experiment on anger self-stereotyping and collective action, Leonard, Moons, Mackie, and Smith (2011) reported that when women perceived other members of their in-group as angry (the emotion was elicited via a manipulated gendered discriminatory vignette), they reported being angry as well when thinking of themselves as members of the in-group (women). This feeling of collective anger also significantly related to the propensity of participants taking action/responding to the discriminatory event on behalf of the group. In Seider's (2008) examination of social class, a participant reported that pride in her working class roots partially stems from a work ethic and drive she claims is distinct to less affluent/privileged students. The participant continued and stated, "If I was born rich the difference would be that there would be

no necessity for such a drive in a kid" (p. 51). These studies demonstrate the link between emotions and self-categorization/self-label of a collective identity.

In the next section, I describe the three sub-dimensions of social class identity affect, discuss pertinent research related to collective emotions, and discuss how each sub-dimension of social class identity affect may relate to psychological adjustment.

Pride. In the MFSCI, *pride* is conceptualized as the positive feelings one holds as it relates to their membership in a particular social class group. Specifically, feelings of pride and self-respect related to one's social class label describes this affective element of social class identity (Webb, 2014). Positive appraisals or evaluations of one's collective group is a proposed dimension of other identity theories and frameworks and inform the conceptualization of social class pride in the MFSCI. For example, according to Social Identity Theory (SIT) individuals aspire to develop and maintain a positive image of the self and the social groups in which they are members (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Moreover, when the perception of the social group is negative or of a lower social status, group members engage in psychological work and identity management processes to bolster the positive characteristics of the group and in turn their own identity.

Social class identity pride is also conceptually similar to Luthanen and Crocker's (2003) *private self-esteem* and the *private regard* dimensions of the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998). Drawing from Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), Luthanen and Crocker (1992) conceptualized a four-dimensional model of a collective identity termed collective self-esteem (CSE; Katz, Joiner, & Kwon, 2002). The scholars developed a measure, the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES), that assesses individuals' feelings and attitudes related to the four proposed dimensions of a particular

collective identity (e.g., class, gender). One of the four types is *private self-esteem*, which is an individual's positive appraisal of the collective group and their membership within the group. Extant studies that use the CSES provide evidence of the link between collective self-esteem and positive psychological adjustment outcomes. For example, Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, and Broadax (1994) reported a positive relationship between private self-esteem and psychological well-being (i.e., personal self-esteem and life satisfaction) among a racially/ethnically diverse college student sample.

The Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) offers a conception of racial identity that considers the meaning and significance of race in the lives of African Americans (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). The dimension of *Regard* in the MMRI is delineated into two sub-dimensions (*public regard* and *private regard*) with the latter being conceptually analogous to the *private self-esteem* subscale from the CSES. According to Sellers and his colleagues (1997), *private regard* reflects, "the extent to which individuals feel positively or negatively towards African Americans as well as how positively or negatively they feel about being an African American" (p. 26). Results from examinations of racial identity highlight the positive association between private regard and psychological adjustment. In their study, on the relation between racial identity and well-being, Yap, Settles, and Pratt-Hyatt (2011) reported a positive relation between private regard and life satisfaction (the author's conceptualization of well-being) among a sample of African American men and women.

The collective identity framework developed by Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) states that following self-categorization, evaluation (positive/negative attitudes toward a particular social category) of a particular collective identity is the next critical step in the identity process. Specifically, the form of evaluation the scholars mention that is akin to

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social class identity pride is *private regard* or the extent to which one feels favorable towards

their identity connected to a collective group (Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004;

Sellers et al., 1998).

Collective pride is a group-based emotion experienced when an individual expresses

positive feelings attached to their membership with the in-group. Research on collective pride is

in its nascent stage resulting in relatively few empirical studies (e.g., Leeuwen, Dijk, & Kaynak,

2013; Schori-Eyal, Tagar, & Halperin, 2015) that focus directly on the experience of pride as a

group based emotion. Moreover, the bulk of this line of research examines the relation between

collective pride and intergroup relations and focuses on the moral implications of collective pride

(e.g., Harth, Kessler, & Leach, 2008). The feeling of collective pride may surface due to factors

such as comparing typical achievements and successes of the in-group to out-group(s) and the in-

group's past or current positive interactions and treatment with members of the out-group

(Mashuri & Zaduqisti, 2014). Harth, Leach, and Kessler (2013) add that experiencing collective

pride can also derive from perceiving the in-group as moral, having certain advantages over out-

groups, and prevailing in a competition. For example, a working-class student in Hinz's (2016)

study expressed that her values and spending habits were superior to those of her more affluent

peers. She went on to state that she is "proud" that her achievements are a direct result of her

hard work and not the social connections and resources she linked to the success of her more

privileged (i.e., middle class) peers.

Emerging research on social class suggests that individuals can and do emote feelings of

collective pride tied to their social class background/identification (e.g., Aries & Seider, 2005;

Manstead, 2018; Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). Individuals from across the social class spectrum

report feeling social class identity pride for diverse reasons some which are influenced by other

intersecting identities (Cole & Omari, 2003; Moore, 2008). Yet, within the education literature

social class pride is often used when describing the experiences of first generation college

students (often used as a proxy for lower class status), students from less privileged backgrounds,

or the sample consists of ethnic/racial minorities from lower class backgrounds. In Thomas and

Azmitia's (2014) study the researchers reported that some working- and middle class students

expressed pride in being from a less resourced as well as a privileged background when making

upward comparisons to their more affluent peers. Similar to their less privileged peers, FGCs

also discussed feeling proud of being able to navigate foreign and sometimes threatening

educational context with less social, cultural, and economic capital than students from wealthier

precollege backgrounds (Jehangir, 2010; Martin, 2015; Wang, 2014). On the other hand, when

affluent students discuss being proud of their social class background it is often framed as being

"blessed" or "lucky" to come from a background that prepared them for both the social and

academic aspects of college (e.g., Thomas & Azmitia, 2014).

Examinations by scholars who used racially homogenous samples highlight that

individuals' social class experiences, especially for people of color, may be racialized (or their

racial experiences "classed") in that their experience of social class is also grounded in their

experience linked to their race. Black students in Torres' (2009) study on 'culture shock' made

observational statements such as, "Being black, I've noticed I'm poor…" (p. 898), but still

expressed pride in being able to attend and navigate an elite university alongside "the white

students…driving around in $35,000 cars" (p. 896). In their examination on the meaning of

social class to Mexican male college students, Schwartz, Donovan, and Guido- DiBrito (2009)

found that the importance of the participants' Mexican identity would always surface in their

responses to questions about social class. In other words, their ethnic and social class identities were so intertwined that one could not be understood without the other.

For affluent ethnic/racial minorities social class pride may be tied to race based on the notion that they achieved their privileged social class status despite the societal impediments distinct to ethnic/racial minorities in the U.S. (e.g., racism; Cole, Omari, 2003; Graham, 1998). For example, in Heard's (1989) report on a debutante ball sponsored by The Links, Incorporated* a member remarked, "We're proud of our success, and we play it up. Some may call us pompous, but we achieve and go back to help others…that's what we teach our children" (p. 1). The pride in being Black and of a privileged social status expressed above was echoed by other members of the Black "elite" interviewed in Graham's (1998) book on the Black upper-middle class. For example, a Jack & Jill* mother recalled a period of time when she was hesitant in disclosing her membership status to "certain Black friends" but,

> realized that what I was really apologizing for was this group's focus on shaping
> successful kids… And frankly, every other group—Jews, Asians, and other ethnic
> persuasions—values families and takes pride in their accomplishments. Why shouldn't
> we? This is supposed to be an elite group." (p. 43)

Graham notes that many upper-middle class Blacks may emote pride in their social status given that "Black accomplishment is inexorably tied to a lingering resentment about our past as poor, enslaved Blacks and our past and current treatment by Whites" (p. 18). Together, the studies cited above buttressed by the interviews by Heard (1989) and Graham (1998) highlight how social class is racialized (Madden, 2015) and individuals who hold membership in disparate social status groups can express pride attached to their social class.

Recall that the dimension of social class pride is conceptually similar to private regard in the MMRI (Sellers et al., 1998) and private self-esteem in the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). As such, findings from studies that incorporate these

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measures may provide insight on how positive feelings linked to a collective identity relate to psychological adjustment. For example, Latino students who endorse more positive feelings about their ethnic group tend to have higher self-esteem, an association mediated by students' sense of community (Rivas-Drake, 2012). Rowley et al. (1998) found that private regard related to self-esteem only for those with higher centrality, while private regard and self-esteem were unrelated for those with lower centrality. Additionally, Lige, Peteet, and Brown (2017) found similar results among African-American college students such that racial private regard was significantly associated with self-esteem and imposter syndrome. In other words, African American students who felt positive towards their racial in-group tend to have higher self-esteem and lower levels of imposter syndrome. Taken together, these studies demonstrate that positive affect (i.e., pride) related to membership in a particular collective group may result in positive/favorable psychological adjustment and in some instances may exacerbate negative psychological outcomes.

Shame. Shame, as described in the MFSCI, is a self-conscious emotion that relates to negative feelings about one's social class identification and background. According to Webb (2014), social class identity shame may involve a want to mute one's social class, feelings of unworthiness, and internalizing negative images imposed by members of the out-group. In the MFSCI, shame is not conceptualized as another version of guilt or simply the opposite of pride. Rather, shame is a distinct affective experience of social class with unique antecedents, psychological process, and behavioral and psychological adjustment outcomes.

Shame is often a result of an individual violating certain unwritten or explicit rules of social conduct. Antecedents specific to shame include disappointment in oneself, poor performance (e.g., academic task), and role and/or identity-inappropriate behavior (e.g.,

politician voting for a bill that disproportionately negatively impacts his/her constituents; Keltner, 2010). When an individual becomes aware of their transgression he/she may feel devalued and believe there is a moral flaw in their self-concept. Morrison (1996) describes shame as a direct blow to the self-concept that includes self-loathing and a negative perception of ourselves which may be self-contrived based on how we expect and think others experience us. According to Meers and Muris (2013) the experience of shame can function as a catalyst for defensive and avoidance behavior as well as affirm subordinate status for those in the lower echelon of a socially stratified society.

As mentioned earlier, shame was not always considered a distinct self-conscious emotion. Many scholars have conceptualized shame as the "twin" of guilt and often use the two terms synonymously (Cohen, Wolf, Panter, & Insko, 2011; Keltner & Buswell, 1996; Tracy & Robins, 2004). However, there are critical differences between these negative emotions. For example, although guilt and shame can be elicited by similar types of situations they differ by self-behavior ("I did a bad thing" = guilt versus "I am a bad person" = shame) and whether the transgression was relatively private (guilt) or publicly exposed (shame) (Cohen, Wolf, Panter, & Insko, 2011; Velotti, Garolfalo, Bottazzi, & Caretti, 2017).

Collective shame is prompted by one's evaluation that their in-group is responsible for a societal transgression that reflects negatively on their group identity (Piff, Martinex, & Keltner, 2011). Webb (2014) notes that theoretical and empirical literature conceptualizes and describes collective shame as an affect experienced when an individual perceives their in-group as engaging in public acts and behaviors that are morally reprehensible and connote the idea that members of the in-group are indeed flawed. Identity-relevant events in particular exacerbate feelings of collective shame. For example, in Harvey and Oswald's (2000) study, White students

who were exposed to a shame-inducing stimuli in the civil-rights condition (civil-rights video) reported significantly higher feelings of shame than their White peers in different conditions. In her description of collective shame, Webb (2014) notes that the majority of literature on collective shame focuses on the experiences and feelings of dominant groups related to past infringements on lower status groups. The literature reviewed for the current study (e.g., Brown, Gonzlaez, Zagefka, Manzi, & Cheajic, 2008) buttresses her observation. However, scholarship that includes an examination of affect related to one's social class background often focuses on the experiences of collective shame of individuals from less affluent social class origins.

Theoretical discourse about class related shame appeared in the literature as early as the writings of Confucius and Aristotle (Harris, 2014). Both philosophers posited that experiences of shame can lead to adaptive behavior such has preventing future shame-inducing transgressions but differed on their thoughts about characteristics that makes one more prone to experiencing this particular affect. Aristotle argued that feeling shame was reserved for "freeborn males from families of ample means" and Confucius claimed that neither background nor upbringing are prerequisites for acquiring a sense of shame (Harris, 2014). Current literature on social class identity shame mainly focuses on the experiences of first generation college students and students from less privileged backgrounds and demonstrate that many students from disadvantaged backgrounds report feeling more social class identity shame relative to their more affluent peers (Aries & Seider, 2005; Hinz, 2016; Lehmann, 2009). Many participants in these studies express that the middle class cultural mores of the university context, the constant exposure to stark differences in background between themselves and their more affluent peers, and the psychological processes associated with upward class mobility relate to their experiences of social class identity shame (Felski, 2000; Hurst, 2007; Lehmann, 2014; Martin, 2015; Rubin,

2012). For example, in Policar's (2010) narrative of her path from growing up in a working class family to her current upper-middle class position via education and "marrying up", she discussed her many experiences of social class shame which were triggered by peer comparisons and the process of managing her old working class identity with her ascribed (and eventually self-labeled) upper-middle class identity. She described how her working class background was often exposed by her unfamiliarity with middle – upper-middle class culture and decorum. Recall that upwardly mobile individuals also expressed feeling guilty during their ascendance to a more privileged status (Reay, 2005). This provides further support that similar class based experiences can lead to distinct related negative affect (e.g., guilt and shame). The studies cited above as well as other literatures captured social class identity shame by examining the narratives of participants in each respective study. To date no known study includes a quantitative measure of social class identity shame which limits our knowledge of how this particular affect may vary within and across social class groups.

Studies suggest that constant threats to one's social self (e.g., social status) is often accompanied by increases in shame (Dickerson, Gruenewald, & Kemeny, 2004). These threats can be explicit such as a verbal denigration specific to a salient social identity or more clandestine and embedded within the environmental context (e.g., academic buildings named after Confederate military officers). The accumulation of threats may amplify the experience of shame which in some cases may lead to maladaptive outcomes. Velotti, Garfolo, Bottazzi, and Caretti (2017) note that a sense of inferiority, desire to retreat/hide, helplessness, and low self-esteem are often consequences of consistent experiences of shame. Additional research confirms the relation between shame and depression (Kim, Thibodeau, & Jorgensen, 2011), distress (Dickerson, Gruenewald, & Kemeny, 2004), anxiety (Molarius et al., 2009), and psychological

well-being (Starrin, Aslund, & Nilsson, 2009). Studies within higher educational literature indicate that students who experience social class identity shame are vulnerable to array of deleterious outcomes. Lehmann (2007) observed that experiences of social class shame was a primary cause of attrition among FGC and working class students. He reported that the juxtaposition of students' values, behaviors, and tastes related to FGCs and less affluent students' feelings of social class identity shame and the belief that "people like them" do not belong or fit in the university context (Lehmann, 2007). Moreover, Policar (2006) found that experiences of social class identity shame result in "shame-laden" conflicted identities and other psychological conflicts related to individuals' social class background.

  Guilt. In the MFSCI *guilt* is conceptualized as a negative emotion that stems from feelings of remorse linked to opportunities, earned or given, afforded to an individual linked to their social class background. Studies that discuss students' feeling of guilt associated with their social class background often focus on those from less privileged backgrounds as it relates to their experiences in an unfamiliar class-saturated context (e.g., a highly selective/elite university; Covarrubias, Romero, Trivelli, 2015; Jack, 2016; Torres & Massey, 2016). However, in the MFSCI, guilt is conceptualized as an emotion that can be experienced by all regardless of one's status or social class background. For example, it is possible that students from more privileged backgrounds experience guilt as a result of their awareness of societal inequities as well as their own privilege in an unbalanced stratified society. Less advantaged students may experience feelings of guilt for "leaving" their families and communities to pursue an education which may eventually result in a more privileged social status relative to their class of origin (Moreno, 2016).

Guilt is an emotion that is typically experienced during an event or situation where a societal behavior norm or one's conscience has been violated and results in the individual feeling regret, remorse, and/or distress for their infraction (Muris & Meester 2013). Guilt stems from a negative evaluation of a specific behavior often followed by individuals feeling regret and remorse for their transgression. Moreover, the experience of guilt occurs when an individual makes internal, unstable, specific attributions to their unfavorable behavior (Tracy & Robins, 2009; Webb, Heisler, Call, Chickering, 2007). For example, a student who did not study for an exam and earned an "F" may feel guilty about their lack of preparation that resulted in their failing grade. Scholars posit that guilt is also a "private" emotion that does not require an audience to elicit the emotion which is distinct from related negative self-conscious emotions like shame and embarrassment (Cohen, Wolf, Panter, & Insko, 2011). When individuals experience guilt the associated negative feelings (e.g., regret and remorse) often serve as a mechanism that motivates individuals to repair their misdoing and prevent them from engaging in that particular behavior in the future.

Guilt as described above is often used when discussing or examining events and situations at an individual level. However, according to IET, guilt can also be experienced as a function of membership in a collective group. Collective guilt arises when an individual identifies as a member of a particular social group that they perceive has breached moral social norms and in turn experiences emotions on behalf of the in-group (Wohl & Branscombe, 2005). This form of guilt is distinct from personal/individual guilt such that one can experience collective guilt without being directly involved in the past or current harm the in-group inflects on another group. For example, individuals who identify as White may feel guilty for the vile and immoral behavior some of their predecessors engaged in towards Black people during

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slavery through the current time. The level of collective guilt one experiences may depend on the magnitude of the in-group transgressions (Bizman, Yinon, & Krotman, 2001) as well as the extent to which members identify with the group (Goto & Karasawa, 2011; Gunn & Wilson, 2011). For example, Myers, Hewston, & Cairns (2009) found that highly identifying as a White Canadian predicted higher levels of collective guilt for the mistreatment of Aboriginals. Additional literatures on collective guilt note that when in-group members experience collective guilt they engage in defensive and reparative strategies in an attempt to perceive the in-group positively as well as make amends to the groups impacted by the past wrongdoings of the in-group (Leeuwen, Dijk, & Kaynak, 2013; Sibley, Robertson, & Kirkwood, 2005). For example, an upper-middle class participant in Thomas and Azmitia's (2014) study expressed low guilt tied to her social class. The participant explained that she was not at fault for her privileged background and there is nothing she can do change her position or that of her less wealthy roommate.

