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Who Am I? Exploring Narrative Identity Through an Intersectional Framework

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Who Am I? Exploring Narrative Identity Through an Intersectional Framework

by

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Narrative identity is an internal and storied representation of the persons' past, present, and presumed future that represents identity. The *narrative identity approach* reveals how individuals story experiences within and across identity domains and how narrative themes correspond with psychological outcomes. To study how identity is embedded within larger systems of power, privilege, and oppression, integration of the narrative identity approach and an *intersectional framework* is needed. In the present dissertation, I used the narrative identity approach and an intersectional framework to examine the content, process, and structure of personal narratives within and across the domains of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class in relation to measures of adjustment and identity. In narrative interviews with 177 emerging adult college students, diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class, narratives of (1) a self-defining memory, (2) racial/ethnic awareness, (3) social class awareness, and (4) intersectional awareness

were gathered. Using inductive and deductive methods, eight themes were quantified within narratives including: (1) meaning making, (2) valence, (3) positive resolution, (4) connection to group, presence of (5) race/ethnicity, (6) gender, and (7) social class, and (8) perceived connection of identity domains. Participants also completed an online survey containing established measures of adjustment and identity as well as two novel self-report measures, which I designed to assess intersections between identity domains. Narrative themes related differentially with adjustment and identity based on narrative prompt. For example, greater meaning making related with lower life satisfaction in social class narratives but stronger identification with race/ethnicity and gender in intersectional narratives. In addition, individuals from marginalized groups tended to perceive identity domains as more connected but conflicting and evinced less positive narratives relative to individuals with privileged identities. Overall, results indicate that themes within narratives about a particular domain have implications for one's understanding of their intersecting identities. This dissertation illustrates that the multi-method assessment of identity within and across domains using a social justice perspective is critical in understanding the experiences of individuals with oppressed and privileged identities. Discussion centers on how the narrative identity approach may be used to organize research on intersecting aspects of identity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Who Am I? Exploring Narrative Identity Through an Intersectional Framework

> To be in a viable culture is to be bound in a set of connecting stories, connecting even though the stories may not represent a consensus. (Bruner, 1990, p. 96)

Psychologists have become increasingly interested in how membership in various socially constructed groups, including race/ethnicity, gender, and social class, impacts psychological outcomes including health and well-being, indicators of personal and social identity, political views, and academic adjustment (Cole, 2009; Rogers et al., 2020). Less research, however, has used a social justice perspective to examine the *content* (what is discussed), *structure* (how it is organized), and *process* (the way it is said) of identity related experiences in relation to psychosocial adjustment and other indicators of identity (Galliher et al., 2017; McLean et al., 2016a; Syed, 2015). Further, research on identity more broadly has relied primarily on relations between self-reported identity measures as opposed to a combination of self-report and behavioral measures, which provide a more comprehensive understanding of identity (Dunlop et al., 2020; Dunlop et al., 2022; Paulhus & Vazire, 2007).

In my dissertation, I adopted an *intersectional framework* to interpret and optimally engage with emerging adults lived experiences as members of their ethnicity/race, gender, and social class. I also used the *narrative identity approach* to determine how individual differences in personal narratives, a form of behavioral data (Dunlop et al., 2020), about intra-and-intergroup experiences related with psychosocial adjustment (i.e., life satisfaction, self-esteem) and self-reported indicators of identity

(e.g., ethnic-racial identity[1] (ERI), gender centrality, self-concept clarity). It is important to examine how dimensions of narrative identity relate with self-reported measures of identity, as this provides researchers with a better understanding of how the content of lived experiences corresponds with processes of identity development (Galliher et al., 2017). This approach also contributes to the multimethod assessment of personality (beyond personality traits) in relation to psychologically meaningful outcomes (Dunlop, 2015). In what follows, I will outline what intersectionality entails and why it is relevant to psychology (Section One). I will then propose a method for measuring multiple identities using an intersectional framework, the narrative identity approach (Section Two), and, finally, present the research questions that guided this dissertation (Section Three).

Section One: An Intersectional Framework

Psychologists interested in the phenomenological experience and psychological impact of occupying multiple identity domains (which people inherently do) have drawn increasingly from an intersectional framework (Azmitia et al., 2008; Bharat et al., 2021; Ghavami et al., 2016; Juan et al., 2016; Moffitt et al., 2020; Warner & Shields, 2013). Black feminist scholars and critical race theorists laid the foundation for this framework (Collins, 1998; Davis, 1983; Hooks, 1981), and it is Kimberle Crenshaw (1990), a legal scholar and critical race theorist, who coined the term *intersectionality*. This was done in

[1] Ethnicity is often used to refer to cultural differences based on shared country of origin, whereas race is often used to refer to a system of power that stratifies people based on perceived physical differences. However, ethnicity and race are overlapping, and multidimensional constructs associated with similar developmental processes and psychosocial outcomes (Cokley, 2007; Quintana, 2007; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). For this reason, I use the combined terms ethnicity/race and ethnic-racial identity (Wilkinson & Dunlop, 2020b).