Studies that examine collective guilt of privileged groups suggest that dominant groups are more prone to experiencing collective guilt relative to lower status groups (e.g., Castano & Giner-Sorolla, 2006; Rice et al., 2016). However, in the MFSCI it is not assumed that social status determines one's ability to experience collective guilt. In fact, Webb (2014) argues that collective guilt can be experienced by members of non-dominant groups via perceived positive inequity (Brockner et al., 1986), an assertion that is supported by the concept of "survivor's guilt". In educational studies, students experience survivor's guilt when they are more successful than their family members and/or friends and struggle with the reality of their success and status relative to those who were not afforded the same opportunities and related privileges (Priokowski, 1983). Discussions of survivor's guilt often revolve around first generation college

students and/or those from under resourced and underserved communities. Moreover, the combination of being a first generation student and a racial/ethnic minority can exacerbate feelings of collective guilt and may result in maladaptive psychological adjustment (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015; Covarrubias, Romero, & Trivelli, 2015).

Current scholarship suggests that experiencing guilt has implications for a range of psychological adjustment outcomes. For example, in Webb et al's. (2007) examination of the relation between shame and guilt and maladaptive psychological adjustment outcomes, the authors reported a significant correlation between guilt and depressive symptoms. Covarrubias, Romoer, & Trivelli (2015) found that family achievement guilt (i.e., survivor's guilt) was significantly associated with depressive symptoms and low self-esteem. This finding was moderated by generational status such that the relation between achievement guilt and the chosen psychological adjustment outcomes was more pronounced for first generation college students. Feelings of guilt, however, do not always significantly relate to psychological adjustment and sometimes the relation is indirect (e.g, Lynchm, Hill, Nagoshi, & Nagoshi, 2012). While there is evidence of the relationship between guilt and psychological adjustment relatively little is known about how different levels of guilt have implications for psychological adjustment. Further, examinations that operationalize guilt as it relates to one's social class background used self-reported socioeconomic status for their social class variable (e.g., Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2014).

Social Class and Context

According to Mesquita and Boigner (2014) most emotion theories and frameworks do not consider the role of context in the construction or experience of emotions. In their Sociodynamic Model of Emotions (SME) framework, Mesquita and Boiger (2014) posit that the construction of emotions, as well as the actual emotional experiences and their associated behaviors (e.g., taking

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collective action), are context dependent and therefore vary across contexts. In other words, the emergence of emotions and subsequently emotional responses are inextricably tied to the specific sociocultural/interpersonal contexts in which they occur. Context in the SME refers to the characteristics of the interaction (i.e., who, what, when, where, why) as well as the physical environment (e.g., campus, house party, etc.) in which emotions are experienced. For example, the pride a first generation college student from a working class background feels around members of their home community may lessen when interacting with affluent students on their campus. Indeed, empirical literature provides examples of the significance of context in experiencing emotions. In Jones' study (2009), a self-identified middle class participant recalls feeling indifferent about her material possessions upon entering college but became ashamed of her social class status overtime because of the differences between her values and the values associated with her class group. Covarrubias, Romero, and Trivelli (2015) note that many first generation college students feel proud about being the first in their family to matriculate into college but once they arrive on campus feel guilty for leaving others "behind". Research also suggests that interacting with others in the out-group of a particular collective identity may result in enhanced positive affect about the in-group (Leyens et al., 2000).

Intersection of Social Class and Race

Blacks' own identified social class label is important to assess as it provides distinct, unique information relative to self-reports of typically assessed SES indicators of social class. For example, in Lacy's (2004) study objectively affluent Black participants tended to deflate their perception of their social class identification regardless if the combination of their economic, social, and cultural capital was associated with a higher social class group. In other words, affluent Blacks in the study identified with a lower social class status group relative to

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how they would be categorized based on SES factors. Sosnaud, Brady, and Frenk (2013) report that compared to Whites, Blacks are significantly less likely to inflate their perception of their subjective social class identification relative to deflating or being congruent with their social class position defined by SES factors. Similarly, Speer (2016) reported that Blacks have lower odds of identifying as middle/upper class than Whites even when controlling for other factors such as objective class position, class origin, wealth, education, and occupation. Scholars contend that Blacks may deflate, or hesitate to inflate, the perception of their social class identification due to factors distinct to the experience of Black people in America. For example, Blacks tend to have poor relatives as well as are more likely to live near higher-poverty and higher-crime neighborhoods net their objective class position compared to Whites and as result may be more inclined to identify with a class that reflects the context and other individuals they engage in/with on a frequent basis (Speer, 2016). Blacks' awareness of the link between their subordinate racial status in American society and the negative impact it has on measures of objective class status may also relate to how Blacks determine their social class identification (Sosnaud, Brady, & Frenk, 2013).

Recent scholarship (e.g., Thomas, 2015) has begun to investigate the complex ways in which race and class together contribute to variation in students' social outcomes and experiences in college. Indeed, Torres' (2009) study on Black students' adjustment to an elite PWI revealed that Black students' social class background significantly contributed to differences in their adjustment (assessed by reports of experiencing "culture shock") to the affluent college context. Smith and Moore (2000) noted how pre-college class background is associated with Black students' feelings of closeness and social distance from other Black students and the larger Black society. And in another study, social class was shown to influence

Black students' perception of upward mobility, preferred race of significant other related to

opportunities for upward mobility, and experience with racism in higher education contexts

(Sanchez et al., 2011). Together, these studies elucidate how class relates to within race variation

on psychosocial and educational outcomes in distinct educational contexts. Race and social class

may also interact with each other such that individuals amplify or lessen indicators of their

membership in one or both groups contingent upon other factors such as context and proximal

others (Archer, 2012; Moore, 2008; Stewart, 2015). For example, a Black working-class female

participant in Brown's (2006) case-study discussed how context and/or the various social

identities (perceived or real) of other individuals she socially interacted with, related to the ways

in which she thought about and "performed" her various social identities. In discussing a social

interaction with her White upper-middle class female peers the participant stated:

> But at one point like, my white girlfriends would be like, like after I hung out with them
> for like a long time, they'd just be like oh yeah, we don't even see you as black
> anymore. And like, I was like ((laughs)) I *am* black. What do you mean you don't see me
> as black anymore? ((laughs)) And it just like got offensive so I'm just like maybe I just
> need to remind them every once in a while ((laughs)) that I'm still black. (p. 604).

The participant went on to report that when she is around certain family members she is

vigilant about adjusting parts of her speech (e.g., inflection, word choice) that her family

associates with the predominantly White and affluent high school she attends (Brown, 2006).

The above is an example related to the concept of social identity threat (and the measure of

perceived ethnic threat used in the current study), in that an individual may come to feel and act

as if she cannot be herself (including acting and talking certain ways) if she receives signals that

her own identity is devalued or regarded negatively.

Although scholarly discourse and empirical analyses of social class impacts in higher

education is growing very few acknowledge how other social identities intersect with class and

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the implications for this intersection on particular outcomes. The current study seeks to fill the gap in the literature on the intersection of race and class, to extend our understanding of the heterogeneity of social class identity within Black student populations at PWIs, and illuminate the association between Black students' social class identities and within racial differences on particular psychological adjustment outcomes.

Social Class and Psychological Adjustment

Previous research suggests that the ability to adjust to college may relate to a number of socio-cultural factors, such as race/ethnicity, gender, social class, and the development of these identities (Kraus & Destin, 2017; Melendez, 2008; Melendez, 2010; Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). Melendez (2009) notes that "freshmen are especially vulnerable to factors influencing their adjustment to college due to their lack of experience within the campus setting" (p. 347). Additional higher education research conducted in the U.S. and countries with comparable educational systems (e.g., U.K.) has demonstrated that socio-structural factors relating to socioeconomic status and social class are an important determinant of the ease with which individuals adjust to college (Argyle, 1994; Higher Education Funding Commission for England [HEFCE], 2005). For newly matriculated Black students, social class may uniquely factor into their adjustment to PWIs - a context stratified by both race and class. Kraus and Park (2014) note that "people of different cultural backgrounds have considerably different ways of thinking about the self" and "that the cultural contexts of relatively upper-and lower –class individuals shape self- evaluation" (p. 8). Much of the literature on the association between Black students' social class and their adjustment to college, particularly PWIs, often focuses on their reported objective indicators of social class status and not on how the meaning and significance of that identity relates to their adjustment in these particular educational contexts. For example, Adler, Epel,

Castellazzo, and Ickovics, (2000) reported that individuals' subjective social class significantly predicted psychological adjustment. In their examination on the relation between college students' social class background and belonging, Ostrove & Long (2007) found that students' subjective social status (operationalized as one's social class) has implications for their adjustment to college contexts, particularly "class saturated" campuses (Dias, 2011). Although studies provide evidence of the link between social class conceptualized as a social status and its influence on psychosocial development in college (Cornelius, 1995; Jamieson, 2005; Kimball, 2007; Taylor, 1995), the role of social class as a social identity has been less examined as a contributing factor to Black students' adjustment to college. As such, another important goal of this study is to examine whether social class as a social identity (i.e., social identity profile groups) of Black students differentially relate to psychological adjustment outcomes, including perceived ethnic threat, psychological distress, and psychological well-being

Perceived ethnic threat. Recall that according to SIT, social identity is a component of the self-concept that is derived from actual or perceived membership in social groups (Tajefel & Turner, 1979). Research suggests that entering into new environments can activate different components of a particular identity which will, in turn, impact the way an individual thinks, feels, and perceives the context (White & Argo, 2009). For example, Ethier and Deaux (1994) examined Hispanic freshman students' perception of threat related to their ethnic identity matriculating into a highly-selective PWI. The researchers found that students from strongly ethnic identified backgrounds were less vulnerable to perceiving the environment as a threat to their ethnic identity. This work suggests that elements of a particular social identity, such as strong group identification, may have implications for one's perceptions of the compatibility of that identity in a particular context. Although perceived ethnic fit is conceptualized around

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ethnicity, I argue that race and class are interrelated (i.e., class can be racialized/race can be classed; Lacy, 2007; Morales, 2010) thus social class may also play a role in Black students' perceptions of ethnic compatibility to the PWI context. The perceived ethnic threat construct in the current study was conceptualized around Hispanic/Latino ethnic identity. However, studies provide evidence that this construct operates similarly for Black people (e.g., Chavous et al., 2002).

Scholarship on Black students' adjustment to PWIs highlights how race and class, together, inform their perceptions of compatibility to predominantly White educational contexts. For example, a Black upper-middle class student in Torres' study expressed his view on how race and objective markers of social class status were linked to students (particularly his Black peers) ability to adjust to his "elite" PWI. The student described his campus as an environment where perceptions of fit are tied to "cultural factors that are both race and classed" (Torres, 2009). Black students' perception of fit into a PWI may also be informed by interpersonal experiences with other students that are classed (Torres & Massey, 2012). For example, Black students in Morales' (2014) study report that White students often assume they are athletes, hypersexual, knowledgeable of hip-hop culture, or are from impoverished neighborhoods. Morales' (2014) notes that the above assumptions are rooted in stereotypes that are both raced and classed, with some Black students stating they often walk around guarded or feel they have to monitor their behavior as a way to protect themselves from these types of threats to their intersecting identities.

Experiences of threat to one's collective identity has been linked to negative feelings about an identity tied to a particular collective group (Ojiambo & Louw, 2015). For example, in Carvalho, Fazel, & Trifts (2018), the authors found that a negative emotional reaction to a

transgression of in-group norms (i.e., shame) is associated with higher perceptions of identity threat, particularly if the transgressions was witnessed by a member of the out-group. Recall that the negative affective dimension in the MFSCI, collective social class shame, is experienced when an individual perceives their in-group as being less favorable by out-group members or that an aspect of their identity tied to their social class is flawed. Therefore, profile groups described by high levels of social class shame may report higher levels of perceived ethnic identity threat. Individuals who hold membership in both stigmatized and privileged groups may enhance the identity that is stereotypically viewed as positive, or deemphasize the stigmatized identity, when the stigmatized identity is salient and threatened. For example, Rydell and Boucher (2010), found that a concurrently accessible positively perceived social identity can reduce the impact of threat to a salient stigmatized identity. In a context where Black students are part of a stigmatized racial group they may focus on the positive aspects of another identity (e.g., being first in their family to be upwardly mobile via education, being a member of a privileged/status quo group) linked to their perceptions of threat. Thus, it is also possible that high levels of Black students' social class pride may relate to high levels of perception of ethnic threat.

Psychological distress. Significant levels of psychological distress have been reported in higher education students globally, who experience greater psychological distress than the general population as well as working nonstudent populations of the same age (Larcombe et al., 2016; Sharpe & Theiler, 2018). Psychological distress is an emotional reaction to a stressor characterized by depression and anxiety symptoms and can impact day-to-day living (Drapeau, Marchand, & Beaulieu-Prevost, 2012). Indeed, the experience of matriculating into and enduring the first year of college can be a stressful time for students as they establish, test, and make meaning of their various social identities in their new environment (Verger et al., 2008). Higher

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education literature highlights the link between social class and various psychological distress outcomes. For example, Jury et al. (2017) study on the experience of low-SES students in higher education found that socioeconomic status (operationalized by generation college status) accounted for differences in levels of emotional distress between lower SES/first generation college students and their more advantaged/college legacy peers. Deasy (2014) found that students from low-SES (i.e., devalued/stigmatized/disadvantaged) backgrounds reported having emotional experiences significantly distinct compared to high-SES students, such that low-SES students were more likely to feel and express greater emotional distress than there more advantage peers. Students from more privileged backgrounds are not immune to experiencing psychological distress but their stressors may uniquely differ from more disadvantage students (e.g., excessive pressure to achieve, Luthar & Latendresse, 2005; Madden, 2015).

Early studies (e.g., Gaitz & Scott, 1972; Yancy et al., 1972) on the association between the intersection of race and class and psychological distress often assumed that the effects of race and social class cumulatively account for an array of health outcomes. However, scholars like Kessler and Neighbors (1986) argued that race and class are not additive but rather interact. In her examination of Black students adjustment to a highly selective PWI, Torres (2009) noted that environmental cues such as the sociodemographic composition of the student population may heightened one's awareness of their membership in certain collective groups. Additional scholarship demonstrates that racial/ethnic minorities and students from less advantaged backgrounds report that social class is more salient within the college context (Orbe, 2004; Phinney & Haas, 2003) and those who identify with these stigmatized groups may experience stressors related to one or the intersection of those identities. For example, Saldaña's (1994) study on the association between students' social class and their adjustment to and experience of

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the college context found a high correlation between socioeconomic status and stress level; this finding was pronounced for students of color. Scholarship that focuses on the experiences of Black students suggests that Black students enrolled at PWIs tend to report more negative events (e.g., racial discrimination) which results in more psychological distress relative to their Black peers enrolled at more racially diverse universities (Phinney & Haas, 2003; Salami & Walker, 2014). Black students' social class background may also contribute to experiences of psychological distress. Less affluent Black students' chronic reminder of their doubly disadvantage and stigmatized status in the context of a PWI may exacerbate experiences of distress. On the other hand, Black students from more advantaged backgrounds often spend more time in more integrated and/or predominately White spaces (Chavous, Rivas, Green, & Helaire, 2002) where they may also have distressing experiences (Assari, 2017). The scholarship cited above provides insight on how social class as a status operates in the lives of Black students and its association to forms of distress. The current study extends these studies by examining how social class as multidimensional social identity relates to Black students' reported levels of psychological distress.

Research suggests that an individual's assessment, positive or negative, of their collective in-group may relate to variation in psychological distress (Lee & Ahn, 2013). In the MFSCI, the affective dimensions (pride, guilt, and shame) of social class identity are derived from an individual's positive and/or negative self-evaluation related to their social class (e.g., positive assessment of one's social class relates to level of pride). Therefore, Black students' social class identity affect, derived from their self-evaluation of their social class identity, may have implications for psychological distress. Webb's (2014) research examining social class identity provides support that emotions tied to social class identity are associated with varying levels of

psychological distress. For example, although guilt and shame are both negative emotions, only experiencing social class shame was associated with psychological distress, particularly for students for whom social class identity was central to their identity (Webb, 2014). Webb (2014) did not report any findings on race playing a role in the relation between social class identity beliefs and psychological distress. However, this portion of her study compared Black students to White students and variation on how these beliefs relate to stress may surface with the current study's design (i.e., within group).

Individuals usually belong to many groups simultaneously, all of which are represented in their social identities (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). Although the role literature originally proposed that having multiple roles or group memberships would be a source of stress because it produces role conflict (Marks, 1977), more recently, researchers have proposed that having multiple group memberships can provide individuals with a buffer against negative events. Indeed, group memberships provide meaning and guidance to one's life and, hence, multiple group memberships

Well-being. The concept of psychological well-being (PWB; Ryff, 1989) is based on the premise that "being well" encompasses a range of characteristics and perceptions which include feeling happy, capable, well-supported, and satisfied with life. Higher education literature suggests that the previously listed characteristics are important to students' overall college experience and that levels of well-being may be contingent on additional factors (e.g., race and class, Bowman, 2010). Research on psychological well-being among college students suggests that students' race/ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds often play a role in the adjustment period which accounts for differences in well-being relative to their more affluent and White peers (e.g., Terenzini et al., 1994; Zwerling & London, 1992). Bowman (2014), notes that part of

the reason that non-majority students report lower levels of well-being is because they experience more challenges in an environment where the "prevailing cultural norms often reflect White, middle-class values" (p. 182). On the other hand, some evidence suggests that PWB is actually higher among stigmatized and marginalized groups (Ryff et al., 2003). It is unclear, then, whether students who identify with underrepresented groups might experience higher or lower levels of PWB. In addition, given the focus on socioeconomic status/background in previous research, it is unclear whether and how the meaning and significance of Black college students' social class serves to undermine or promote psychological well-being.

Self-Acceptance. Self-acceptance is an integral part of one's overall psychological well-being and indicates the extent to which one has positive attitudes towards all aspects of the self (Ryff, 1989). Individuals who tend to negatively evaluate themselves are vulnerable to less positive adjustment outcomes (Butler-Barnes et al., 2013). Ancis, Sedlack, and Mohr (2000) report that the acceptance of self can be a protective factor from discrimination for students from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds. Self-acceptance is not reliant upon evaluation or approval of others. The acceptance of self is based on self-appraisal on internal feelings. To date, Webb's (2014) work is the only study that examined how PWB varies as a function of college students' social class conceptualized as a multidimensional collective identity. Webb (2014) observed that social class identity beliefs (i.e., pride, guilt, and shame) were associated with psychological well-being, such that students with high levels of pride reported high levels of self-acceptance and the opposite relation was observed with students with high levels of guilt and shame. In the same study, Webb (2014) also examined the role of race in the relation between social class identity affect and PWB and reported that this relation was more pronounced for Black students. This research demonstrates that emotions attached to one's social class has implications for

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psychological well-being and that there may be something distinct to the experience of being a Black student at a PWI that adds to this association.

Social Class Identity and a Person-Centered Approach

Few studies examine social class identity as it functions in the daily lives of students, with individuals endorsing beliefs across identity dimensions simultaneously and varying in patterns of beliefs across dimensions or identity statuses (e.g., Reay, 2005; Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). The person-centered theoretical approach stems from both developmental science (e.g., Cairns, Elder, &Costello, 1996) and a holistic-interactionist approach (e.g., Magnusson & Stattin, 2006) in which the focus of development is on individuals as complete wholes. Person-centered approaches emphasize a theoretical approach to the individual as a whole system, composed of dimensions organized into a hierarchy of subsystems that function as an integrated totality (von Eye, 2010). Magnusson (1999) notes that person-centered approaches addresses the theoretical and ecological notion that variables interact in the overall functioning of the person, and therefore cannot be isolated for analysis. The basic principle is that a given subsystem derives its characteristic features and properties from the interaction among the elements involved, not from the isolated parts (Magnusson, 1999). In other words, in an individual, a given element derives its significance from its role in the subsystem of which it forms a part. The holistic (i.e, person-centered) approach has two functions: "as a theoretical framework for the identification and formulation of the research problem (discussing the problem in such a framework has consequences for the manner in which the problem is investigated) and as a framework for interpreting and discussing the significance of the empirical results" (Magnusson, 1999, p. 228).

Person-oriented perspective derives from the notion that the individual serves as the organizing principle for examining human functioning. The defining feature of a person-oriented approach is that the specific question under investigation is formulated in person terms. Operationally, these person-referent questions are examined in terms of the patterns of values from variables that are relevant to the issue under consideration (Magnusson, 1999). A main advantage of the person-oriented approach is that conclusions based on empirical results refer to persons, not variables. The interplay of behavioral and contextual variables creates patterns of experience for the individual, and individuals form into subgroups based on their shared similar patterns of experience (Bergman & Magnusson, 1997). Subgroup membership is based on shared commonalities within the group, and qualitative distinction from other subgroups. The individuals' holistic experience is the unit of analysis, with the researcher analyzing the composition of the variables within the subgroups, and the overall differences between the subgroups (von Eye & Bogat, 2006).

Studies that have investigated social class phenomena often use a variable-centered approach and only focus on certain dimensions of social class identity such as centrality and affect linked to their social class (Thomas & Azimita, 2014). Thus, our knowledge of how different dimensions of social class identity may interact with each other and relate to social class self-label as well as certain psychosocial and psychoeducational outcomes is limited. Empirical evidence (e.g., Aries & Seider, 2007) highlights the multidimensionality of social class identity and how different dimensions (e.g., centrality) independently relate to students' perception of, interactions in, and adjustment to "class saturated" contexts (i.e., PWIs). Unfortunately, current studies do not include methods that allow for an examination of the different dimensions of social class identity in the aggregate and how distinct patterns of the

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dimensions vary by individuals within a specific population. Therefore, it is critical to consider how the interplay of distinct dimensions of social class identity relate to social class self-label and individual differences in psychological adjustment to certain contexts (i.e., Black college students' psychological adjustment to PWIs).

One response to the lack of social class research in which the conceptual unit of analyses are individuals and not variables, is the use of a person-centered approach. By taking multiple variables (i.e., dimensions of social class) into account simultaneously, the person-centered approach allows for a more holistic analysis of individuals. The paucity of intra-individual approaches to the examination of social class identity in the psychological literature is surprising given the use of this methodology in other studies that investigate different dimensions of social identities. For example, Chavous et al. (2003) employed a person-oriented approach to their examination of the relation between racial identity and academic achievement of African American adolescents. A key finding in the study was that if one examined variables using a correlational approach, it looked like negative affect (i.e., low public regard) was negatively associated with adjustment (e.g., academic adjustment). However, using a profile approach the researchers demonstrated that low public regard was only related to negative adjustment for those youth who also had low connection to their racial group (low centrality) and who personally endorsed negative affective beliefs about their group (low private regard). Those youth with low public regard, but coupled with high centrality and high private regard had more positive adjustment outcomes. Banks and Kohn-Wood (2007) included all seven dimensions of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) to create Black racial identity profiles. The researchers posited that creating racial identity profiles, rather than using the different facets

of racial identity as separate variables, may illuminate latent relationships not discovered using a variable-centered approach.

In regards to social class identity, scholars contend that the different dimensions of social class identity may not operate independently as it relates to individuals' attitudes, behaviors, or perceptions towards a context, event, or social interactions (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). To buttress this assertion, consider how social class centrality in combination with the affective dimensions of social class identity (e.g., guilt and pride) may relate to different outcomes as a function of the varying levels of other dimensions of social class. For example, when an individual's social class is significant to their self-concept and expresses guilt and shame (i.e., negative emotions) about their subjective class identity, social class interactions and events may cause distress or be interpreted as a threat to the individual. In other words, an individual who reports high levels of social class centrality in conjunction with high levels of guilt and shame might exacerbate the association between social class identity and psychological adjustment. On the other hand, a person for whom social class is significant and reports a high level of pride and low levels of guilt and shame, might be less likely to report maladaptive psychological adjustment to social class events, interactions, and distinct contexts (i.e., PWIs). This individual who views their social class identity (regardless of self-label) as very important, has a strong sense of pride in their class identification, and does not feel guilt or shame about their class background, may be able to adjust better to a classed context. Recall in Webb's (2014) study that she reported a different association of affect with psychological adjustment, depending on level of centrality. While that was a variable oriented analysis (interaction), this suggests that multiple dimensions can function interactively in ways that explain more variation than individual variables alone. Given the various ways in which the interplay of the different facets of social

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class identity may relate to psychoeducational outcomes, this study adds to the literature by examining patterns of identity and how different dimensions of social class identity interact within different types of individuals and relate to psychological adjustment.

Current Study

The present study utilizes a person-oriented approach to examining within-group differences in the significance and meaning Black college students place on social class (i.e., their social class identity) among a sample of students attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs). I use Webb's (2014) Multidimensional Framework of Social Class Identity (MFSCI), a derivation of collective identity (Ashmore et al. 2004), as the primary conceptual framework with individual profiles as the unit of analyses in hopes of presenting a more robust understanding of social class identity. The study has four specific aims. First, using latent class cluster analysis I will examine Black students' social class identity profiles based on their variation across two dimensions of the MFSCI – centrality and affect (operationalized as three distinct emotions). Second, I will examine whether social class centrality and affect profiles differ based on the social class self-identification dimension, i.e., whether poor, working class, middle class, upper-middle class, and upper class Black students are represented differently across the profile groups. Next, I will investigate associations between Black collegians' social class centrality and affect profiles and their psychological adjustment (*perceived ethnic fit, psychological distress, and psychological well-being)* over the course of the first-year college transition. Lastly, I will examine if the relationship between social class identity profiles and psychological adjustment vary as a function of social class identification at the beginning and towards the end of Black students' freshman year at PWIs.

Research Questions and Hypotheses. The first set of research questions examined in the study are: **What distinct patterns, or profile groups, of social class identity importance (centrality) and affect (pride, shame, and guilt) will emerge among Black college students? Are individuals' social class self-identification associated with membership in particular social class centrality and affect profile groups?** This study is the first known examination that uses the Multidimensional Measure of Social Class Identity (MMSCI) subscales in the aggregate to create social class identity profiles, using latent profile cluster analysis. Previous work on other collective identities (e.g., race) has shown that within group variation on the dimensions of a particular identity result in distinct identity profiles (e.g., Banks & Kohn-Wood, 2007; Blackmon & Thomas, 2015; Butler-Barnes, Chavous, Hurd, & Varner, 2013; Neblett et al., 2016). Although the exact combinations of the profiles in the study sample are unknown, I expect profile groups reflecting variation in Black students' social class identity in PWI contexts. Specifically, I posit that profile groups should be defined by a combination of quantitative differences in the dimensions of social class centrality and affect (e.g., distinct levels of social class identity dimensions). Identity Theory (IT) proposes that social identities that are viewed more positively are likely to be more central to an individual's self-concept (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). As such, I expected that among Black college students, one emergent social class centrality and affect profile type would be distinguished by high levels of social class centrality and social class pride. Previous research suggests that the significance of an identity may also enhance negative assessments and feelings towards the in-group (Crocker & Major, 1989). For instance, the Ethier and Deaux (1994) framework suggests that individuals confronting negative feelings/views of their group might respond by distancing (lowering centrality). Thus, it possible that one profile type might include students with more negative affect (guilt, shame) and lower

centrality and pride. Thus, I expected a social class centrality and affect profile distinguished by high levels of social class centrality and negative emotions (e.g., guilt and shame).

Regarding the association between social class self-identification and social class centrality and affect profiles, it is expected that profile groups will vary in representation of individuals across self-defined social class identification. My conceptualization of this relationship is grounded in Intergroup Emotions Theory (IET; Mackie, Smith, & Ray, 2008) which posits that individuals who self-identify with a collective social group (e.g., middle class) appraise situations as an in-group member and as result experience emotions distinct to one's in-group. However, all individuals from the same social class group do not fare similarly well or poorly. Individuals from the same group category may vary in how important or meaningful the group is to their overall identity, and this variation may help explain individual within-group differences in adjustment outcomes. For example, individuals identifying with more stigmatized or lower status social class groups may be more represented in profile groups reporting higher centrality and shame or guilt, in the context of PWI settings that often signal privilege and value for higher social class status. On the other hand, individuals identifying with a more privileged social class group may also be represented in profile groups reporting negative emotions. For example, previous research using the MMSCI showed the link between significant differences in the levels of certain dimensions and students' self-identified social class such that students who self-identified as upper-middle class reported higher levels of guilt compared to students who identified as poor, working class, lower middle class, and middle class (Webb, 2014). Thus, in the current study, I hypothesize that students within the same social class group (determined by their social class self-identification) may not endorse similar levels of social class affect and may be differentially represented in social class centrality and affect profile groups.

The second research question asks: **Do Black students' social class centrality and affect profiles relate to psychological adjustment outcomes (*perceived ethnic threat, psychological distress, and psychological well-being*) over the course of their freshman year?** It is expected that students within profile groups with high levels of negative affect (i.e., shame and guilt) will report higher levels of perceived ethnic threat and psychological distress, and lower psychological well-being compared to students within profile groups with low levels of negative affect (Crocker & Major, 1989). While there is no known examination of the relation between social class identity profiles (operationalized via MMSCI) and psychological adjustment, scholarship on other collective identities (e.g., race) provide results that demonstrate an association between particular identity dimensions and psychological adjustment. For example, Lam (2007) reported a significant negative relation between collective self-esteem (CSE) and psychological distress among Vietnamese-American college students (i.e., higher CSE predicted lower levels of psychological distress). Whittaker and Neville (2010) found differential associations between racial identity profiles and psychological health outcomes such that participants' profiles described as endorsing a very strong (e.g., Afrocentric cluster) or a very weak (e.g, Self-Hatred cluster) connection to their race reported lower levels of psychological well-being. In another study, racial identity cluster profiles that reflected positive feelings related to being Black was associated with less psychological distress when compared to cluster profiles that reflect the opposite (Neville & Lilly, 2000). Although a person-oriented approach was not used in Webb's (2014) study, she reported that some dimensions of social class identity (e.g., shame) significantly related to psychological adjustment (e.g., psychological distress). Further, participants who felt a greater sense of shame related to their social class experienced psychological distress more often. However, this was true only for students who felt

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that social class was central to their identity (i.e., social class centrality; Webb, 2014). As such, I expect that profiles distinguished by relatively high levels of negative social class affect (guilt, shame) and centrality will relate to an increase in levels of psychological distress, perceived ethnic threat, and lower levels of well-being.

I also expect that Black students' initial levels of social class identity affect and centrality together (i.e., social class identity profiles) will predict psychological adjustment at the beginning and latter part of their freshman year. In particular, I expect social class identity profiles characterized by high levels of social class pride and centrality will be associated with adaptive psychological adjustment (i.e., increased level of psychological well-being and decreased levels in psychological distress and perceived ethnic threat) and maladaptive psychological adjustment (i.e., decreased level of psychological well-being and increased levels of psychological distress and perceived ethnic threat) during the first year of college. Research with college students demonstrates that psychological adjustment may vary between the beginning and end of freshman year of college (Bowman, 2010). For example, Conley, Kirsch, Dickson, and Bryant (2014) observed significant variation in levels of both adaptive and maladaptive psychological adjustment across students' freshman year of college. The authors reported a significant decline in participants' psychological well-being and a significant increase in psychological distress from Time 1 (1 week before the beginning of freshman year) to Time 2 (end of first semester of freshman year). However, there was not a significant difference in participants' reported levels of psychological well-being between Time 2 and Time 3 (end of the second semester of freshman year) but there was a significant increase in psychological distress between the same time points. The above study provides evidence of the variation in college students' psychological adjustment. However, there is still a gap in the literature on the role

social class identity may have on how students adjust to distinct higher education contexts which is examined in the current study.

Research suggests that different dimensions of a particular collective identity (e.g., centrality) may uniquely contribute to individual's psychological adjustment over time. For example, Ethier and Deaux (1994) observed a significant decrease in perceived ethnic threat among Hispanic students who highly identified with their ethnic group (i.e., centrality) relative to their peers with weaker identification between the first and second semester of their freshman year. The authors also reported a significant relationship between collective self-esteem and strength of ethnic identification such that lower collective self-esteem predicted weaker identification over time. In a more current examination of the link between a collective identity and psychological adjustment, Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter (2008) observed that individuals with identity profiles characterized by high levels of positive attitudes towards their sexual identity reported a decrease in maladaptive psychological adjustment over the course of 12-months. As such, it is expected that social class identity profiles will vary in their association with psychological adjustment and profiles with higher levels of positive affect will report higher levels of adaptive adjustment across their freshman year of college.

The last question asks: **Does the relationship between social class identification and psychological adjustment function differently across social class centrality and affect profiles during Black college students' freshman year?** It is also expected that the initial interaction between Black students' initial levels of social class identity affect and centrality together (i.e., social class identity profiles) and social class identification will predict psychological adjustment during the course of their freshman year. For example, a centrality and affect profile with high levels of centrality and negative emotions (guilt and shame) and low

pride may exacerbate the relation between social class identification and psychological adjustment for those identifying with lower status social class identification groups. A cursory review found virtually no existing work that examines the impact of social class identification on the relation between social class centrality and affect and psychological adjustment. However, the social identity research previously cited (e.g., Ethier & Deaux, 1994) suggests that self-evaluations, negative or positive, of one's membership in a particular collective group may have implications for psychological adjustment, particularly if the group is devalued or stigmatized by society (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities, poor people). For example, Webb (2014) found that the relation between social class identification groups and psychological adjustment varied for those reporting higher and lower levels of social class identity affect (guilt, shame, pride). McClain et al. (2016) observed a positive association between self-identified Black students' attitudes and feelings about their racial group and adaptive psychological adjustment. Mandara, Gaylord-Harden, Richards, and Ragsdale (2009) reported that Black students who held positive feelings towards their racial group experienced fewer symptoms of maladaptive psychological adjustment. Additional racial identity research also suggests that feelings of closeness to a socially devalued collective group relate to positive evaluations of the group and that positive evaluations of the group is linked to psychological well-being (conceptualized as high self-esteem and lower depressive symptoms).

Chapter III: Methods

In this chapter, I will describe the method of data collection and analysis. The proposed study will focus on distinguishing the formation of social class centrality and affect profile groups.

Study Overview and Design

Data for the current study were drawn from five university sites from a multimethod project, the College Academic and Social Identities Study (CASIS). CASIS investigates ethnic/racial minoritized undergraduate students' interpersonal, intrapersonal, and contextual experiences during their college years, and how these experiences are tied to various kinds of identities (e.g., ethnic/racial, social class). CASIS used a cross-sequential research design with three cohorts. Each cohort completed surveys during their first semester at their respective four-year university (i.e., fall semester). Thus, students were either undergraduate freshman or first-year transfer students at the first time of data collection for each cohort. Participants completed a second survey in the spring semester of the same academic year. Participants were contacted to complete follow-up surveys during subsequent spring semesters after the first year in the study. Therefore, Cohort 1 includes fives waves of data (fall of first year and four subsequent spring surveys); Cohort 2 includes four waves (fall of first year and three subsequent spring surveys); and Cohort 3 includes three (fall of first year and two subsequent spring surveys).

Participants in CASIS ($N = 2,074$) self-identified with various ethnic and racial categories including African American, Black, Latino, Asian American, and Native American, attending one of five four-year Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) in the Midwest. Approximately

one-third of the CASIS sample identified as "Black" at entry to the study (n = 708). Given my focus on within-group variation in the social class identity experiences of Black students at highly selective PWIs, this dissertation focuses on the Black subsample of the CASIS project of data collection during their freshman year on the main variables of interest (social class identity and psychological adjustment - perceived ethnic threat, psychological distress, and psychological well-being).

Participants

Of the 538 of the participants from Time 1, 70% had at least two waves of data on social class identity variables (e.g., social class identification, social class centrality, social class pride, social class shame, social class guilt) and psychological adjustment variables (perceived ethnic threat, psychological distress, and psychological well-being), which provided me with an analytic sample of 375. Thus, the present sample were 375 racially self-identified Black students from five Midwestern four-year Predominantly White Institutions in three sequential cohorts (cohort 1, $n = 156$; cohort 2, $n = 109$; cohort 3, $n = 110$) participating in a longitudinal study of the experiences of college students pursuing different academic major areas with a focus on students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) outcomes. The data reported in this study are from two waves of data collection during students' freshman year in college, referred to as Time 1 and Time 2. The sample was composed of 104 males (28%) and 270 females (72%). Participants also had the option to report non-binary gender but no one in the sample identified as such. The mean age of the sample was 18 years ($SD = .65$, Range = 16-27).

Participants responded to an array of sociodemographic items and represented a range of pre-college backgrounds. Most of the participants spent their childhood in an urban or large metropolitan area (48%). A large portion of the participants grew up in neighborhoods that were

over 80% Black (40%, *n* = 149) and on the opposite end 19% (*n* = 70) of the sample reported less than 20% of individuals in their neighborhood of origin were Black. Participants' pre-college objective indicators of social class status varied. Almost half of participants reported family household incomes of less than $45,000 (40.7%). Per the 2010 census data the mean income for poor families is $11,239; lower-middle class, $29,204; middle class, $49,842; upper-middle class $80,080; and $178,020 for upper class families. Income ranges on the study measure did not cleanly align with information from the US census data. Therefore, I attempted to create ranges that captured the incomes of each class group based on information from the census data. Based on those ranges of mean income, 10.2% reported incomes in the poor range, 22% in the lower-middle class range, 16.4% in the middle-class range, 20.4% in the upper-middle class range, and 3.8% roughly above the mean of the upper class (8.1% reported not knowing their household income).