her seminal work examining Black women's experiences on the outskirts of a male dominated movement for Black rights and a feminist movement focused on the needs of White women. In conceptualizing intersectionality, Crenshaw argued that discourse on identity has artificially separated the experiences of women and people of color, "relegate[ing] the identity of women of color to a location that resists telling" (Crenshaw, 1990, p. 1241). This demonstrates how discounting the diversity that exists within identity domains and failing to acknowledge how one identity domain is meaningful relative to another, contributes to intergroup tension. In the case of Crenshaw's research, it was of particular import to delineate how violence against women is shaped by other identity domains including race and class. This work revealed how violence against Black working-class women was less visible relative to violence against White middle-class women, whose experiences were more likely to be publicized by policymakers and garner public concern. At the same time, Crenshaw emphasized that while race, gender, and class are often treated as "vestiges of bias or domination that exclude or marginalize those who are different" (Crenshaw, 1990, p. 1242), variation on the basis of these identity domains is also a source of social empowerment. In this way, intersectionality relies on an asset-based perspective (as opposed to a deficit perspective) that highlights resilience, resistance of dominant ideology, and empowerment (Bharat, 2021), when considering how multiple oppressed identity domains are jointly associated with life outcomes (see also, Cole, 2009).

Since its introduction to the lexicon, intersectionality has been applied in various disciplines including ethnic/racial studies, organizational behavior, sociology, women's

studies, and psychology and has been used by scholars, policymakers, and activists alike (Collins, 2019; Rosette et al., 2018; Warner & Shields, 2013). For example, sociologists have found that the experience of being middle class varies on the basis of race (Conley, 1999). One way this occurs is through residential segregation, which makes Black middle-class communities more likely to be situated near poor neighborhoods with higher crime rates relative to White-middle class communities. In addition, Black middle-class families were found to possess less than half the net worth of their White counterparts due to redlining practices that occur when assigning mortgages. This research demonstrated how identity domains such as race/ethnicity, gender, and social class are not simply characteristics of the individual but reflect macrolevel processes that are rooted in inequality (Rogers et al., 2021). As psychologists, our focus is often on the individual, however, in this dissertation I strive to advance understanding of how individual experiences with race/ethnicity, gender, and social class mirror larger systems that guide and constrain identity. To do this, I draw heavily on Crenshaw's approach to intersectionality but do not focus exclusively on oppressed and/or marginalized identities. In this way, I draw on an intersectional framework more broadly to examine how the content, structure, and process of experiences within and across multiple identity domains relates with psychosocial adjustment and other indicators of identity.

In what remains of this section, I will summarize major tenets that guide my use of an intersectional framework and call attention to gaps in the literature that may be addressed with the use of the narrative identity approach. An intersectional framework is defined by an exploration of how systems of power, privilege, and oppression function

and imbue identity domains including race/ethnicity, gender, and social class with meaning (Rogers & Syed, 2021; Syed & Ajayi, 2018). Thus, intersectional research reveals how categories of identity are made significant relative to one another (Crenshaw, 1990). For example, McLean et al. (2017b) described how gay men may experience identity conflict when they feel they do not meet perceived standards of what it means to be a man but, also, what it means to be gay. Evident in this example, multiple identity domains (i.e., gender and sexuality) are often experienced simultaneously. This example also illustrates that an intersectional framework may be applied to psychology by considering how social systems (e.g., gender) and cultural norms (e.g., heteronormativity) impact individuals' lived experiences (Velez & Spencer, 2018). This illustrates how it is critical when examining multiple identity domains to use a social justice perspective that problematizes unequal systems and centers individuals' experiences (Bharat et al., 2021; Lilgendahl, 2015; Moffitt et al., 2020). Such an analysis involves a shift away from prioritizing the examination of negative outcomes associated with a particular identity domain (deficit-based perspective) and towards an emphasis on how identity domains including race/ethnicity, gender, and social class function as culturally based assets.

In addition to the use of a social justice perspective, an intersectional framework is also defined by its recognition of how various identity domains are experienced in concert with one another. Collins (2019) termed this phenomenon "relationality" and argues that it lies at the heart of intersectional research (p. 226). To capture this relationality, researchers have examined qualitatively how intragroup experiences vary based on other identity domains. Cole (2009) argued this analysis of intragroup variation

highlights diversity within identity domains and reveals "who is included" within a group (p. 171). This is also demonstrated in research finding that relative to White women, women of color were more likely to perceive a connection between race/ethnicity and gender and draw from personal experiences to illustrate gender role expectations (Juan et al., 2016). These results demonstrated how the content of women's identities varied when considering an additional identity domain (viz. race/ethnicity). While the importance of this work cannot be understated, psychological research applying an intersectional framework has primarily done so at the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender (e.g., Rosario et al., 2021; Rogers et al., 2021) and sometimes race/ethnicity and class (see Azmitia et al., 2008 for discussion). Through this dissertation, I seek to build upon previous research examining intragroup variation in personal experiences by considering participants' narratives about and perceived connection with their race/ethnicity, gender, and social class.