Procedures

In the larger study, participants were recruited via e-mail during the fall semester. At two institutions, the Office of Registrar distributed an e-mail to all registered undergraduate freshmen and first-year transfer students who self-identified as ethnic/racial minority students (i.e., students who did not identify as Caucasian or non- Hispanic White). At the remaining three institutions, research collaborators (e.g., a professor or graduate student) sent e-mails to the populations of interest. After providing informed consent, participants self-administered a 30-45 minute web-based survey. Identifiable information was retained for future contact with participants, and participants were contacted via e-mail at the end of the each spring semester and asked to complete follow-up surveys. Participants were compensated with a $25 Visa e-card for the fall survey (T1), a $30 Visa e-card for the T2, T3, and T4 spring surveys, and a $35 Visa

e-card for the T5 spring survey. The sample for the current study is a cross-section of data from the first two waves of data collection (i.e., Time 1 and Time 2) of the larger longitudinal study from one university site.

Measures

  Student background. Students completed a demographic measure in which they provided information about their pre-college backgrounds. They provided information about class year, university, gender, age, race, social class, parental education, parental income, racial composition of high school and neighborhood (reported percentages of African Americans in high school and neighborhood), and the type of area/hometown (e.g., urban) in which they spent most of their precollege years.

  Social Class Identity. Social class identity was assessed using a combination of one stand-alone question and a measure that consisted of 18 items. The single item assessed participants' subjective social class label. The items on the social class identity questionnaire were designed to assess two dimensions of social class identity: centrality and affect (pride, shame and guilt).

  Subjective Social Class Identification. Social class identification/self-label was assessed using a single stand-alone item that asked participants to select the social class category that best described their background. The social class options were poor, working class, lower-middle class, middle class, upper-middle class, and upper class.

  Social Class Centrality. Social class centrality was measured using the Centrality subscale of the Social Class Identity Questionnaire (Webb, 2014). The Centrality subscale consists of 5 items measuring the extent to which social class is an important part of one's self-concept (e.g., Coming from a(n) [*self-ID social class group*] background is important to my

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sense of what kind of person I am). Participants were asked to respond regarding the extent to which they endorse the items on a 7-point Likert-type scale. Sample items include, "Whenever possible, I prefer to hang out with other students from a(n) [*self-ID social class group*]" and "in general, coming from [*self-ID social class group*] background is an important part of my self-image" (α = .67).

  Social Class Identity Affect. Social class identity affect was assessed using 3 subscales from the Social Class Identity Questionnaire (Webb, 2014): pride, shame, and guilt.

  Pride was assessed with 2 items measuring the extent to which individuals endorsed positive feelings related to their social class. Both items were adapted from existing scales (CSES – Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; MIBI – Sellers et al., 1997) and were created by Webb (2014) for the measure. Participants were asked to respond regarding the extent to which they endorse the items on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores on this subscale indicate a greater feeling of pride related to one's social class. Items include, "I feel good about my [*self-ID social class group*] background" and "I feel a sense of pride because of my social class background" (r^2 = .49).

  Shame was assessed with 3 items measuring the extent to which individuals feel ashamed (3 items) about their social class origins. Participants were asked to respond regarding the extent to which they endorse the items on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores on this subscale indicate greater feelings of shame and embarrassment. Sample items include, "I wish I were from a different social class background" and "At times, I try to hide the fact that I am [*self-ID social class group*]" (α = .61).

  Guilt was assessed using 2 items measuring the extent to which individuals feel regret related to the opportunities they have been afforded. Participants were asked to respond

regarding the extent to which they endorse the items on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Sample items include, "I fear that others may perceive me as 'thinking I am better' and "Sometimes, I feel guilty that others have not been as fortunate as I have been" ($r^2 = .20$). Due to the low correlation one item was removed from this scale for all study analyses. The sample item, "Sometimes, I feel guilty that others have not been as fortunate as I have been" was retained because it is a better operationalization of guilt as conceptualized in the MFSCI.

Psychological Adjustment

Perceived Ethnic Threat. Perceived threat was examined with an adapted version of the Ethier and Deaux's (1990) Perceived Threat Scale. The adapted 6-item scale assesses the extent to which students feel threatened in expressing their ethnic identity in their college institution as well as the extent they feel their ethnic identity/background is compatible or congruent with their college environment (Chavous, 2000, Chavous et al., 2002). An example of a scale item is "I feel like a chameleon at school, having to change my 'colors' according to the race or ethnicity of the person I am with". Each statement was rated on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) Likert-type scale. Higher scores on the scale indicate feeling less of a fit between participants' ethnicity and their institution. Internal consistency for the scale items was high ($\alpha_{T1} = .86$; $\alpha_{T2} = .89$).

Psychological distress. The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (Kessler et al., 2002) assesses distress based on 10 questions about anxiety and depressive symptoms that a person has experienced within the past month. Participants are asked to rate on a scale from 1 (*none of the time)* to 5 (*all of the time*) how often they experience during the last 4 weeks. Sample items include: "During the last 30 days, about how often…did you feel tired for no good reason" and

"…did you feel hopeless". Individual responses on each item are summed for a total score. Higher scores indicate greater occurrence of psychological distress. The reliability for this scale for participants in this study was high (α_{T1} = .92; α_{T2} =.93).

Psychological well-being_Self-Acceptance. Psychological well-being was assessed using 1 subscale of the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale (1989) that measures positive psychological functioning. The *Self-Acceptance* subscale assesses attitudes, positive or negative, towards multiple aspects of the self. The subscale consists of 4 items rated on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) Likert-type scale. Example items include, "In general, I feel confident and positive about myself" and "I like most aspects of my personality." Higher scores indicate a positive attitude toward the self and an overall acceptance of the multifaceted self. Lower scores imply dissatisfaction with the self, dislikes certain personal characteristics, and a desire to be different from the current self. The internal consistency for the self-acceptance subscale for participants in this study was high, (α_{T1} = .77; α_{T2} = .75).

Analysis Plan

First, I will present descriptive statistics of the primary study variables which include reporting variable means, standard deviations, and correlations among social class identity and psychological adjustment variables. Next, to examine the first research question, I will use latent profile analysis (LPA) to explore the formulation of Black students' social class identity profiles based on the four social class dimensions delineated by the MFSCI - centrality, pride, shame, and guilt. Using LatentGold 5.1, results for different numbers of profile solutions will be requested and fit indices will be used to compare and find the best fitting model. When selecting the best fitting profile solution one should consider:

(a) model fit, (b) classification accuracy (the accuracy with which cases are classified into clusters), (c) interpretability (e.g., relative size of the clusters, whether the clusters are meaningfully distinct from one another, and whether the findings are consistent with theory and previous research), and (d) parsimony (the fewest number of clusters that adequately describe the associations among the manifest indicators) (Wong et al., 2012).

In terms of model fit, the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) and the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) will be used to determine the best fitting model and parsimony. The BIC and AIC are used relative to one another between models with lower BIC and AIC suggesting better fitting models (Nylund, Asparouhov, & Muthen, 2007; Wong et al., 2012). When the BIC and AIC increase it is suggested that the bootstrap likelihood ratio test (BLRT) is conducted to assess model fit between the solution with the increased BIC and AIC and the preceding solution (Hart et al., 2016). Next, the BLRT will be conducted to identify the best fitting model. The BLRT is a parametric bootstrap method that uses bootstrap samples to compare one latent profile model solution (k) to its preceding solution (k-1) and to determine it k is the better fitting solution of the two models. In other words, it allows for the comparison of fit indices between selected class solutions. The p-value associated with the BLRT will be used to compare the increase in model fit between the k-1 and k models. A p-value less than .05 indicates that k is a better fitting model (e.g., 4-profile solution is a better fit than the 3-profile solution). If the BLRT p-value is greater than .05, it would suggest that k-1 is the better fitting model (e.g., 3-profile solution is a better fit than the 4-profile solution). Next, I will examine the bivariate residual (BVR) in selected models to test whether the assumption of local independence (i.e., indicators within profile groups are mutually independent) was violated (Magidson & Vermunt, 2004). Bivariate residuals larger than 3.84 suggests significant correlations between

pairs of indicators and that the model falls somewhat short of fully capturing the association between indicators. The "traditional way" (p. 18) to account for a BVR greater than 3.84 is to add another latent profile or use the alternative approach of adding a direct effect to the model to account for the residual correlation (Magidson & Vermunt, 2004), which will both be considered in selecting the best model fit. When a model contains more than one large BVR, it is recommended to include each direct effect one at a time, checking the updated BVRs after each new model until all BVRs are less than 3.84 (Vermunt & Magidson, 2005). Thus, I will use the BIC, AIC, BLRT, and BVR to initially determine which profile solution will be the best fit for the data.

Next, classification errors (proportion of cases estimated to be misclassified in each profile) and the Entropy R^2 (how well the model predicts profile membership) will be examined to determine classification accuracy. Low classification error values (values closest to 0) and higher posterior probabilities indicated by Entropy R^2 values (values closer to 1) suggest greater accuracy in classification. Next, I will examine the proportion of the sample in each cluster of specified solutions for extreme disproportionality to assess interpretability. Some researchers consider profiles containing less than 5% of cases as a spurious profile while others are less conservative and consider profiles containing 1% or less of the sample as uninterpretable (Choi, Moon, and Yeum, 2017; Hart et al., 2016; Owen & Videras, 2009; Wang, Shakeshaft, Schofield, & Malanchini, 2018). Also, descriptive analyses will be used to illustrate how distinct the profiles are from each other on the 4 MMSCI subscales. Lastly, parsimony will be determined by the model that used the fewest number of profiles to account for the associations among the indicators.

In addition to analyzing model fit indices provided by Latent Gold, I will perform an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to analyze differences in profile characteristics across profile groups. Next, I will perform a chi-squared test of independence test to describe the distribution of social class identification groups (categorical grouping variable) across social class centrality and affect profiles. To examine the second research question, I will conduct separate one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to examine the association between social class centrality and affect profile groups and psychological adjustment outcomes (perceived ethnic threat, psychological distress, and psychological well-being) during participants' freshman year of college (Time 1 and Time 2). Last, I will conduct hierarchical multiple regression to assess the effects of social class centrality and affect profile groups on the relation between social class identification (continuous variable) and psychological adjustment during participants' freshman year of college (Time 1 and Time 2).

Chapter IV: Results

This chapter describes the quantitative analyses performed to examine the following research questions: 1) What distinct patterns, or profile groups, of social class identity variables (centrality, pride, shame, and guilt) will emerge among Black college students?; 1a) Are individuals' social class self-identification (e.g., poor, working class, middle class) associated with membership in particular social class centrality and affect profile groups?; 2) Do Black students' social class centrality and affect profiles relate to psychological adjustment outcomes (perceived ethnic threat, psychological distress, and psychological well-being) over the course of their freshman year?; and 3) Does the relationship between social class identification and psychological adjustment function differently across social class centrality and affect profiles during Black college students' freshman year?

First, I present descriptive statistics of the main study variables. Next, I present latent profile analysis results and descriptive statistics that examined the association between the degree of social class identification (treated as a categorical grouping variable) and social class centrality and affect profile group membership. I then present the results of the second research question assessing the relation between social class centrality and affect profile groups and psychological adjustment during participants' freshman year of college. Finally, I present the findings from analyses that examined whether the relation between social class centrality and affect profile groups and psychological adjustment vary as a function of social class identification (treated as a continuous variable).

Preliminary Descriptive Analyses: Social Class Identity Variables and Psychological Adjustment Outcomes

Preliminary analyses focused on descriptive statistics for social class identity variables and psychological adjustment; please see Table 4.1. On average, participants reported being lower-middle class (M=3.27, SD=1.21). However, the modal number indicates that most students self-identified as middle class (mode=4). Social class identity is moderately central to participants' self-concept (M=4.26, SD=1.12). Examination of the affective dimensions of social class identity indicate moderate levels of social class pride (M=4.51, SD=1.38), moderately low levels of shame (M=3.20, SD=1.20), and moderate levels of guilt (M=4.49, SD=1.72). Regarding the psychological adjustment variables, participants reported low levels of perceived ethnic threat (M_{T1}=2.26, SD=1.34; M_{T2}=2.75, SD=1.49) – a cultural background variable – and psychological distress (M_{T1}=2.27, SD=.90; M_{T2}=2.22, SD=.93). Reports of psychological well-being were moderate (M_{T1}=4.55, SD=1.03; M_{T2}=4.39, SD=1.01).

The associations among social class identification (Time 1), social class centrality (Time 1), pride (Time 1), shame (Time 1), guilt (Time 1), and psychological adjustment variables (Time 1 and Time 2) were examined using bivariate Pearson correlations (Table 4.2). Social class identification was positively correlated with pride ($r = .25$, $p < .01$) and guilt ($r = .22$, $p < .01$) but negatively associated with social class shame ($r = -.35$, $p < .01$). The positive correlation between social class centrality and pride ($r = .40$, $p < .01$), shame ($r = .11$, $p < .05$), and guilt ($r = .16$, $p < .01$) suggest that as the importance of social class to Black students' self-concept increases social class affect, both positive and negative, increases as well. Pride was positively correlated with guilt ($r = .20$, $p < .01$) but was negatively correlated with shame ($r = -.43$, $p < .01$).

Dimensions of Black college students' social class identity were also significantly associated with psychological adjustment outcomes at Time 1 and Time 2. Social class identification was inversely related to perceived ethnic threat (r_{T1} = -.13, $p < .05$; r_{T2} = -.13, $p < .05$) and psychological distress (r_{T1} = -.18, $p < .01$; r_{T2} = -.14, $p < .01$) such that as social class identification increased perception of the college environment as threatening and levels of distress decreased. In regards to social class affect, shame had the strongest association with the psychological adjustment variables, compared to pride and guilt. As Black students' feelings of social class shame increased, perceived ethnic threat (r_{T1} = .24, $p < .01$; r_{T2} = .23, $p < .01$) and psychological distress (r_{T1} = .35, $p < .01$; r_{T2} = .18, $p < .01$) increased and psychological well-being decreased (r_{T1} = -.38, $p < .01$; r_{T2} = -.17, $p < .01$) during the first year. Pride was positively correlated with psychological well-being (r_{T1} = .20, $p < .01$; r_{T2} = .11, $p < .05$) at Time 1 and Time 2 and guilt was negatively correlated with perceived ethnic threat (r_{T1} = -.03, $p < .05$; r_{T2} = .10, $p < .05$). By and large, these reports indicate that negative emotions related to social class (i.e., guilt and shame), particularly social class shame, are associated with decreased psychological adjustment.

Preliminary Descriptive Analyses: University Selectivity and Time 2 Attrition

T tests were conducted to examine if participants enrolled in the only highly selective institution in the study and participants enrolled in institutions that are not as selective reported significantly different levels of the different dimensions of social class identity (i.e., identification, centrality, pride, shame, and guilt) and psychological adjustment (i.e., perceived ethnic threat, psychological distress, and psychological well-being). There were no significant differences in reported levels of social class identification [$t(216) = 1.30$, *ns*], centrality [$t(247.21) = -0.74$, *ns*], pride [$t(254.46) = 0.92$, *ns*], shame [$t(186.30) = -0.51$, *ns*], or guilt

[$t(225.03) = 0.50$, *ns*] between participants enrolled in the highly selective university and students enrolled in universities that are not as selective. *T* tests also indicated there were no significant differences in reported levels of psychological distress [$t(271.06) = 0.71$, *ns*], and psychological well-being [$t(250.17) = 0.09$, *ns*]. However, there were differences on one psychological adjustment outcome. Those enrolled in the highly selective university reported higher levels of perceived ethnic threat, $t(235.71) = 0.00$, $p < 0.001$ compared with those enrolled in universities that are not as selective. These results suggest that for Black students, university selectivity did not have an effect on social class identity (identification, centrality, and affect). However, university selectivity did have an effect on perceived ethnic threat – the only psychological adjustment variable in the current study that is specific to the college context (Ethier & Deux, 1994). With the exception of perceived ethnic threat, there was no evidence for differences between students attending a highly selective college versus those who attended schools that are not as selective in this study. Thus, I decided to include the students at the highly selective university in the sample with the other participants.

At Time 2, 375 participants (64%) from Time 1 had full data at Time 2 and were included in the final sample for the current study. To determine whether participants who did not complete the Time 2 survey systematically differed from those who did, paired t-tests were conducted to compare the participants who completed the Time 2 survey ($n = 375$) with the 213 participants who did not complete the Time 2 follow-up on the Time 1 variables of interest (social class identification, social class dimensions – centrality, pride, shame, and guilt, and psychological adjustment variables). Independent Samples *t* tests indicated no significant differences in reported levels of self-reported social class [$t(461.18) = -1.05$, *ns*], pride [$t(458.10) = 1.10$, *ns*], shame [$t(421.70) = 0.69$, *ns*], or guilt [$t(419.59) = 0.58$, *ns*] between those with full data at Time

1 and Time 2. There were differences, however, on social class centrality. Those who did not participate in the follow-up reported lower levels of social class centrality, $t(429.50) = 2.04$, $p = .042$. Independent Samples t tests indicated no significant differences in reported levels of perceived ethnic threat [$t(464.54) = 1.90$, *ns*], psychological distress [$t(424.61) = -.44$, *ns*], and psychological well-being [$t(480.12) = -1.35$, *ns*]. Overall, participants in Time 1 and Time 2 did not significantly differ on reported levels of the study variables, suggesting no distinct patterns of attrition from the study. Thus, attrition was not considered to have an impact on the study variables and I decided to only use those with complete data at both time points in the main analyses.

Question 1: What distinct patterns, or profile groups, of social class identity variables (centrality, pride, shame, and guilt) will emerge among Black college students?

To investigate what profile groups of social class centrality, pride, shame, and guilt will emerge among Black college students, latent profile analysis (LPA) was performed on 4 dimensions of social class identity. Social class self-identification variable was not added to the LPA because it is conceptually distinct from the dimensions included in the LPA. According to the collective identity framework (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004), self-categorization (e.g., self-selected social class) is the precondition to activate all other identity dimensions (e.g., centrality and affect). Therefore, it conceptually cannot operate in tandem with the other identity dimensions. Using data from the four subscales of the MMSCI, I ran a series of models with one to seven profiles. Summary statistics for these seven models are displayed in table 4.3. The decision criteria (Wong et al., 2012) outlined in the analysis plan was used to identify the optimal LPA model: (a) model fit, (b) classification accuracy (the accuracy with which cases are classified into clusters), (c) interpretability and (d) parsimony (see analysis plan

in chapter 3 for detail). The seven-profile latent model exhibited the lowest BIC (4499.94) and

AIC (4256.47) values relative to the other latent profile models. The BLRT p-value for the

seven-profile model was significant, indicating that the seven-profile solution shows a better fit

than the six-profile solution. However, due to other decision criteria (e.g., contained a profile

group smaller than 3% of the sample), the seven-profile solution was not selected as the most

appropriate solution.

There were significant decreases in BIC between the three-profile (4808.55) and four-

profile (4684.94) solutions and the four-profile solution (4684.94) and the five-profile solution

(4571.98). In addition to having lower BIC and AIC values, the five-profile solution contained

less variable pairs with BVRs (local independence of variables in the latent profile model) higher

than 3.84, proportional profile sizes and better fit indices (e.g., classification error) than the four-

profile solution and was examined further to determine if it is the optimal profile solution.

The BVRs for each variable pair of the five-profile model were examined for local

dependence. The centrality/shame dimension pair had a BVR exceeding 3.84 (i.e., 6.14) and it

was the only BVR over 3.84. BVRs above 3.84 indicate that the model does not adequately

explain the bivariate relations between indicators (Magidson & Vermunt, 2004), and adding

direct effects may result in models with better fit to the data. Consequently, a five-profile model

with the direct effect between centrality and shame was estimated. The direct effect accounted

for the residual correlation between the two indicators and provided a better model solution

indicated by the absence of BVRs above 3.84. Although there was a slight increase in the BIC

(4415.56) and AIC (4415.56) for the five-profile model with this direct effect added than without

this direct effect, the values were still significantly lower than the four-profile solution.

Additionally, the conditional bootstrap estimates of the log-likelihood (i.e., BLRT) showed that

the BLRT *p*-value for the five-profile model with one direct effect was significant, indicating

that the five-profile model shows a better fit than the four-profile solution.

In terms of classification statistics, the five-profile model with one direct effect had a

relatively low proportion of classification errors of (.08) and a relatively high Entropy R^2 value

(.86). Also, in the five-profile model the average probabilities of participants being accurately

classified in their respective profile groups were 0.86 for Profile 1, 0.90 for Profile 2, 0.97 for

Profile 3, 1.0 for Profile 4, and 1.0 for Profile 5. With regard to interpretability, I examined the

proportion of the sample in each profile within the five-profile solution with one direct effect and

did not find any disproportionately small profile groups (e.g., 3% of the sample): Profile 1 =

33%, Profile 2 = 34%, Profile 3 = 13%, Profile 4 = 11%, Profile 5 = 9%.

To ensure that the profiles were clearly distinct, I conducted one-way ANOVAs using

profile membership as the predictor variable and centrality, pride, shame, and guilt as the

outcome variables. The results between the ANOVAs (4.4) indicate that, overall, there are

significant differences between the profiles on the social class identity dimensions centrality,

$F(4, 371) = 4.42, p < .001$; pride, $F(4, 371) = 29.21, p < .001$; shame, $F(4, 371) = 191.10, p <$

.001; and guilt, $F(4, 371) = 102.94, p < .001$. These results suggest that the differences between

the profiles are meaningful and show both quantitative and qualitative differences.

The profiles are graphically presented in Figure 4.1. and described using the means of

social class centrality and affect variables (pride, shame, and guilt). Standardized means were

used so that visual comparisons between profiles and comparisons to the sample mean could be

easily made. Both standardized means and raw means for social class centrality, pride, shame,

and guilt measures for each cluster are provided in Table 4.4.

Profile labels are often generated to reflect the quantitative differences that emerge from the between-profile post hoc comparisons (Table 4.4), salient (i.e., defining) differences between profiles (e.g., an unusually high level of a particular variable; Stanley, Kellermanns, & Zellweger, 2017), and existing theory regarding how social class dimensions operate in higher education. Therefore, profile labels were chosen based on the criteria above.

Profile 1 ($n = 125$, 33%) includes participants who reported levels of centrality, pride and, guilt around the sample mean. More specifically, these Black college students reported levels of centrality (M=4.08, SD=1.07) slightly below the mean and levels of pride (M=4.90 SD=1.04) and guilt (M=4.51, SD=1.38) at similar levels slightly above the mean. Students in this group reported level of shame approximately a half of standard deviation below the mean (M=2.53, SD=.48). This is also the only profile where a negative emotion (guilt) and positive emotion (pride) were at similar levels above the mean. Therefore, I labeled this profile *Social Class Homeostasis* (Figure 4.2). Profile 2 ($n = 126$, 34%) includes Black students who reported the highest levels of centrality (M=4.59 SD=1.02) and the negative social class affect dimensions, shame (M=4.21, SD=.74) and guilt (M=5.24, SD=1.15), relative to the sample mean. In terms of pride, Black students in this cluster reported levels of this social class affect a little under one-third of a standard deviation below the mean (M=4.09, SD=1.36). Accordingly, I labeled this profile *Social Class Vulnerable* (Figure 4.3). The next largest group of Black students ($n = 49$, 13%), labeled *Social Class Unfazed* (Figure 4.5), were marked by the lowest reported level of guilt (M=1.41 SD=.50) relative to the sample mean. Participants in this profile group also reported levels of centrality (M=4.07 SD=1.44) and pride (M=3.79 SD=1.61) below the sample mean. Profile 4 ($n = 40$, 11%) includes Black students who reported levels of centrality (M=4.28, SD=1.35) and guilt (M=4.55 SD=2.11) just above the mean. In this profile

there is a sharp contrast between pride and shame with students in this profile reporting the highest level of pride (M=6.04 SD=1.09) and the least feelings of shame (M=1.22, SD=.22) relative to the sample mean. Thus, I labeled this profile *Social Class Buffer* (Figure 4.6). Last, Black students in Profile 5 (n = 35, 9%) reported a level of social class shame (M=3.91, SD=.21) a little over half a standard deviation above the mean. Students in this profile reported the least centrality (M=4.02, SD=.08) and levels of pride (M=4.00, SD=.00) and guilt (M=4.00, SD=.00) below the mean. Accordingly, I named this profile group, *Social Class Concealed* (Figure 4.7). These participants possess similar characteristics as Profile 3, but can be distinguished from participants in this profile based on the pronounced level of guilt in the *Social Class Unfazed*.

Question 1a: Are individuals' social class self-identification associated with membership in particular social class identity profile groups?

I performed a chi-square test of independence to examine the relation between social class self-identification and social class identity profile. The relation between these variables was significant, $\chi^2(16) = 79.44$, $p <.001$ (Table 4.5). Next, I employed relative and absolute contribution post hoc methods to determine which cells contributed to the significant omnibus chi-square test. The results of this analysis is shown in Table 4.6.

To obtain the relative contribution I divided each cell chi-square by the omnibus-chi square value and multiplied that number by 100 which gave me a percentage contribution for each cell to the overall test statistic (Beasley & Schumacker, 1995). In the analysis of standardized residuals, cells s_{11}(22.63%), s_{14}(13.62%), s_{15}(15.16%), s_{23}(20.64%), s_{24}(17.61%), s_{31}(31.34%), made larger relative contributions to the significant omnibus chi-square test. There were significantly less participants who identified as poor (s_{11}) as well as significantly more participants who identified as middle class (s_{14}) and upper-middle class (s_{15}) than expected in the

Social Class Homeostasis group. There were significantly more participants who identified as lower-middle class (s_{23}) and significantly less participants who identified as middle class(s_{24}) than expected in the Social Class Vulnerable Group. Additionally, there were significantly more participants who identified as poor (s_{31}) than expected in Social Class Unfazed group.

To obtain the absolute contribution values of each cell I divided each cell chi-square by the sample ($n = 375$) and multiplied that number by 100 which gave me a value for the variance shared between social class identity profile and social class self-identification for each cell chi-square. The finding that participants who identified as poor were significantly less likely than expected to be in the Social Class Homeostasis group accounted for 4.79% of the variance while the finding that middle class and upper-middle class participants were significantly more likely than expected to be in the Social Class Homeostasis group accounted for 2.89% and 3.21%, respectively, of the variance. The finding that there were significantly more participants who identified as lower-middle class and significantly less participants who identified as middle class than expected in the Social Class Vulnerable group accounted for 4.37% and 3.73%, respectively, of the variance. Lastly, the finding that participants who identified as poor were significantly less likely to be in the Social Class Unfazed group accounted for 6.64% of the variance.

Question 2: Do Black students' social class centrality and affect profiles relate to psychological adjustment outcomes (*perceived ethnic threat, psychological distress, and psychological well-being*) over the course of their freshman year?

The association between social class centrality and affect profiles and the psychological adjustment variables (perceived ethnic threat, psychological distress, and psychological well-being) while controlling for gender were examined at Time 1 (college entry) and Time 2 (near

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the end of their freshman year) in separate one-way ANCOVAs. Bonferroni's post hoc procedure was used for pairwise comparisons across groups.

Time 1

  Perceived ethnic threat. The results of the ANCOVA revealed that gender was not associated with perceived ethnic threat $F(1, 375) = 0.05$, *ns*. There was a significant effect of social class centrality and affect profile groups on levels of perceived ethnic threat after controlling for gender $F(4, 375) = 5.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. Bonfeorroni's post hoc comparisons indicated that participants in Social Class Homeostasis ($M = 1.97$) reported significantly lower levels of perceived ethnic threat than participants in Social Class Vulnerable ($M = 2.59$) and Social Class Unfazed ($M = 2.64$).

  Psychological distress. The results of the ANCOVA revealed that gender was not associated with psychological distress $F(1, 375) = 2.73$, *ns*. There was a significant effect of social class centrality and affect profile groups on levels of psychological distress after controlling for gender $F(4, 375) = 10.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Bonfeorroni's post hoc comparisons indicated that participants in Social Class Vulnerable ($M = 2.61$) reported a significantly higher level of psychological distress than participants in Social Class Homeostasis ($M = 2.06$) and Social Class Buffer ($M = 1.77$). Participants in Social Class Concealed ($M = 2.40$) also reported a significantly higher level of psychological distress than participants in Social Class Buffer ($M = 1.77$).

  Psychological well-being. The results of the ANCOVA revealed that gender was not associated with psychological well-being $F(1, 375) = 1.79$, *ns*. There was a significant effect of social class centrality and affect profile groups on levels of psychological well-being after controlling for gender $F(4, 375) = 10.50$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Bonferroni's comparisons revealed

that participants in Social Class Buffer ($M = 5.14$) reported significantly higher level of psychological well-being than participants in Social Class Vulnerable ($M = 4.25$), Social Class Unfazed ($M = 4.37$), and Social Class Concealed ($M = 4.23$). Participants in Social Class Homeostasis ($M = 4.83$) reported significantly higher levels of psychological well-being compared to participants in Social Class Vulnerable ($M = 4.25$) and Social Class Concealed ($M = 4.23$).

Time 2

     Perceived ethnic threat. The results of the ANCOVA revealed that gender was not associated with perceived ethnic threat $F(1, 375) = 0.05$, *ns*. There was a significant effect of social class centrality and affect profile groups on levels of perceived ethnic threat after controlling for gender $F(4, 375) = 5.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. Bonferroni's comparisons indicated that participants in Social Class Homeostasis ($M = 2.40$) reported significantly lower levels of perceived ethnic threat than participants in Social Class Vulnerable ($M = 3.11$) and Social Class Unfazed ($M = 3.12$).

     Psychological distress. The results of the ANCOVA revealed that gender was not associated with psychological distress $F(1, 375) = 1.79$, *ns*. There is a significant effect of social class centrality and affect profile groups on levels of psychological distress after controlling for gender $F(4, 375) = 4.90$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Bonferroni's post hoc comparisons indicated that participants in Social Class Vulnerable ($M = 2.42$) reported a significantly higher level of psychological distress than participants in Social Class Homeostasis ($M = 2.06$) and Social Class Buffer ($M = 1.89$). Participants in Social Class Concealed ($M = 2.53$) also reported a significantly higher level of psychological distress than participants in Social Class Buffer ($M = 1.89$).

Psychological well-being. The results of the ANCOVA revealed that gender was not associated with psychological well-being $F(1, 375) = 0.03$, *ns*. There is a significant effect of social class centrality and affect profile groups on levels of psychological well-being after controlling for gender $F(4, 375) = 3.33$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Bonferroni's post hoc comparisons revealed that participants in Social Class Buffer ($M = 4.83$) reported a significantly higher level of psychological well-being than participants in Social Class Vulnerable ($M = 4.28$).

Question 3: Does the relationship between social class identification and psychological adjustment function differently across social class centrality and affect profiles during Black college students' freshman year?

I employed multiple linear regression analyses to test if the association between social class centrality and affect profiles and the psychological adjustment variables (perceived ethnic threat, psychological distress, and psychological adjustment) varies as a function of social class identification, while controlling for gender at Time 1 (college entry) and at Time 2 (near the end of their freshman year). I ran two models for each psychological outcome variable. In the first block of each regression model, I included gender as a control variable as well as the main effects of social class identity centrality and affect profiles as well as the continuous social class identification variable. To test the function of social class identification, social class affect and centrality profiles X social class identification interaction terms were included. As outlined in Aiken and West (1991), all continuous predictor variables were centered and categorical variables were dummy coded before entering into the model. For the social class centrality and affect profile variable the Social Class Vulnerable profile was coded as the reference group. Results for each regression model predicting the psychological adjustment variables are presented in 4.8.

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Perceived ethnic threat. At Time 1, the model predicting the effect of social class centrality and affect profile on perceived ethnic threat while controlling for gender was significant, $R^2 = .06$ $F(6, 375) = 4.36$, $p < .05$. The model predicting the effect of social class centrality and affect profile on perceived ethnic threat including interaction terms while controlling for gender was non-significant, $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $\Delta F(10, 375) = .36$, *ns.* At Time 2, the model predicting perceived ethnic threat while controlling for gender was significant, $R^2 = .06$ $F(6, 375) = 3.95$, $p < .01$. The model predicting perceived ethnic threat including interaction terms while controlling for gender was non-significant, $\Delta R^2 = .06$, $\Delta F(10, 375) = .54$, *ns.*

Psychological distress. At Time 1, the model predicting the effect of social class centrality and affect profile on psychological distress while controlling for gender was significant, $R^2 = .12$ $F(6, 375) = 8.15$, $p < .001$. The model predicting the effect of social class centrality and affect profile on psychological distress including interaction terms while controlling for gender was non-significant, $\Delta R^2 = .13$, $\Delta F(10, 375) = .54$, *ns.* At Time 2, the model predicting psychological distress while controlling for gender was significant, $R^2 = .06$ $F(6, 375) = 3.63$, $p < .01$. The model predicting psychological distress including interaction terms while controlling for gender was non-significant, $\Delta R^2 = .07$, $\Delta F(10, 375) = .44$, *ns.*

Psychological well-being. At Time 1, the model predicting the effect of social class centrality and affect profile on psychological well-being while controlling for gender was significant, $R^2 = .10$ $F(6, 375) = 9.45$, $p < .001$. The model predicting the effect of social class centrality and affect profile on psychological well-being including interaction terms while controlling for gender was non-significant, $\Delta R^2 = .12$, $\Delta F(10, 375) = 1.67$, *ns.* At Time 2, the model predicting psychological well-being while controlling for gender was significant, $R^2 = .04$

$F(6, 375) = 3.25, p < .01$. The model predicting psychological well-being including interaction terms while controlling for gender was non-significant, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F(10, 375) = .29$, *ns.*

In sum, the relationship between level of social class self-identification and psychological adjustment outcomes (perceived ethnic threat, psychological distress, and self-acceptance) did not vary as a function of social class centrality and affect profile group.

Table 4.1

Means, standard deviations, minimum, maximum, and range of study variables.

Variable	N	M	SD	Min.	Max	Range
1. Social Class Identification	375	3.27[a]	1.21	1.00	5.00	4.00
2. Social Class Centrality	375	4.26	1.12	1.00	7.00	6.00
3. Social Class Pride	375	4.51	1.38	1.00	7.00	6.00
4. Social Class Shame	375	3.20	1.20	1.00	6.75	5.75
5. Social Class Guilt	375	4.49	1.72	1.00	7.00	6.00
6. Perceived Ethnic Threat	375	2.26	1.34	1.00	7.00	6.00
7. Perceived Ethnic Threat_Time 2	375	2.75	1.49	1.00	7.00	6.00
8. Psychological Distress	375	2.27	.90	1.00	5.00	4.00
9. Psychological Distress_Time 2	375	2.22	.93	1.00	5.00	4.00
10. Psychological Well-Being – Self-Acceptance	375	4.55	1.03	1.00	6.00	5.00
11. Psychological Well-Being – Self-Acceptance_Time2	375	4.39	1.01	1.00	6.00	5.00
Valid N (listwise)	375					

Note. [a] approximately lower-middle class

Table 4.2

Intercorrelations Among Study Variables (*N* = 375)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. SC_ID	-										
2. SC_Cent	-.05	-									
3. SC_Pride	.25**	.40**	-								
4. SC_Shame	-.30**	.11*	-.43**	-							
5. SC_Guilt	.22**	.16**	.20**	.03	-						
6. PET	-.13*	.08	-.07	.24**	-.03	-					
7. PET_T2	-.13*	.09	-.06	.23**	-.10*	.50**	-				
8. PsyDiss	-.18**	.12*	-.04	.35**	.05	.38**	.40**	-			
9. PsyDiss_T2	-.14**	.01	-.08	.18**	.01	.21**	.48**	.57**	-		
10. PW_SA	.10	-.04	.20**	-.38**	.01	-.32**	-.37**	-.51**	-.34**	-	
11. PW_SA_T2	.03	-.01	.11*	-.17**	.04	-.28**	-.43**	-.38**	-.48**	.58**	-

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

Table 4.3
Model Fit Statistics for Latent Profile Analysis Results ($N = 375$)

Model	BIC	AIC	-2LL Diff	Bootstrap p value	Classification errors	Entropy R^2
1-Profile	5124.31	5092.89	-	-	.00	1.00
2-Profile	5050.11	4983.35	127.54	.00	.06	.75
3-Profile	4808.55	4706.45	294.90	.00	.02	.90
4-Profile	4684.94	4547.49	176.96	.00	.10	.80
5-Profile	4571.98	4399.19	166.30	.00	.02	.93
6-Profile	4541.17	4333.04	84.15	.00	.14	.80
7-Profile	4499.94	4256.47	94.57	.00	.12	.83
With direct effects						
5-Profile with direct effect between shame and pride	4607.98	4415.56	159.94	.00	.08	.86

Note. BIC = Bayesian Information Criterion; AIC = Akaike Information Criterion; -2LL Diff = Difference in log-likelihood estimates between models.