The notion that identity domains concurrently shape one another ostensibly opposes additive/multiple approaches to examining numerous identity domains, which typically study various identity domains in isolation to calculate the combined effects of membership in multiple marginalized groups (Seaton et al., 2010). Commonly, this occurs within a quantitative paradigm, wherein researchers examine statistical interaction terms of two or more categories of identity that are treated as categorical (e.g., Singh et al., 1997; Syed & Ajayi, 2018). However, past work has noted that individuals possess experiences that occur in one group (e.g., being Black), overlap with other groups (e.g., Black, and White women have shared experiences based on gender), and are unique to a

particular identity domain (e.g., Black woman; Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1990). Indeed, previous research indicates that women of color perceived both the combined effects of racism and sexism as well as struggles specific to either race or gender in their personal narratives (Juan et al., 2016). Therefore, qualitative, and quantitative methods should be used in tandem to determine how experiences are perceived within, and intersect across, identity domains (see also Settles et al., 2019 for discussion of intersectional research and quantitative paradigms). The narrative identity approach represents the ideal method with which to obtain qualitative insight into personal experiences with race/ethnicity, gender, and social class as well as a quantitative understanding of how the content, structure, and process of identity related experiences relates with psychosocial adjustment and other indicators of identity. While the expansive nature of intersectional research is a strength, it is also a weakness of the approach that has, in some ways, obfuscated how scholars, activists, or practitioners "do intersectionality" (Collins, 2019, p. 8). In other words, intersectional research is in need of an organizing principal or methodology to guide future inquiry. I propose that, in the context of psychology, where the goal is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the individual, with consideration of the larger systems within which the person presides (Dunlop & Westberg, 2022), narrative represents the appropriate organizing principle.

Section Two: The Narrative Identity Approach

Storying and storytelling are ubiquitous and fundamental aspects of human nature (Bruner, 1987; Sarbin, 1986). This claim is evident in the way individuals communicate with others, conceive of the world, and understand themselves (McAdams, 2001; Thorne

& McLean, 2003). To make meaning of the world around us and our personal experiences, we create and propagate stories (Bluck et al., 2014; King et al., 2000). A growing body of research attests to the notion that individuals interpret events in their lives and the social world using narrative devices (e.g., characters, plots, setting; McAdams, 1995). Indeed, in a classic psychology study, Heider and Simmel (1944) found that participants created meaning of shapes moving on a screen by generating a story in which the shapes themselves were characters with motives. In addition, Bohanek et al. (2006) found that during dinner table conversations, families told one story for every five minutes of conversation, and in a daily-diary study, Pasupathi et al. (2009) found that 62% of college students reported narrating their most memorable event of the day by the end of the same day. As a whole, previous research indicates that stories are an integral aspect of people's daily life and history. To best understand how and what narrative devices individuals use to interpret the self and social world as well as their psychological impact, researchers have rallied around the concept of narrative identity. Narrative identity embodies (1) a theoretical framework, (2) a methodological technique, and (3) an analytic approach (Adler, 2018; Bühler & Dunlop, 2019; McAdams, 2013). In this section, I outline these aspects of narrative identity that guide my use of this approach.

Narrative Identity: A Theoretical Framework. Narrative identity is the dynamic and internalized story individuals craft about their life, which provides a sense of self-continuity and purpose. As narrative identity emanates partly from Eriksonian developmental theory, researchers in this area are also concerned with how this construct

varies across time and contexts (McAdams, 1997). Research on the former has demonstrated that children begin to tell rudimentary stories as early as age three and, through feedback from parents and other adults, are taught during childhood the sort of stories society expects them to tell (Nelson & Fivush, 2004; Fivush et al., 2017). For example, parents typically encourage girls, rather than boys, to engage in emotional elaboration within stories. Boys, in contrast, are taught to emphasize the setting, action, or logical solutions within the story (Thorne & McLean, 2003). Although children disclose stories quite early in their development, an understanding of what the story says about the self – or the cognitive capacity to engage in autobiographical reasoning – does not emerge until adolescence and emerging adulthood (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; but see Dunlop & Walker, 2013). Consequently, emerging adulthood is an ideal time in the life span to situate studies on narrative identity, as individuals experience heightened identity understanding and an increased salience of identity-relevant goals (McAdams & Olson, 2010; Wilkinson & Dunlop, 2019).

With respect to context, narrative identity researchers are particularly attuned to how cultural *master narratives* work to contour personal identity, which has implications for psychological functioning and collective action (Habermas, 2007; Hammack, 2010; McLean & Syed, 2015). Master narratives are culturally shared stories regarding how individuals are expected to think, feel, and behave within various situations and life in general. These stories perpetuate the dominant ideologies within a given culture and derive power from their invisibility, rigidity, and moral value (McLean & Syed, 2015). For example, evidence suggests that redemption (stories that begin negatively but end

positively; Dunlop 2021; McAdams, 2013), is a master narrative in the United States (U.S.). Indeed, McLean et al. (2020) found that Americans prefer redemptive stories and rate those who tell them as more likeable. Moreover, in a comprehensive qualitative study of intergroup conflict, Hammack (2010) identified master narratives of redemption and contamination (stories that begin positively but end negatively) among Israeli and Palestinian youth, respectively. Another type of master narrative is the expected order, content, and timing of life events believed to be prototypical (i.e., biographical master narrative or *life script*; Berntsen & Rubin, 2004). Life script expectations are value-laden and, in dictating how life 'should' progress, have moral implications for what individuals believe constitutes the good life (Westberg, 2022). Recent research indicates that the content of biographical master narratives (i.e., life scripts) varies based on ethnicity/race, substantiating the need to examine domain-specific perceptions of life experiences (Wilkinson & Dunlop, 2020b). Research on master narratives aligns the person and society on a narrative metric to reveal how personal identity is influenced and, often, constrained by cultural expectations (Bruner, 1990; Syed & McLean, 2020). In this way, a narrative approach is ideal for examining how personal identity is influenced by values and expectations inherent in identity domains including race/ethnicity, gender, and social class.