Table 4.4

Descriptive Statistics for Multidimensional Measure of Social Class Identity ($N = 375$)

	Social Class Homeostasis ($n = 125$)		Social Class Vulnerable ($n = 126$)		Social Class Unfazed ($n = 49$)		Social Class Buffer ($n = 40$)		Social Class Concealed ($n = 35$)	
Raw means	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Centrality	4.08_2	1.07	$4.59_{1,3}$	1.02	4.07_1	1.44	4.28	1.35	4.02	.08
Pride	$4.90_{2,3,5}$	1.04	$4.09_{1,4}$	1.36	$3.79_{1,4}$	1.61	$6.04_{1,2,3,5}$	1.09	$4.00_{1,4}$	.00
Shame	$2.53_{2,3,4,5}$	.48	$4.21_{1,3,4}$	.74	$3.43_{1,2,4,5}$	1.24	$1.22_{1,2,3,5}$	.22	$3.91_{1,3,4}$	.21
Guilt	$5.06_{3,5}$	1.19	$5.24_{3,4,5}$	1.15	$1.41_{1,2,4,5}$	.50	$4.55_{2,3}$	2.11	$4.00_{1,2,3}$	.00
Standardized means	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Centrality	-.16	.96	.29	.92	-.18	1.29	.01	1.21	-.22	.07
Pride	.28	.75	-.31	.99	-.53	1.17	1.10	.79	-.37	.00
Shame	-.56	.40	.83	.62	.19	1.04	-1.66	.18	.59	.17
Guilt	.32	.69	.44	.67	-1.79	.29	.04	1.23	-.28	.00

Note. Subscript numbers are profile groups that are significantly different from the focal profile group ($p < .05$). Post hoc comparisons are based on psychological adjustment variables between social class identity profiles based on Tukey's test.
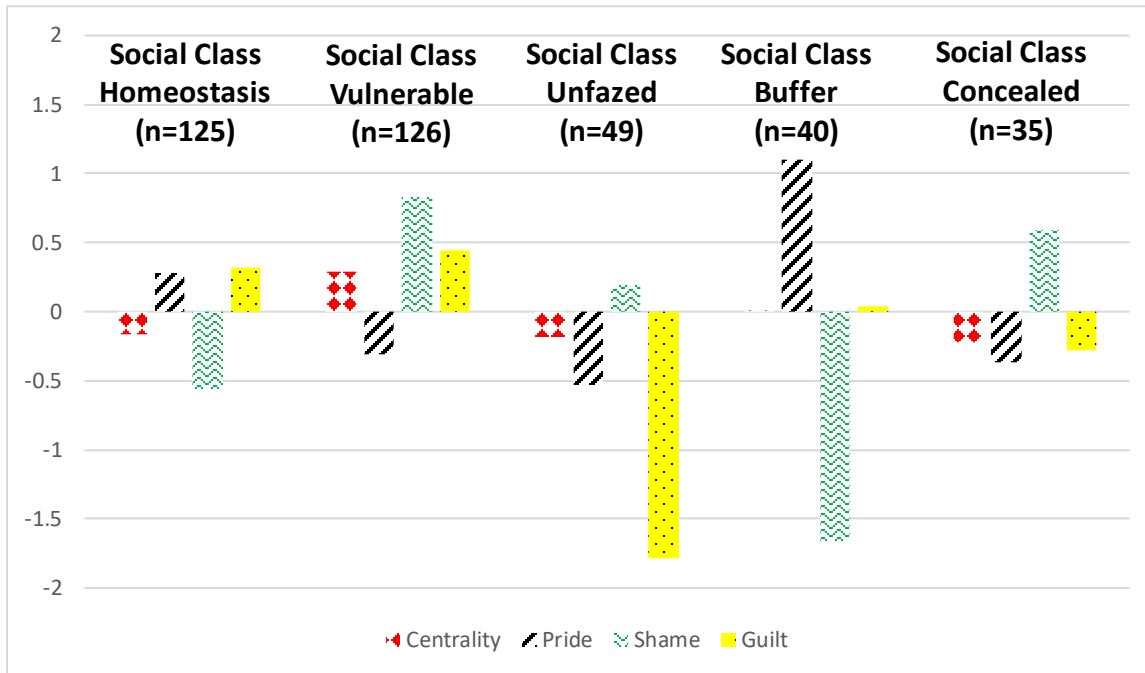
Figure 4.1

Profiles of Black Students' Social Class Identity (*n* = 375)
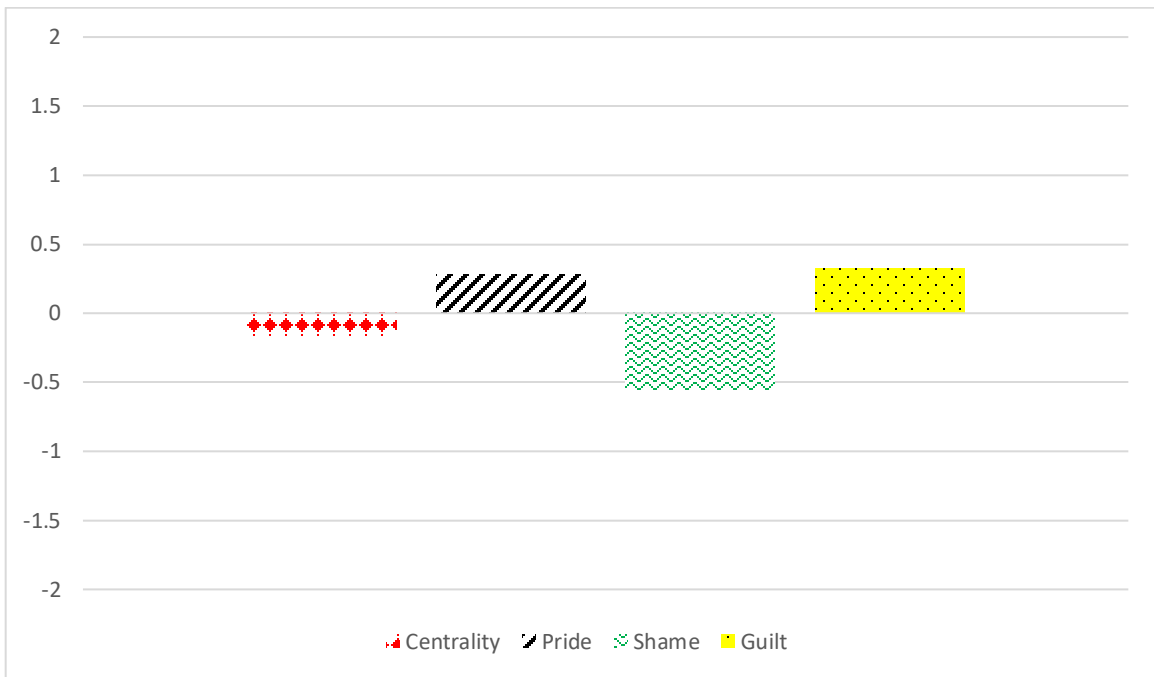
Figure 4.2

Social Class Homeostasis (*n* = 125)

Figure 4.3

Social Class Vulnerable (*n* = 126)
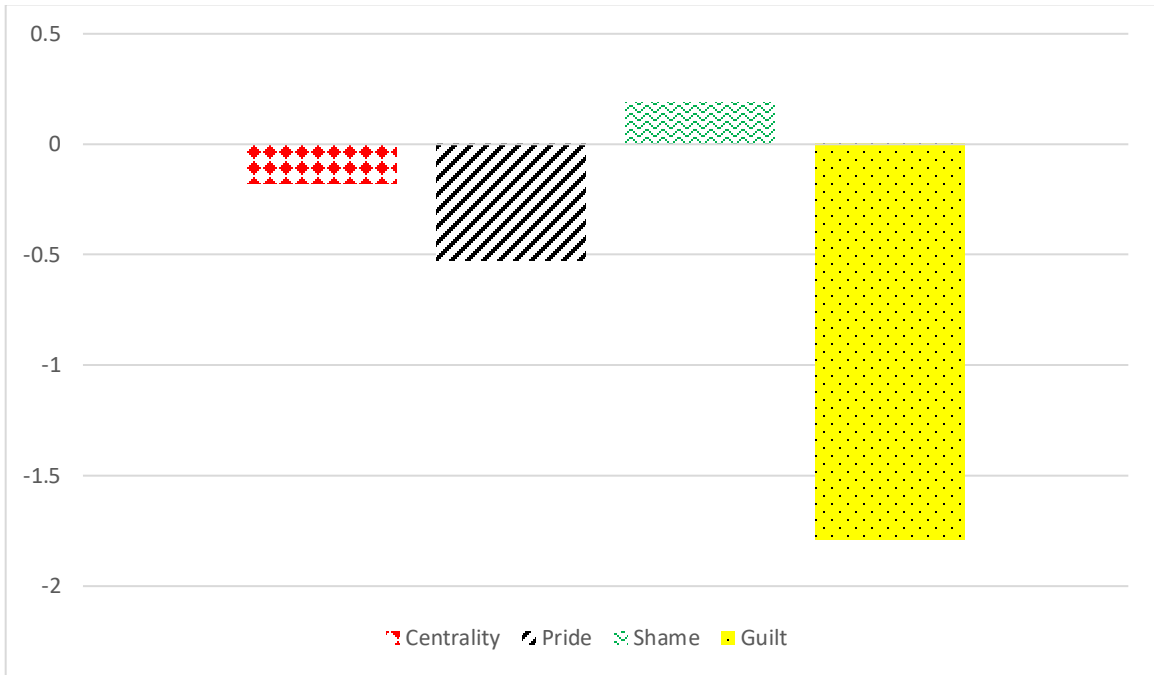
Figure 4.4

Social Class Unfazed (*n* = 49)
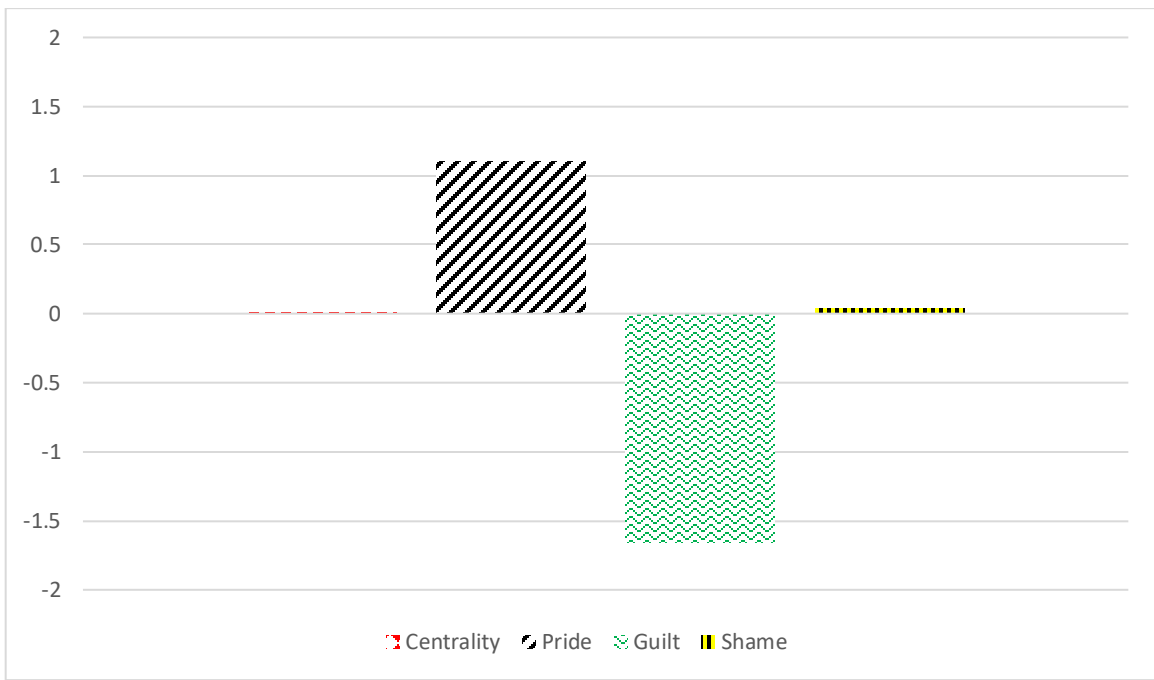
Figure 4.5

Social Class Buffer (n = 40)
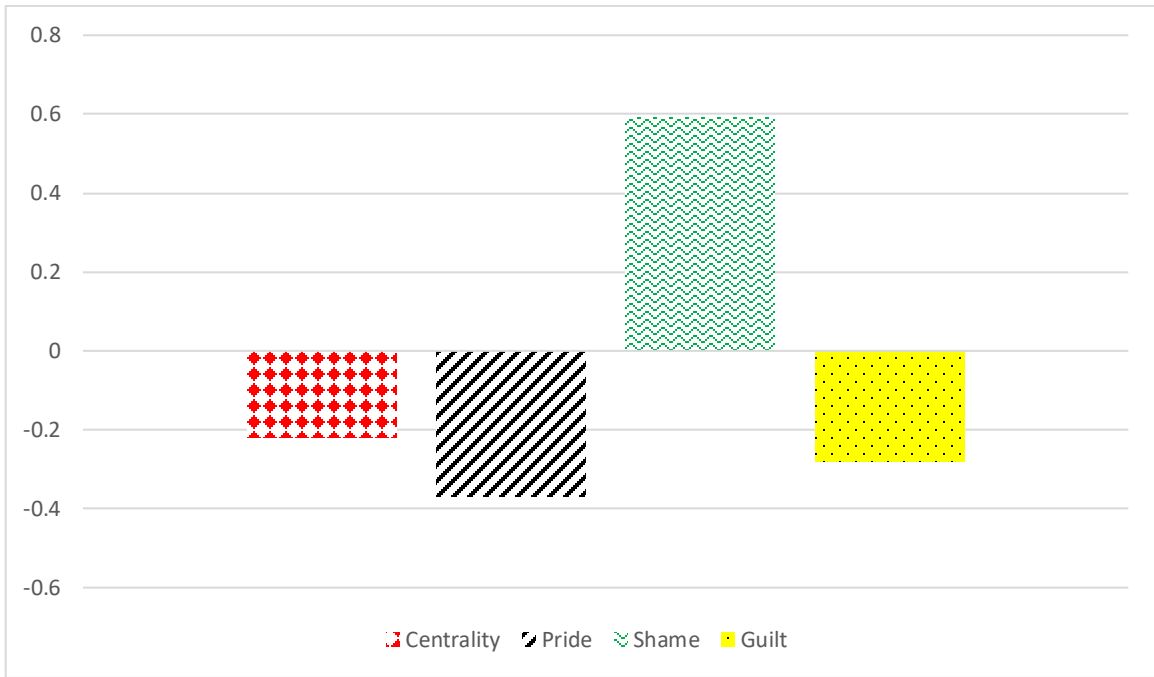
Figure 4.6

Social Class Concealed (*n* = 35)

Table 4.5

Results of Chi-square Test and Descriptive Statistics of Social Identity Profiles by Social Class Identification ($N = 375$)

Social Class Identity Profile		Poor	Working Class	Lower Middle Class	Middle Class	Upper Middle Class	Row total
Social Class Homeostasis	n	2	15	17	64	27	125
	%	4.70	25.00	22.70	43.20	55.10	33.30
Social Class Vulnerable	n	20	23	40	33	10	126
	%	46.50	38.30	53.30	22.30	20.40	33.60
Social Class Unfazed	n	16	7	6	19	1	49
	%	37.20	11.70	8.00	12.80	2.00	13.10
Social Class Buffer	n	1	6	5	21	7	40
	%	2.30	10.00	6.70	14.20	14.30	10.70
Social Class Concealed	n	4	9	7	11	4	35
	%	9.30	15.00	9.30	7.4	8.20	9.30
Column total	n	43	60	75	148	49	375
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100

Note. $\chi^2(16) = 79.44$. *,
 *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

Table 4.6

Calculations of Chi-Square, Standardized Residuals, and Relative and Absolute Contribution of Data in Table 4.3 ($N = 375$)

Cell	Total	Cell chi-square	Standardized residual	Relative (%) contribution	Absolute (%) contribution
s_{11}	2	17.98	-4.24*	22.63	4.79
s_{12}	15	2.22	-1.49	2.79	0.59
s_{13}	17	4.80	-2.19+	6.04	1.28
s_{14}	64	10.82	3.29*	13.62	2.89
s_{15}	27	12.04	3.47*	15.16	3.21
s_{21}	9	3.65	1.91	4.59	0.97
s_{22}	19	.72	.85	0.91	0.19
s_{23}	17	16.40	4.05*	20.64	4.37
s_{24}	78	13.99	-3.74*	17.61	3.73
s_{25}	26	4.41	-2.10+	5.55	1.18
s_{31}	6	24.90	4.99*	31.34	6.64
s_{32}	25	.12	-.35	0.15	0.03
s_{33}	31	2.13	-1.46	2.68	0.57
s_{34}	49	.01	-.11	0.01	0.00
s_{35}	13	6.05	-2.46+	7.62	1.61
s_{41}	15	3.53	-1.88	4.44	0.94
s_{42}	18	.03	-.18	0.04	0.01
s_{43}	34	1.56	-1.25	1.96	0.42
s_{44}	32	3.17	1.78	3.99	0.85
s_{45}	9	.77	.88	0.97	0.21
s_{51}	8	.00	-.01	0.00	0.00
s_{52}	10	2.72	1.65	3.42	0.73
s_{53}	16	.00	.00	0.00	0.00
s_{54}	17	1.04	-1.02	1.31	0.28
s_{55}	3	.09	-.30	0.11	0.02
Total	375	$\chi^2(16) = 79.44$		100.00	11.74

Note. An asterisk (*) indicates significance at the adjusted alpha level of .002. The symbol + indicates statistical significance at the nominal alpha level of .05

Table 4.7

Means and Standard Deviations of Psychological Adjustment by Social Class Identity Profile Groups at Time 1 and Time 2 (N = 375)

| Psychological Adjustment Variables	Social Class Homeostasis (n = 125)		Social Class Vulnerable (n = 126)		Social Class Unfazed (n = 49)		Social Class Buffer (n = 40)		Social Class Concealed (n = 35)		F	η_p^2
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	η_p^2
Perceived Ethnic Threat	$1.97_{2,3}$	1.17	2.59_1	1.37	2.64_1	1.70	1.98	1.21	1.92	1.06	5.59	.06
Perceived Ethnic Threat_T2	$2.40_{2,3}$	1.30	$3.11_{1,4}$	1.55	3.12_1	1.64	2.33_2	1.38	2.77	1.48	5.39	.06
Psychological Distress	2.06_2	.74	$2.61_{1,4}$	.98	2.26	.96	$1.77_{2,5}$	.58	2.40_4	.81	10.68	.10
Psychological Distress_T2	2.06_2	.86	$2.42_{1,4}$	.99	1.89	.93	$1.89_{2,5}$	.80	2.53_4	.88	4.90	.05
Psych Well-Being_SA	$4.83_{2,5}$	.91	$4.25_{1,4}$	1.03	4.37_4	1.16	$5.14_{2,3,5}$	.86	$4.23_{1,4}$	.82	10.50	.10
Psych Well-Being_SA_T2	4.49	.95	4.28_4	.97	4.23	1.21	4.83_2	1.07	4.18	.91	3.33	.04

Note. Subscript numbers are profile groups that are significantly different from the focal profile group ($p < .05$). Post hoc comparisons are based on psychological adjustment variables between social class identity profiles based on Bonferroni's test. Analyses are adjusted for gender.

Table 4.8

Time 1 Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses for Social Class Identification Moderating Relationship Between Social Class Identity Profile and Psychological Adjustment (N = 375)

	Perceived Ethnic Threat			Psychological Distress			Psychological Well-Being		
	b	SE_b	β	b	SE_b	β	b	SE_b	β
Gender (1=Male)	-.11	.15	-.04	.17	.10	.08	.01	.11	.01
Social Class Identification	-.07	.10	-.06	-.15	.06	-.20*	.10	.07	.12
Social Class Identity Profile Dummy 1[a]	-.60	.18	-.21**	-.4	.19	-.25***	.65	.14	.30*
Social Class Identity Profile Dummy 2[b]	-.04	.24	-.01	-.30	.16	-.11	.06	.18	.02
Social Class Identity Profile Dummy 3[c]	-.60	.26	-.14*	-.75	.17	-.26***	.86	.19	.26**
Social Class Identity Profile Dummy 4[d]	-.69	.27	-.15**	-.18	.17	-.06	-.04	.19	-.01
Social Class Identification X SC Dummy 1[a]	.09	.16	.04	.08	.10	.06	-.29	.12	-.17
Social Class Identification X SC Dummy 2[b]	-.12	.17	-.05	.16	.11	.09	-.15	.13	-.08
Social Class Identification X SC Dummy 3[c]	.11	.23	.03	.04	.15	.02	-.11	.17	-.04
Social Class Identification X SC Dummy 4[d]	-.01	.21	.00	.06	.13	.03	-.02	.15	-.01

Note. In perceived ethnic threat model, adjusted $R^2 = .06$ for Step 1 (not reported above); $\Delta R^2 = .05$. In psychological distress model, adjusted $R^2 = .12$ for Step 1 (not reported above); $\Delta R^2 = .08$. In psychological well-being, adjusted $R^2 = .10$ for Step 1 (not reported above); $\Delta R^2 = .09$. . *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$
[a] Social Class Homeostasis Dummy (Referent group = Vulnerable), [b] Social Class Unfazed Dummy (Referent group = Vulnerable), [c] Social Class Buffer Dummy (Referent group = Vulnerable), [d] Social Class Concealed Dummy (Referent group = Vulnerable)

Table 4.9

Time 2 Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses for Social Class Identification Moderating Relationship Between Social Class Identity Profile and Psychological Adjustment (N = 375)

	Perceived Ethnic Threat			Psychological Distress			Psychological Well-Being		
	b	SE_b	B	b	SE_b	β	b	SE_b	β
Gender (1=Male)	-.20	.17	-.01	.14	.10	.07	-.03	.12	-.01
Social Class Identification	-.07	.11	-.05	-.12	.07	-.15	.00	.07	.00
Social Class Identity Profile Dummy 1[a]	-.66	.20	-.21**	-.25	.13	-.13*	.25	.14	.12*
Social Class Identity Profile Dummy 2[b]	-.10	.27	-.02	-.20	.17	-.07	-.07	.18	-.02
Social Class Identity Profile Dummy 3[c]	-.84	.28	-.17**	-.49	.18	-.16**	.57	.20	.17
Social Class Identity Profile Dummy 4[d]	-.32	.29	-.06	.13	.18	.04	-.08	.20	-.02
Social Class Identification X SC Dummy 1[a]	.00	.18	.00	-.01	.11	-.01	-.08	.12	-.05
Social Class Identification X SC Dummy 2[b]	-.14	.19	-.05	.13	.12	.07	-.05	.13	-.02
Social Class Identification X SC Dummy 3[c]	.26	.25	.06	.11	.16	.04	-.04	.18	-.01
Social Class Identification X SC Dummy 4[d]	.05	.23	.01	.03	.14	.01	.09	.16	.03

Note. In perceived ethnic threat model, adjusted R^2 = .06 for Step 1 (not reported above); ΔR^2 = .04. In psychological distress model, adjusted R^2 = .06 for Step 1 (not reported above); ΔR^2 = .04. In psychological well-being, adjusted R^2 = .04 for Step 1 (not reported above); ΔR^2 = .03. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

[a] Social Class Homeostasis Dummy (Referent group = Vulnerable), [b] Social Class Unfazed Dummy (Referent group = Vulnerable), [c] Social Class Buffer Dummy (Referent group = Vulnerable), [d] Social Class Concealed Dummy (Referent group = Vulnerable)

Chapter V: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the patterns of social class centrality and affect (pride, shame, and guilt) that would emerge among a sample of Black college students during their first-year of college, and to determine how certain types of social class centrality and affect profiles related to psychological adjustment outcomes. Building on prior literature (e.g., Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Thomas & Azmitia, 2014; Webb, 2014), this study was one of the first to consider multiple indicators of social class identity together, as opposed to focusing solely on one dimension (e.g., social class category; Torres & Massey, 2012). In addition, the study considered whether certain types of social class identity dimensions (centrality and affect) taken together related to Black college students psychological adjustment during their freshman year at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). By examining the significance and meaning of social class among Black college students at PWIs, we will have more insight on how the meaning making of this identity varies within a racially homogenous group of students and how it effects their adjustment during their transition into college.

Given that prior literature (Jack, 2014; Lee, 2013; Torres, 2009), highlights that the sociodemographic characteristics of highly selective PWIs (i.e., largely affluent and White) exacerbates race and class differences, I considered whether differences in Black college students' social class identity (identification, centrality, and affect) and psychological adjustment related to university selectivity. The two groups did not vary in social class self-identification, centrality, pride, shame, or guilt. Additionally, psychological distress and psychological well-being did not

vary as a function of university selectivity. Perceived ethnic threat, however, was significantly higher for Black college students at the highly selective university compared to their peers enrolled in universities not classified as highly selective. This finding highlights that the context of highly selective PWIs may uniquely relate to Black students' perception of fit in a context where the stratification of race and class is more salient (Torres, 2009). Black students' in Torres (2009) study expressed how the overwhelmingly affluent student body as well as its whiteness factored into their definition of campus climate and their perception of compatibility between their background and the context of their highly selective elite PWI. The median household income of families at the highly selective PWI in this study is over $150k and Black students make up less than 5% of the student population. Thus, the large proportion of affluent and White students at the highly selective university may have implications for Black college students' perception of fit similar to the participants in Torres' (2009) study.

Latent profile analysis revealed distinct and meaningful groups of Black college students based on four dimensions of social class identity. Utilizing a multidimensional approach to the examination of social class identity elucidated the heterogeneity of Black students' social class identity beliefs, how the dimensions functioned in relation to each other, as well as how the dimensions varied across subgroups of Black college students. The five patterns of social class centrality and affect differed in the extent to which Black students attached positive or negative emotions to their social class identity (pride, shame, guilt) and the importance of social class identity to their overall self-concept (centrality). Examining the ways in which Black college students make meaning of their various and intersecting identities that may be particularly salient within distinct educational contexts (e.g., class and race at PWIs) is a critical step in understanding their adjustment outcomes in these environments.

Latent Classes of Social Class Centrality and Affect Among Black College Students

The first aim of this study was to examine what distinct patterns of social class identity centrality and affect (pride, shame, and guilt) would emerge among Black college students at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). While the variable-level correlations described in the previous chapter highlight how individual social class identity dimensions related to one another, perceptions of threat from the educational context, psychological distress, and psychological well-being, the use of a person-oriented approach via profile analysis allowed for examination of particular patterns of social class-related beliefs. Through use of latent profile analyses, five patterns or profiles of social class centrality and affect were identified within the sample of Black college students. Overall, these five profiles of social class centrality and affect highlight the heterogeneity within the sample by providing a more detailed picture of the significance and meaning as well as the emotions Black college students attached to their social class identity.

Freshman year of college is a particularly interesting and relevant period of transition for such an analysis. During this period, individuals often explore and make meaning of their various identities and may be in various states of figuring out who they are and the meanings of their social identities in a new educational context. Concurrently, college students in their first year may vary in their perceptions and understandings of how social class functions at multiple levels (interpersonal, social, and institutional). Additionally, the profile approach made possible the consideration of whether Black college students with differing patterns of social class centrality and affect varied in their psychological adjustment. Thus, in using this approach it was possible to explore whether particular types of Black college students social class centrality and affect are adaptive or maladaptive to their adjustment rather than considering only their social class category (e.g., poor, working class, middle class).

In an effort to provide a more qualitative description of the types of Black college students in each of the profile groups, analyses were employed to provide more descriptive information and profile variation in social class centrality and affect. Below, the five profiles resulting from the analyses are described.

Social Class Homeostasis. The *Social Class Homeostasis* profile included Black college students who, relative to the broader sample, had lower levels of centrality and shame and higher levels of guilt and pride. Thus, this group of Black college students reported their social class as less significant to defining part of their self-concept and felt less ashamed or embarrassed about identifying with their social class group relative to the overall sample. In addition, they reported feeling more positive about being a member of their social class group as well as more remorse associated with the opportunities that have been afforded to them in relation to their social class background. This profile group composed one-third of the sample (33%; $n = 125$) and contained significantly less individuals who identified as poor ($n = 2$) as well as significantly more individuals who identified as middle class ($n = 64$) and upper-middle class ($n = 27$) than expected.

Interestingly, Black college students in this profile group reported pride and guilt at approximately the same level above the sample mean. For these Black students, simultaneously experiencing similar levels of negative and positive self-emotions attached to their social class group may be a result of a number of factors related to how they make meaning of their social class self label in a higher educational context. For example, students who identify with more disadvantage social class groups (e.g., poor, working class) may be proud of their accomplishment of matriculating into a context where members of their group have been historically marginalized and in low numbers (Hardaway & McLoyd, 2009). At the same time, these less advantaged students may also harbor feelings of guilt related to experiencing upward mobility and the associated

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privileges compared to others in their families and community of origin (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2014; Orbe, 2004). The less than expected number of Black college students in this group who self-identified as poor is surprising given the amount of literature that describes how economically disadvantaged students, especially those who are Black, often grapple with positive feelings tied to their academic success and negative feelings related to being on a pathway to a social class status higher than their one of origin.

Factors related to equal levels of guilt and pride reported by the more advantage (i.e., middle class and upper-middle class) Black students in this profile group may be similar to those of their more disadvantaged peers within in this same group. Black middle-income families tend to live in economically diverse neighborhoods (Reardon, Fox, & Townsend, 2015). Moreover, given the income variability among the Black middle class (Lacy, 2007) it is likely that there is also variability in which families can and cannot afford to send their children to college. Taken together, it is possible that Black students in this profile group who self-identify as middle class or upper-middle class share environments with more economically disadvantaged Black families and may experience guilt related to the opportunity to attend college.

Social Class Vulnerable. The *Social Class Vulnerable* profile group included Black students with higher centrality, shame, and guilt and lower pride relative to the sample mean. In addition, the dimensions of centrality, shame, and guilt in this profile group were the highest compared to the other profile groups. These students viewed social class as more central to their overall identities, attached more negative feelings to their social class background, and had less positive evaluations of their social class than the overall sample. This profile group composed 34% ($n = 126$) of the sample and the majority of Black students (66%) within this profile group identified with one of the three lower status social class groups. The Social Class Vulnerable group

also contained significantly more students who identified as lower-middle class ($n = 40$) and significantly less students who identified as middle class ($n = 33$) than expected.

The high levels of centrality and negative affect coupled with the proportion of Black students within this profile who identify with one of the less privileged social class status groups aligns with theoretical expectations and findings in previous studies. For example, social identity theory posits (Tajfel, 1981) that social categories are more salient to individuals who identify with stigmatized groups and other scholarship demonstrates that racial/ethnic minorities and students from less affluent backgrounds report that social class is more salient within the college context (Langhout et al., 2007). This profile group had the highest level of social class centrality across profile groups which may be partially a result of the large proportion of Black college students in this group who identified with a devalued social class identification category (i.e., poor, working class, lower-middle class). Results from Webb's (2014) study of social class identification and the narratives of Black students who identified as poor or with a similar lower status social class group (e.g., working class; Jack, 2014; Torres, 2009) provide additional evidence that Black college students at PWIs from less privileged backgrounds may be more prone to hold a number of negative emotions tied to their social class group.

Social Class Unfazed. The *Social Class Unfazed* profile group included Black college students with lower centrality, pride, and guilt but higher shame than the sample mean. The level of guilt in this profile group is particularly distinct with students reporting the lowest level of this dimension compared to levels of guilt in other profile groups. Moreover, shame was the only social class affect in this profile group that was above the sample mean. This profile group composed 13% ($n = 49$) of the study sample. Additionally, there were significantly more Black college students in this profile group who identified as poor ($n = 16$) than expected.

Black college students in this profile group reported feeling the least amount of guilt related to the opportunities they have been afforded and also reported having the least amount of pride in their social class identification group compared to their peers in other profiles. Similar to the Social Class Vulnerable profile, the majority of participants (53%; $n = 29$) in the Social Class Unfazed group identified with one of the three lower ranked social class identification groups. Given the composition of this profile (i.e., majority lower-middle class and below) some of the reported levels of the different dimensions of social class identity (centrality and affect) in this group are surprising. For example, the low level of guilt reported by Black students in this profile counters research cited earlier (e.g., Lubrano, 2004) that suggests that college students from less advantage backgrounds may experience guilt for having "succeeded" and in the process "left behind" people in their community of origin/from a similar social class background. The low level of social class guilt may also be a result of the guilt item in the current study not distinguishing the referent group. In other words, it is possible that the less advantaged students in this group compared themselves to their more advantaged peers on campus responding to this question and felt less guilt about having opportunities that others from their, or similar lower status, backgrounds do not. Additionally, the explicit stratification and inequality that are present on many PWI campuses may result in the less privileged students in this profile feeling less guilt about being upwardly mobile and "leaving" others behind to pursue an education. This may also apply to the more advantage Black students in this group who may encounter others in their context who are more advantaged and in turn feel less guilt about the opportunities they have compared to others from their pre-college environments.

Social Class Buffer. Black college students in the *Social Class Buffer* profile group reported moderate levels of centrality and guilt. This profile also had the highest pride and the lowest shame relative to the other centrality and affect profile groups. These students reported the importance of

their social class background to their overall identity at a level similar to the sample and they did not report significantly more or less guilt attached to their social class when compared to the sample mean. Also, they held both very positive feelings attached to, and had significantly less remorse about, their social class background. This profile group was composed of 11% ($n = 40$) of the sample.

The distinguishing characteristic of this group is its significantly high level of pride and low level of shame. The largest proportion of Black students in this profile self-identified with one of the higher social class status groups (i.e., middle class and upper-middle class). Being a Black student at a PWI, regardless of social class background, may make their membership in a racially stigmatized group salient and as a result engage in psychological work to buffer negative interactions/experiences associated with being part of a racially minoritized group (e.g., discrimination) on a PWI campus. Thus, it is possible that the high level of pride these students have tied to their social class group may stem from an attempt to manage their devalued racial identity with their privileged social class identity. This result is supported by Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981) which posits that individuals who identify with a lower-status social group may engage in identity management strategies such as enhancing and reinforcing identities that are valued and viewed more favorably in an attempt to protect their self-esteem. This high level of pride among the more advantaged students in this profile may also be a result of racial socialization practices of Black middle – upper-middle class children. The narratives of Black middle class parents provide evidence that instilling racial pride in their children is a priority given the amount of time they spend in predominantly White environments. Recall that race may be classed and/or class may be racialized so the messages of racial pride may also be linked to social class status. Thus, these heightened levels of pride and lower levels of social class shame may reflect how the more

privileged students in this profile group feel about their race or the intersection of their race and social class.

Extant literature suggests that students from lower status social class origins may emote a sense of pride about their social class background and how the work ethic they attribute to their class group resulted in their successful matriculation into college (Jehangir, 2010; Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). Webb (2014) reported that students from poor and working class backgrounds endorsed higher levels of social class pride relative to those who identified with the other social class categories. Thus, it is surprising that there were so few participants in this group who identified with a lower status social class category.

Social Class Concealed. The *Social Class Concealed* profile group included Black college students who had the lowest centrality, second lowest pride, and second lowest guilt relative to the broader sample. Students in this profile also had the second highest level of shame, the only affective dimension in this profile group above the sample mean. These students viewed their social class background as less central to their overall identity, held less positive feelings about their social class group, felt less guilty about their social class background, and felt more shame and embarrassment about their social class group relative to the broader sample. This profile group was the smallest and composed 9% ($n = 35$) of the sample and contained the expected number of participants from each social class identification group.

The centrality and affect pattern in this profile is similar to those in the Social Class Unfazed group (i.e., shame is the only dimension above the mean, centrality is higher than pride and pride is higher than guilt). However, what distinguishes the profiles from each other is the level of guilt in the Social Class Unfazed group is significantly below the sample mean and students in the Social Class Concealed group reported a level of social class shame at a higher level compared to their

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peers in the Social Class Unfazed group. Over half of the students (57%) that compose this profile group self-identify with one of the lower status social class categories. The reported low levels of centrality and pride coupled with reporting the second highest level of shame may be a result of these students de-identifying (Abrams & Hogg, 2010) with their social class group as protective strategy in an environment where they may feel students from certain backgrounds do not belong. The centrality and affect patterns of the more affluent students in this group may be a result of their interaction with other students, especially other Black students who come from lesser means. As a member of a racially minortized group, Black students often seek out spaces and/or groups on campus where their race can be supported. Sometimes in these spaces, certain lived experiences are seen as more authentically Black and those with different experiences sometimes experience social distancing from the group (Smith & Moore, 2000). Therefore, it is possible that the levels of centrality and affect for more affluent Black students is linked to them lessening their privileged identity to maintain a connection with their Black peers.

Taken together, the profile groups' patterns of social class centrality and affect suggest that Black college students may vary in the importance and meaning they attach to their social class self-identification as well as the extent to which they hold positive and negative emotions linked to their social class group. The use of person-oriented methodologies elucidated the various ways that Black students make meaning of their social class identity in PWIs within and across social class groups. Experiencing one negative emotion does not necessarily lead to heighted levels of other related negative emotions as illustrated in the Social Class Homeostasis, Social Class Unfazed, and Social Class Concealed profile groups. Additionally, several of the centrality and affect profiles provide evidence that individuals can simultaneously hold both negative and positive emotions tied to their

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social class background. Lastly, it is interesting to note that when levels of pride are above the mean the level of centrality is just at or below the sample mean.

Social Class Centrality and Affect Profiles Associated with Psychological Adjustment During Freshman Year

Previous research indicated direct associations between Black students' social class centrality and affect and psychological adjustment (Webb, 2014). Accordingly, I examined differences in psychological adjustment variables across profile groups over the course of participants' freshman year of college. My hypothesis that Black college students who reported high levels guilt and shame would report less adaptive psychological adjustment to predominantly White institutions was largely supported.