Demonstrating how personal identity is influenced by master narratives, Thorne and McLean (2003) distinguished two culturally accepted stories for the telling of trauma. These stories emphasized either (a) the action or excitement of the experience (John Wayne narrative) or (b) the concern one had for others during the experience

(Florence Nightingale narrative). These culturally vetted stories restricted participants from divulging personal vulnerability and potentially limited their capacity to engage authentically with difficult life experiences. This study highlighted how individuals are made to interface with master narratives to construct personal stories, resulting in the internalization of the cultural standard as part of one's identity (Hammack & Cohler, 2009). The omnipresent and compulsory nature of master narratives makes them difficult to defy and doing so may lead to adverse consequences (e.g., marginalization; McLean et al., 2017b; McLean & Syed, 2015). Thus, it is especially important to examine how individuals position themselves in relation to cultural narratives about multidimensional aspects of identity, including ethnicity/race, gender, and social class with an intersectional lens that recognizes how these statuses bear varied levels of privilege.

Narrative Identity: A Methodological Technique. With respect to narrative methods, researchers typically use narrative prompts from McAdams (2008) Life Story Interview (LSI) or a variant thereof, to assess features of narrative identity. In the LSI, participants are prompted for a series of life chapters as well as key scenes (e.g., life high point, low point, turning point) or self-defining memories (Singer & Blagov, 2004) to gather the stories theorized to comprise one's narrative identity. On occasion, researchers have adapted narrative prompts from the LSI to explore participants' stories within specific domains (e.g., romance; Dunlop et al., 2018). As opposed to the distal context captured by master narratives, work on contextualized narrative identity has begun to record how interpretations of proximal contexts correspond with meaningful differences in narrative identity and functioning within and across life domains (Dunlop & Hanley,

2019; Dunlop & Westberg, 2022; Harake et al., 2020; Wilkinson & Dunlop, 2020a). In this way, the time is ripe for examining the ways in which the narrative identity approach can be used to understand how multiple domains intersect with consideration of the personal and cultural contexts that influence identity. There is value in delineating differences in narrative identity across domains, as in so doing, researchers may gain insight into the personal impact of various aspects of identity (Dunlop & Hanley, 2019; Syed, 2015). Likewise, it is important to examine how identity content, structure, and process correspond with self-reported indicators of identity (e.g., ERI, self-concept clarity), as a volume of work indicates that behavioral and self-report data do not necessarily align (e.g., Dunlop et al., 2020; McClelland et al., 1989; Roberts & Donahue, 1994).

Narrative Identity: The Analytical Approach. Finally, from an analytical vantage, the narrative identity approach involves quantifying personal stories for individual differences in previously validated or inductively derived thematic elements. These dimensions, or *narrative themes* as I will refer to them, often capture differences in the content (what is said), structure (how it is organized), and process (the way it is said) of personal narratives (McLean et al., 2020). Differences in narrative themes have been found to reflect current and long-term well-being, predict sustained health behavior, and relate with aspects of identity including political ideology, ERI, and ego development (Adler et al., 2017; Dunlop & Tracy, 2013; Dunlop et al., 2018; McLean et al., 2017b; McLean et al., 2020; Syed & Azmitia, 2010). In other words, variation in narrative identity has been found to correspond with psychosocial adjustment and self-reported

indicators of identity. Relative to self-report data, which captures subjective evaluations of the self, emotions, and behaviors, the narrative identity approach produces data that are behavioral in nature such that participants produce narratives about autobiographical key scenes that are objectively quantified for various features (Dunlop et al., 2020). This analysis results in a uniquely generative source of psychological data that provide rich qualitative insight into the person's evolving view of the self. These data are then viewed in relation to significant and theoretically relevant psychological outcomes (e.g., prosocial behavior; Walker & Frimer, 2007). In this way, the narrative identity approach brings together in-depth qualitative analysis and quantitative research methods that are ideal for research applying an intersectional framework.

Narrative Processing of Multiple Identities

Narrative research examining multiple identity domains has revealed the importance of considering context specific self-aspects, the existence of various identity configurations, and the intersection of multiple identities. For example, Dunlop et al. (2014) found that in goals and narratives about professional and relational contexts, themes of agency (defined by independence, self-mastery) and communion (defined by connection with others) were more relevant in professional and relational goals and narratives, respectively. This work provides evidence that narrative themes are more relevant in some contexts than others, suggestive of the possibility that differences in narrative identity exist based on identity domain (e.g., ethnicity/race, gender, and social class). In a similar manner, Schachter (2004) examined the content and structure of orthodox Jewish participants' narratives and elucidated four distinct identity

configurations that participants used to make sense of their conflicting religious and sexual identities. For example, suppression involved selecting one identity over the other, whereas synthesis involved embracing both identities and resolving conflict. This study revealed how conflict among identity domains may lead to increased identity work and that the coherent integration of multiple identity domains is only one possible outcome. In this way, examining the content and structure of personal experiences across the domains of ethnicity/race, gender, and social class may reveal varied ways in which emerging adults' reason about contradictions in the self within and across identity domains. Similarly, Syed (2010) identified five ways college students perceived a connection or lack thereof between their ethnicity and college major ranging from low to high awareness of a connection. This study bolstered the notion that, in contrast to stage models of identity development (e.g., Erikson, 1994), which imply that identity achievement is the sole optimal outcome, it is important to consider the varied identity configurations that may exist within and across identity domains including race/ethnicity, gender, and social class. This body of work reveals the need to articulate the content and structure of how individuals' reason about domain specific aspects of their identities and how this may contribute to their psychological functioning and overall sense of self.

Meaning Making. In addition to the content and structure of personal narratives, researchers have examined how process varies within and across stories about multiple identity domains. Narrative identity researchers focusing on process have often considered the role of meaning making in narratives within and across identity domains (e.g., McLean et al., 2016b; Qi et al., 2015). Meaning making is a narrative theme

important for understanding potentially disparate aspects of the self. A form of autobiographical reasoning, meaning making reflects the degree to which participants narrate self-understanding based on life experiences and use this knowledge to guide behavior as well as thoughts about the self, others, or the world (McLean et al., 2020; McLean et al., 2016b). This theme also captures the extent to which individuals find coherence when narrating experiences within and across life domains. Meaning making is especially relevant when participants incorporate difficult or unexpected life experiences into their sense of self or seek to make sense of identities perceived to be incompatible. For example, McLean et al. (2016b) found meaning making was more common in self-defining memories wherein participants discussed two or more identity domains. In addition, McLean and Pratt (2006) found that greater meaning making in emerging adults' turning point stories was associated with identity maturity. Likewise, King and colleagues (2000) found that women who narrated a changed understanding of the self and the world to accommodate the discovery that their child had Down Syndrome reported highest personal growth. In sum, meaning making may matter for constructing a clear sense of overall identity, especially across various (potentially conflicting) identity domains. At the same time, past work indicates that meaning making is less common and adaptive in positive narratives and may be maladaptive depending on the person and context of reasoning (McCoy & Dunlop, 2017; Mansfield et al., 2010). Given these mixed relations with meaning making, it is unclear how this theme may function within and across narratives pertaining to race/ethnicity, gender, and social class.

Section Three: An Intersectional Framework and The Narrative Identity Approach

A dearth of research has examined, either independently or in tandem, the content, structure, and process of experiences from multiple identity domains including ethnicity/race, gender, and social class using the narrative identity approach. While more research has examined the content of ethnic/racial identity, specifically (e.g., Sellers et al., 1998, Syed & Azmitia, 2008), additional research on racial/ethnic experiences in relation to gender and social class is needed. Further, research in this area has often relied on either the examination of quantitative relations between self-reported identity measures or on purely qualitative methods, as opposed to using multiple methods (e.g., collecting self-report and behavioral data). It is critical to understand how our assessment of various identity domains converges (or does not) across diverse forms of measurement to gain a more coherent understanding of identity (Roberts et al., 2006). This multi-method approach will also help fine-tune our assessment of these identity domains in the future and obtain a more robust measure of how they function in relation to one another. The narrative identity approach provides a practical method for conducting psychological research with an intersectional lens that supplies insight into how personal identity is influenced by larger systems (e.g., ethnicity/race). In this way, the narrative identity approach may also serve to sharpen the "critical edge" of intersectional research by articulating best practices for this framework within psychology (Collins, 2019, p. 15). The narrative identity approach also permits an exploration of participants' subjective understandings of how various categories of identity shape one another, which may differ from researchers' conceptions of how they intersect.

In the present dissertation, I focused on participants' perceptions of the identity domains of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class, as past work indicated that these categories are especially salient to American emerging adults (Cole, 2009; Collins, 2019). While previous research has assessed intersections among two identity domains (e.g., race/ethnicity and gender; Crenshaw, 1990; Juan et al., 2016), less work has examined the content of three identity domains and how the subjective representation of social class, in particular, corresponds with adaptive functioning as well as measures of social and personal identity (Juan et al., 2016; but see Okoro et al., 2021). It is also important due to social hierarchies in the U.S., which contribute to educational and health disparities, to shed light on how individuals understand the role of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class in their lives and how this perception corresponds with psychosocial functioning and other aspects of identity (Godfrey & Burson, 2018).