Perceived Ethnic Threat. Significant profile group differences were found in participants' reports of perceived ethnic threat when they arrive to college and towards the end of their freshman year, suggesting that certain combinations of social class centrality and affect can make Black students vulnerable to perceiving their cultural background as incompatible with the college context. Students in the Social Class Vulnerable and the Social Class Unfazed profile groups reported higher Time 1 and Time 2 perceived ethnic threat than did students in the Social Class Homeostasis profile group. For the Social Class Vulnerable profile group, this difference may be partly explained by the higher levels of centrality and the negative emotions of shame, and guilt relative to the Social Class Homeostasis group. This finding corroborates previous research that suggests having a strong connection to one's social identity group, and holding negative emotions attached to membership in that social group may lead to increased perceptions of threats from the environment to that identity (Sellers, 2003). Additionally, the large proportion of students in the Vulnerable profile group that identified with a lower status social class group may have contributed

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to this group's higher level of perception of threat in an environment where the visible salience of status may illuminate societal inequalities and other reminders of devalued social status of certain backgrounds (i.e., classism).

Black college students in the Social Class Unfazed group reported lower levels of pride and higher levels of shame compared to those in the Social Class Homeostasis group. These results suggest that, the low appraisal of, and negative feelings about, their self-identified social class group may relate to their relatively higher perception of incompatibility between their background and the environment of a PWI. Recall that previous research suggests that class can be racialized (Lacy, 2007). In a context where certain cultural backgrounds are privileged students who feel less positive and more ashamed of their social class group may feel that they cannot express parts of their cultural background in contexts where signs of White middle class culture are celebrated. Similar to the Social Class Vulnerable group, a large proportion of Black students in the Social Class Unfazed group identified with a lower social class status group (i.e., membership in two devalued groups). Thus, for students in this profile group, the social class and racial composition of a PWI may also be a factor in their perception of fit between their cultural background and the college context.

Psychological Distress. There were significant differences in participants' report of psychological distress over the course of their freshman year. This finding suggests that certain levels of social class centrality and affect in the aggregate have implications for Black college students level of psychological functioning and discomfort that may interfere with their daily living activities. Specifically, Black college students in the Social Class Vulnerable profile reported higher levels of psychological distress compared to those in the Social Class Homeostasis and Social Class Buffer. Additionally, participants in the Social Class Concealed profile group reported experiencing

higher levels of psychological distress than participants in the Social Class Buffer group. These differences were found at both data collection time points.

Black college students in the Social Class Vulnerable and Social Class Concealed profile groups both report high levels of shame and low levels of pride compared to the broader sample mean. In the Social Class Homeostasis group, the relationship between shame and pride was in the opposite direction with level of pride above the sample mean and level of shame below the average of the sample. These findings suggest that being embarrassed and ashamed about one's membership in their social class group and at the same time hold less than positive feelings about their social class background may be a driving factor in the difference between the experiences of distress across the profile groups mentioned above. Indeed, Webb (2014) reported that high levels of social class shame and low levels of social class pride were positively and negatively, respectively, predictive of psychological distress. Although she took a variable approach in her examination, her findings coupled with the ones discussed above elucidate the implications these dimensions of social class identity have for psychological distress.

Psychological Well-being – Self-Acceptance. Significant difference were found in Black college students' report of self-acceptance at the beginning and towards the end of their freshman year. Specifically, upon entering college participants in the Social Class Buffer group reported higher self-acceptance than participants in the Social Class Vulnerable, Social Class Unfazed, and Social Class Concealed group. However, all but one of these across profile group differences dissipated towards the end of the freshman year. At Time 2, there was still a significant difference in levels of self-acceptance between participants in the Social Class Buffer profile and those in the Social Class Vulnerable profile group.

Again, the levels of pride and shame appear to be the dimensions of social class identity that are impactful in Black college students' psychological adjustment. All three profile groups with reported levels of social class pride below the sample mean and levels of social class shame above the mean (Vulnerable, Unfazed, and Concealed) reported higher levels of psychological distress compared to students in the Social Class Buffer group which reported levels of pride well above the mean and shame significantly below the sample average. Webb (2014) found similar associations of pride and shame with self-acceptance indicating that these emotions have implications for adaptive psychological functioning. It is not surprising that the difference in self-acceptance between the Social Class Vulnerable and the Social Class Buffer group held at Time 2. In addition to the levels of both negative emotions being the highest above the sample mean students in the Vulnerable group also reported social class centrality significantly above the sample average. Sellers and Shelton (2003) note that stronger centrality of a devalued social identity (recall the majority of students in the Vulnerable group self-identify with a lower social class status group) may contribute to less favorable psychological adjustment. Moreover, centrality for these students may be stable over time due to their daily engagement in a class-saturated context where they are constantly reminded of their lower social class status. These works together suggest that the significance of social class and negative feelings tied to one's social class identification group together have implications for Black college students' acceptance of self, a critical asset to adjusting to academic contexts (Butler-Barnes, Chavous, Hurd, & Varner, 2013).

Associations between Social Class Identification and Psychological Adjustment by Centrality and Affect Profile Group Membership During Freshman Year

In addition to direct associations of profile groups and psychological adjustment, I was also interested in whether social class centrality and affect patterns moderated the association of social

class identification with adjustment. Current findings suggest having more negative emotions and less positive evaluations associated with one's social class identification group seems to mitigate positive adjustment. This is demonstrated by the comparably low levels of adaptive psychological well-being and high levels of maladaptive psychological adjustment (PET and distress) among profile groups in which Black college students simultaneously reported levels of shame above, and levels of pride below the sample mean but vary in how significant their social class identification is to their self-concept. Social identity literature suggests that identifying with a devalued or stigmatized social group (e.g., poor), the extent to which individuals positively or negatively evaluate their membership in that low social status group can play a significant role in their psychological adjustment in higher educational contexts. For example, in Webb's (2014) study she reported that holding negative emotions towards one's social class self-label played a significant role in how individuals in devalued social class group (e.g., working class) psychologically adjusted in college. Additionally, she reported that the relation between negative social class affect was positively related to psychological distress among individuals who reported higher levels of social class centrality. Although Webb (2014) used a variable approach in her analysis, I drew from the results of her study reported above and expected that Black college students for whom social class was an important part of their self-concept, who also held negative emotions tied to their social class identification, would show less adaptive psychological adjustment if they identified with a lower status social class during their freshman year at a PWI.

Findings from the present study do not support the above hypothesis. Thus, it does not appear that the relation between social class identification and psychological adjustments vary as a function of the social class centrality and affect profiles. This result is surprising given the evidence that suggests strongly identifying (i.e., high centrality) with a socially devalued group and holding

less than favorable feelings towards membership in that group is associated with maladaptive psychological outcomes (Bernard, Hoggard, & Nebblet, 2018). The findings from the current study also did not support other research that has found that feelings of pride tied to social class background for more advantage students relates to more adaptive adjustment to educational contexts (Aries & Seider, 2007; Webb, 2014). It is possible that moderation did not occur because the significance and meaning of social class identity is a stronger explanatory factor in Black college students' psychological adjustment compared to social class self-identification alone.

General Discussion

The current study illustrates the importance of employing a person-centered approach to the examination of the meaning making of social class. The findings demonstrate that there is variation in the patterns of the dimensions of social class identity among Black college students within and across social class identification groups and that this variation is predictive of Black students' psychological adjustment. The current study expands on budding literature examining the relationship between various dimensions of social class and students' psychological adjustment (Aries & Seider, 2007; Hurst, 2010; Torres, 2009; Thomas & Azmitia, 2014; Webb, 2014). Indeed, many scholars who examine social class identity take a variable approach (e.g., Liu, 2013; Ostrove & Long, 2007; Webb, 2014) to examine how this social identity relates to students' psychological adjustment outcomes. While a variable approach to social class provides information on group differences, it does not account for the within social class category variability for how individuals make meaning of their social class within a socioeconomic stratified society or examining the psychological implications of this identity process. The current findings demonstrate that patterns of social class identity dimensions are predictive of Black students' psychological adjustment to predominantly White institutions.

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Another contribution of the current study is the use of a multidimensional framework specific to social class identity. A large proportion of the body of literature conceptualize social class as a status within a socioeconomic hierarchy (e.g., Jack, 2014; Molarius et al., 2009). While there is a growing number of social identity scholars who conceptualize social class as a social identity (e.g., Destin, Rheinschmidt-Same, Richeson, 2017; Liu et al., 2013; Pieterse et al., 2013), the current study utilized a framework that conceptually distinguishes between different affective beliefs tied to one's social class group membership and allows the researcher to examine how the dimensions independently, or together, uniquely relate to Black college students' psychological outcomes.

The findings also highlight another contribution of the current study – the importance of a within race, particularly within Black racial group, examination of social class and its relation to psychological adjustment to PWIs. Social class examinations often compare individuals across racial groups implicitly privileging the social class related experiences and associated outcomes of one, usually White, racial group. Other social class examinations assume that social class operates the same across race (Stephens et al., 2012). However, the current study adds to the research by further investigating the meaning making of social class among Black students and provides evidence that race comparative research is not necessary to advance our understanding of social class identity.

Lastly, the findings from the current study has implications for university staff and administrators who work and interact with Black students. Many university student affairs offices have staff who are responsible for developing programming, providing resources, and advising student groups specifically for Black students. Historically, a large proportion of Black students at PWIs, especially those that are highly selective/"elite", were first generation college students and/or

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from low socioeconomic backgrounds. As such, the initiatives developed for Black students often assumed that these students shared similar backgrounds of origin and experienced their various identities in the same way. The current study provides evidence that Black students vary not only in their social class self-identification but they also vary in how they make meaning of their membership in their self-identified social class group.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study makes several important contributions to the literature, advancing our knowledge of social class identity and its relationship to psychological adjustment. As with all studies, there are limitations that should be noted. First, the current study may not be generalizable beyond the present sample. Given that the sample was composed of college students, it is unclear how these findings would apply to Blacks outside of a higher education context. Additionally, the sample size in this study was small and the majority of students attended two of the five colleges. Although all colleges in the study were PWIs they differed in in median household income for students and the percentage of the undergraduate student body that identify as Black. This is of note because of the evidence that suggests that certain factors of educational contexts (sociodemographic of undergraduate student body) has implications for the salience and meaning-making of various social identities (Torres, 2009; De-Cuir-Gunby, Martin, & Cooper, 2012). It is also of note that all institutions in the current study are large public universities. Liberal arts colleges also are noted for being class saturated educational contexts and it may be of interest to investigate the meaning-making process of social class identity in those types of spaces.

Another limitation was the number of items in the subscales of the Multidimensional Measure of Social Class Identity (MMSCI). The subscales of the MMSCI were comprised of 2-5 items and all had Cronbach's alpha coefficients were less than the suggested threshold of .70. The

low estimates of internal consistency of the MFSCI subscales may be explained by the calculation of alpha being overly sensitive to the number of items in a measure (Ponterotto & Ruckdeschel, 2007), such that shorter subscales often yield lower Cronbach's alpha values (Streiner, 2003). Given the downward bias of Cronbach's alpha and that "multidimensional scales typically yield lower alpha reliability coefficients" (Helms et al., 2006, p. 639), future research should examine the mean inter-item correlations as they are a more accurate estimate of internal consistency that are not biased by the number of items on a scale (Diemer & Rapa, 2016). And although the MFSCI was developed and tested with a sample that included Black students it may not capture the nuances unique to class based experiences of Blacks in the U.S. that may factor into how they make meaning of their social class background. However, it is important to note that the above limitations do not represent problems with the conceptualization of the dimensions operationalized by the scales. The size of the sample was another limitation in this study, particularly as it relates to the statistical test employed to answer the third research question. A larger sample size would allow for more participants in each social class centrality and affect profile group of the moderated multiple regression, increasing power in the analyses and the possibility of identifying moderations that did not surface in this study. In other words, the impact of social class centrality and identity on the relationship between social class identification and psychological adjustment may have been significant in a larger sample. Future research should continue to explore the relationship between these variables, particularly how social class self-label relate to social class affect.

A final limitation was that the study only examined the emergence of social class centrality and affect patterns at one time point. It is possible that participants may have moved into different profile groups over the course of their freshman year. Students may have a number of experiences during their first year of college that may relate to how they make meaning of their social class

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identity (e.g., first time living with someone from a different background, social events) which may change over time.

Future research should include an examination on the role university location and type (public versus private) contributes to the relation between Black students' social class identity and their adjustment to PWIs. Future studies examining issues of social class among Black students should also include samples from HBCUs. Given the majority Black undergraduate, faculty, and administrative population other social identities (e.g., gender and social class) of Black students may be more salient and relate to outcomes differently than they did for this study. There might also be an increase in individuals who self-categorize into the two highest social class subgroups which could potentially provide more insight on the experiences of Black students from more advantage backgrounds.

Conclusion

In sum, this study empirically tested four dimensions of social class identity beliefs (centrality, pride, shame, and guilt) from a person-centered perspective among a longitudinal sample of Black college students at predominantly White institutions. A strength of this study is that it adds a unique approach to examining the meaning-making of social class identity during the transition to college for Black students. By applying a multidimensional social-class specific framework, the results of this exploratory study elucidated the heterogeneity of social class identity of Black college students when they matriculate into college. Additionally, the findings of this examination corroborate and extend previous scholarship on Black college students at PWIs, indicating that there is indeed variation in how Black college students make meaning of their social class identity and that this identity process relates to their psychological adjustment.

The present study's findings contribute to the literature on the diversity that exists within the Black college student population and dispels the assumptions that Black students' experiences at PWIs do not significantly differ within this racial group as well as within and across social class categories. This research also illuminates the need for and the utility of a multidimensional and intersectional framework for intraracial examinations and studies that seek to further understand individuals that hold membership in a socially devalued status group but vary in their identity related to another social identity and its implications for adjustment in distinct higher educational contexts (i.e., PWIs). The current study provided evidence that certain patterns of the dimensions of social class identity may serve as a protective factor from, or exacerbate, maladaptive psychological adjustment. If indeed social class is a significant factor in Black college students overall experiences at PWIs (Jack, 2014; Torres, 2009; Webb, 2014) then it is important to understand how these students make meaning of their social class self-identification.

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Appendix A

Social Class Identity Measure

IDENTIFICATION ITEM:

If you had to describe your social class background, you would describe it as:

- o poor
- o working class
- o lower middle class
- o middle class
- o upper middle class
- o upper class

Please consider your social class background. Please read each statement carefully, and respond by using the following scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Centrality Items
1. I have a lot in common with other [*selected social class group*] students.
2. Coming from a(n) [*selected social class group*] background is important to my sense of what kind of person I am.
3. Whenever possible, I prefer to hang out with other students from a(n) [*selected social class group*] background.
4. If I were to describe myself to someone, I would probably say that I'm from a(n) [*selected social class group*] background.
5. In general, coming from a(n) [*selected social class group*] background is an important part of my self-image.

Pride Items
1. I feel a sense of pride because of my [*selected social class group*] background.
2. I feel good about my [*selected social class group*] background.

Shame Items
1. At times, I try to hide the fact that I am [*selected social class group*].
2. I wish I was from a different social class background.
3. I sometimes feel embarrassed that I come from a(n) [*selected social class group*] background.
4. I am not ashamed of my social class background.*

Guilt Items
1. Sometimes, I feel guilty that others have not been as fortunate as I have been.
2. I fear that others may perceive me as "thinking I am better." #

Note: Items marked with an asterisk (*) were reversed coded. Items marked with a pound sign (#) item was not included in analyses after conducting reliability analyses.

Appendix B

Measures of Psychological Outcomes

Perceived Ethnic Threat

Scale of 1 (Not true of me at all) to 7 (Very true of me)

For the following statements, please respond how true the following statements are of how you generally feel in your college settings

1. I feel that I have to change myself to fit in at school. did you feel nervous
2. I cannot talk to my family about my friends at school or what I am learning at school.
3. I feel like a chameleon at school, having to change my "colors" according to the race or ethnicity of the person I am with.
4. I feel as though I cannot be myself because of my ethnicity.
5. I feel that my ethnicity is incompatible with the new people I am meeting and the new things that I am learning.
6. I do not feel comfortable talking about my culture in class discussions.

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale

Scale of 1(None of the time) to 5 (All of the time)

During the last 30 days, about how often:

7. did you feel tired out for no good reason?
8. did you feel nervous?
9. did you feel so nervous that nothing could calm you down?
10. did you feel hopeless?
11. did you feel restless or fidgety?
12. did you feel so restless you could not sit still?
13. did you feel depressed?
14. did you feel that everything was an effort?
15. did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up?
16. did you feel worthless?

Ryff Psychological Well-Being Measure (PWB)

The questions below relate to how people think about themselves generally. Select the number that best describes your agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree)

Self-Acceptance Subscale:
1. In general, I feel confident and positive about myself.
2. If I could, there are many things about myself that I would change.*
3. I like most aspects of my personality.
4. For the most part, I am proud of who I am.

Table 5

Institutional Demographics at Commencement of the Study (Fall 2012)

	College A	College B	College C	College D	College E
Undergraduate Enrollment	29,000	39,000	6,000	18,000	20,000
% African American/Black	4.4%	7.2%	1.3%	12.2%	23.2%
% European American	63.5%	79.4%	84.4%	71.6%	49.85%
Selectivity*	Highly Selective	Selective	Selective	Selective	Selective
Median Household Income of Undergraduate Students Families*	$154K	$115K	$94.6K	$92.7K	$58.6

Source. * Aisch, G., Buchanan, L., Cox, A., & Quealy, K. (2017). Some Colleges Have More Students From the Top 1 Percent Than the Bottom 60.

Table 6

Demographic Characteristics of Full Sample of Black College Students at Time 1

	Category	N
Ethnicity	African American	335 (89%)
	African	28 (7%)
	Caribbean American	9 (2.7%)
	Hispanic/Latino	1 (0.3%)
	Other	2 (1%)
Hometown Profiles	Urban/Metropolitan	179 (47.6%)
	Suburban	99 (26.3%)
	Small Town/City	88 (23.4%)
	Rural	7 (1.9%)
Racial Composition of Home Neighborhood	< 20% Black	70 (18.6%)
	20-40% Black	54 (14.4%)
	41-60% Black	49 (13%)
	61-80% Black	54 (14.4%)
	81-100% Black	149 (39.6%)
Racial Composition of High School	< 20% Black	89 (23.7%)
	20-40% Black	63 (16.8%)
	41-60% Black	48 (12.8%)
	61-80% Black	42 (11.2%)
	81-100% Black	134 (35.6%)
Household Income	Below 11.2K	38 (10.2%)
	11.2K – 29.2K	81 (22%)
	29.2K – 49.8K	61 (16.4%)
	49.8K – 80.1K	76 (20.4%)
	80.1K - 178K	70 (19%)
	178K and above	15 (4%)
	Don't know	30 (8.1%)