The Present Dissertation

Though past work has shed light on the experience of occupying multiple identity domains, additional research is needed that explores narrative themes within and across stories about ethnicity/race, gender, and social class and how such dimensions relate with psychosocial adjustment and other indicators of identity. Such a study requires the use of an intersectional framework to best highlight how dynamics of power and privilege impact individuals understanding of these identity domains. In the present dissertation, I examined the content and correlates of the narratives gathered during a semi-structured interview that I developed on the basis of previous research (Dunlop et al., 2018; McAdams, 2008). Here, I examined five narrative prompts contained within the semi-

structured interview (see Appendix A for narrative prompts).[2] The first prompt was for a self-defining memory. This prompt was chosen on the basis of its demonstrated ability to elicit vivid, affectively intense experiences theorized to represent the self-concept (Singer & Blagov, 2004; Thorne et al., 2004). Self-defining memories are thought to help individuals communicate identity to oneself and others. This prompt also allowed for the collection of generalized stories of the self to compare to contextualized stories about personal experiences couched within a particular identity domain. The second prompt was for an awareness of race/ethnicity narrative that previous research has linked with self-reported measures of ethnic identity (Syed & Azmitia, 2008). For the next two questions, I adapted the racial/ethnic awareness prompt to the domains of gender and social class. Lastly, in contrast to the first four narrative prompts, which were derived from previous research, I developed a novel prompt for an experience when participants felt particularly aware of their race/ethnicity, gender, and social class named the intersectional awareness prompt. I created this prompt partly in response to Lilgendahl's (2015) call to ask participants directly about intersections among identity domains to capture, "critical psychological space in which identity processing takes place" (p. 490). While there is certainly something to be gained by asking participants directly about various categories of identity, some research indicates that emerging adults find it difficult to make connections between more than two identity domains (Azmitia et al., 2013; Galliher et al., 2017; Juan et al., 2016). For this reason, participants who were unable to identify an experience that incorporated all three identity domains were

[2] I also refer to narrative prompts as 'prompt types' or 'prompts'.

prompted to provide an experience that incorporated the two identity domains most salient to them. My dissertation was ultimately guided by four research questions:

Research Question 1 (RQ1). What narrative themes emerged in participants' stories about ethnic/racial, gender, and social class experiences?

Research Question 2 (RQ2). Do narrative themes relate with self-reported measures of psychosocial adjustment, self-concept clarity, and other indicators of identity?

Research Question 3 (RQ3). Do higher average scores of meaning making across the five narrative prompts relate with greater psychosocial adjustment, self-concept clarity, and other indicators of identity?

Research Question 4 (RQ4). Does perceived connection between identity domains, assessed using multiple measures, vary based on one's self-identified race/ethnicity, gender, and social class?

Method

From the start, I would like to acknowledge how my positionality may have impacted various aspects of this dissertation including my collection and analysis of the data as well as my interpretation of the results. My goal was to integrate an intersectional framework and narrative identity approach to optimally examine the experiences of emerging adults who possess oppressed and privileged identities. However, it is important to recognize that my identity as a Mexican American woman with a lower socioeconomic background likely influenced the way I interacted with participants during this study as well as how I present the qualitative and quantitative results of this

dissertation. I believe that my position as a woman of color from a lower socioeconomic background and as a former UCR undergrad provide me with a unique perspective on these data. I hope that my perspective and the data I have gathered encourage integration of an intersectional framework and narrative identity approach to examine multiple identity domains in personality research and psychology more broadly.

Participants

One hundred seventy-seven undergraduate students (M_{age} = 20.30, *SD* = 2.94, range = 18-38) at the University of California Riverside (UCR) participated in this two-part study examining, "Your experiences in relation to various forms of cultural identity and psychological functioning (e.g., well-being)" in exchange for research credit. To take part in this study, participants were required to be current UCR students and assigned to participate in research for credit. Participants indicated their race/ethnicity on the online survey in three ways. First, participants were asked to type what they consider to be their race/ethnicity in a free-response text box. I have not yet coded these responses and they are not used in the present dissertation. Next, participants were asked to check each option that described their race/ethnicity from the following list: (1) American Indian/Native American/Indigenous, (2) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, Japanese, and others, (3) Black or African American, including African, Caribbean, and others, (4) Hispanic or Latina(o), including Mexican American, Central American, and others, (5) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American, no Hispanic, and (6) Other (see Weisskirch et al., 2013 for similar approach). With this method, there were 69 Asian American, 6 Black/African American, 63 Latinx/Hispanic, 9

White/Caucasian, 23 multiracial (i.e., participants who selected more than one racial/ethnic group), and 7 Other participants (2 Arab American, 2 Egyptian, 1 Taiwanese, 1 Persian, and 1 Armenian). Lastly, participants were asked to select the group that they identified with *most strongly* from the same list resulting in 75 Asian American, 9 Black/African American, 71 Hispanic/Latinx, 13 White/Caucasian, and 8 Other participants (1 Black and White, 1 South Asian, 1 Arab/Arab American, 1 Haitian/Indian, 2 Egyptian, 1 Persian/Middle Eastern, and 1 Armenian). To allow for statistical comparisons on the basis of race/ethnicity, I used the racial/ethnic group that participants identified with most. Due to sample size, only differences between Asian American and Latinx participants are presented. In terms of gender, 104 participants identified as female, 71 as male, and 1 as non-binary.[3] Participants reported an average parental household income of 4.80 (*SD* = 2.12; 1 = Below $15,000, 2 = $15,0001 to $25,000, 3 = $25,0001 to $35,000, 4 = 35,001 to $50,000, 5 = $50,001 to $75,000, 6 = $75,000 to $100,000, 7 = $100,000 to $150,000, and 8 = Above $150,000). On average, participants reported that their mother's and father's highest level of education were 1.50 (*SD* = .67) and 1.58 (*SD* = .78), respectively (1 = High school graduate, general education diploma, or some college, 2 = College graduate, 3 = Postgraduate degree (e.g., Masters, PhD, MD). Consistent with previous research (Kraus et al., 2009), objective social class was measured using a standardized aggregate (z score) of parental education and parental income.[4]

[3] Though participants identified as 'female' or 'male', I refer to them as 'woman' and 'man' within the Results and Discussion as well as the General Discussion.
[4] Scores of parental education and income were originally on different scales. To ensure they were equally weighted on the composite measure of objective social class, I standardized these variables using z scores.

Procedure

Participants completed an approximately 50-minute online survey followed by an approximately 60-minute semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview occurred on the online webcam-based platform Zoom within two-weeks of students' participation in the online survey. Consent to audio-recording was mandatory for participation in the Zoom interview, but videorecording was optional. Participants were able to sign-up for this two-part study on the UCR online participant pool website. During study enrollment, participants were asked to schedule a time and date to complete the online survey and Zoom interview. Participants were not eligible for the Zoom interview if they did not take part in the online survey.

The online survey, containing measures of psychosocial adjustment and identity, was made available on Qualtrics, an online survey-based platform. During the online semi-structured interview, myself or one of two trained research assistants prompted participants to narrate experiences pertaining to their life as a member of their ethnicity/race, gender, and social class. I personally conducted 122 semi-structured narrative interviews. The other two interviewers each identified as women as well as White and Asian American, respectively. In the present dissertation, I examined narratives pertaining to a moment when participants felt particularly aware of their (1) race/ethnicity, (2) gender or gender identification, and (3) social class as well as (4) an experience participants' felt represented who they are across these identity domains (intersectional awareness) and (5) a general self-defining memory (Singer et al., 2013). I selected these narrative prompts on the basis of the existing literature summarized in the

introduction (Syed & Azmitia, 2008; Singer & Blagov, 2004; Lilgendahl, 2015). At the start of the study, many participants thought that the gender awareness narrative prompt was asking for the moment they decided their gender identification rather than a moment when gender was particularly salient to them. For this reason, I replaced the gender awareness prompt with a prompt asking directly for a salient moment with gender to best capture an experience when gender was especially important or relevant to the participant (see Appendix A for original prompt and final wording). This change was made following the first week of online semi-structured interviews. The order of the ethnic/racial and social class awareness as well as the gender salient narrative prompts was counterbalanced. However, the self-defining memory prompt and intersectional awareness prompt were consistently presented first and last, respectively (see Appendix A for full interview). In what follows, I describe the measures of psychosocial adjustment and identity that appeared on the online survey. I then detail the approach I used to quantify themes within the narratives (also referred to as stories) that I gathered during the semi-structured interview.

Measures

Psychosocial Adjustment

Satisfaction With Life. The Satisfaction with Life scale (SWL; Diener et al., 1985) is a five-item measure, used to measure global life satisfaction ($\alpha = .83$). Participants rated items including, "In most ways, my life is close to my ideal" on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.27$, range = 1.00 – 7.00).

Self-Esteem. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (R-SES; Rosenberg, 1965) is a 10-item measure of global self-worth used to assess positive and negative feelings about the self (α = .86). Participants rated, on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree, items including, "I feel that I have a number of good qualities" and "All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure" (R; *M* = 2.74, *SD* = .23, range = 1.60 – 4.00). Items were reflected such that higher scores were indicative of greater self-esteem.

Identity

Self-Concept Clarity. Participants also completed a measure of self-concept clarity in the form of a 12-item measure, which captured the extent to which participants' beliefs about the self are clearly defined, internally consistent, and stable (α = .85; Campbell et al., 1996). This scale included items such as, "In general, I have a clear sense of who I am and what I am" rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree (*M* = 2.90, *SD* = .72, range = 1.17 – 4.83). Items were reflected such that higher scores were indicative of greater self-concept clarity.

Ethnic Identity. The Multidimensional Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) is a 12-item measure used to assess two components of ethnic identity: ethnic exploration and ethnic belonging. Ethnic exploration (*M* = 3.06, *SD* = .52, range = 1.20 – 4.00, α = .66) is a cognitive and behavioral construct that captured the extent to which participants have explored their ethnicity through both participation (e.g., "I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group) and contemplation about its role in their life (e.g., "I think a lot about how my life

will be affected by my ethnic group membership."; see also Syed et al., 2013). Ethnic belonging (M = 3.30, SD = .52, range = 1.57 – 4.00, α = .88) is an affective and cognitive construct that captured the degree to which participants felt a positive sense of belonging to their ethnic group (e.g., "I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background"). Items were rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree.

Racial/Ethnic Centrality. The eight-item Centrality Scale was used to measure how central race/ethnicity were to participants' sense of self (α = .81; Sellers et al., 1998). Participants rated items such as, "Overall being [self-identified racial/ethnic group] has very little to do with how I feel about myself" on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree (M = 3.42, SD = .72, range = 1.25 – 5.00). Items were reflected such that higher scores were indicative of greater racial/ethnic centrality. This scale was originally validated among Black and African American participants (e.g., Sellers et al., 2003) and was modified to reflect the race/ethnicity that the participant reported identifying with most strongly.

Gender Centrality. The Centrality Scale was adapted to capture how central gender is to the participants' sense of self (Sellers et al., 1998). Participants completed this measure according to their self-reported gender (e.g., self-identified female participants reported female centrality). This eight-item measure included items such as, "Being [gender identification] is an important reflection of who I am" rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Items were reflected such that higher scores were indicative of greater gender centrality. Aside from

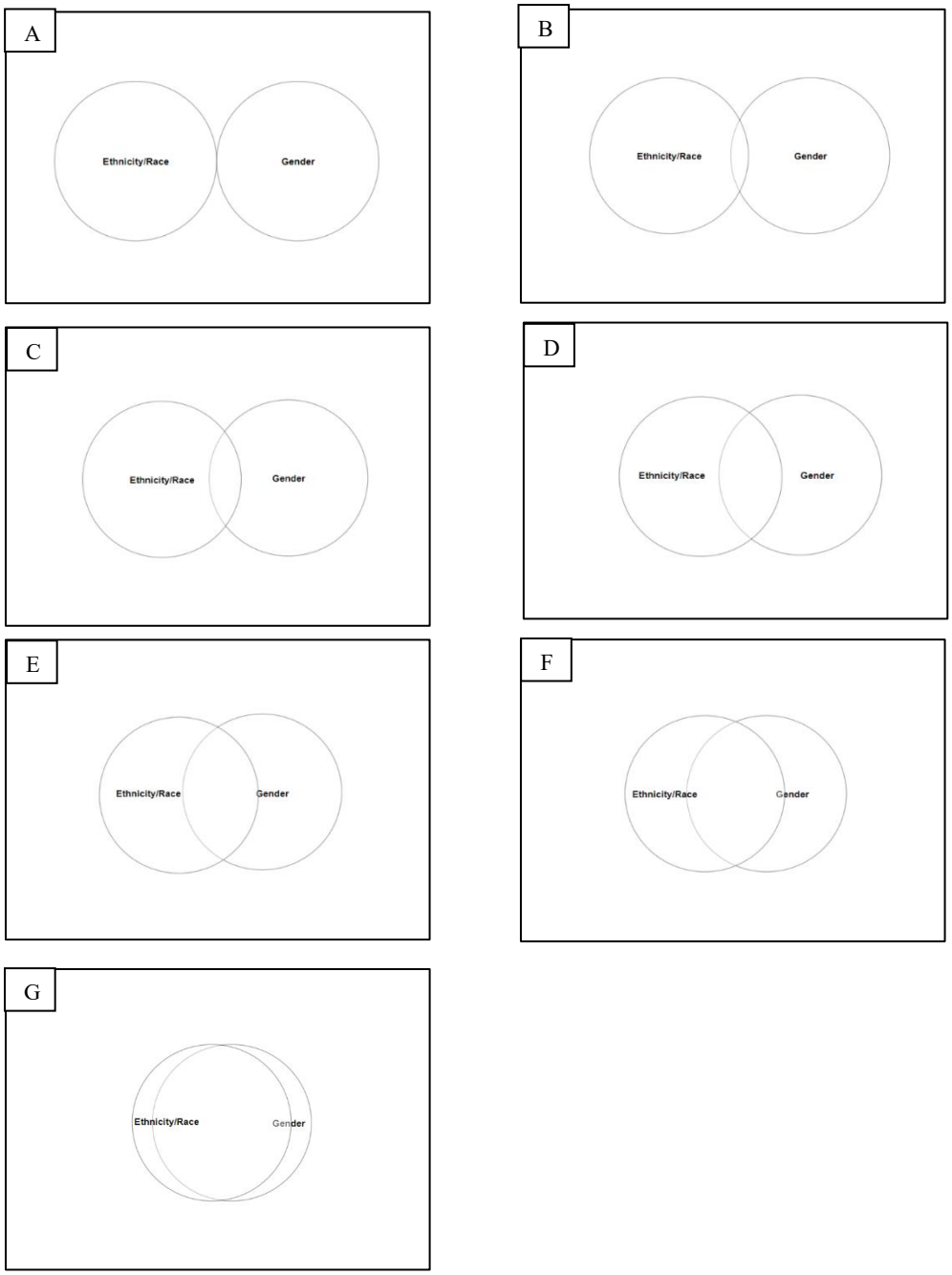
one non-binary participant, all participants in this study identified as either female (M = 3.76, SD = .84, range = 1.88 – 5.00, α = .78) or male (M = 3.12, SD = .71, range = 1.25 – 4.63, α = .78). One non-binary participant was excluded from analyses examining gender differences due to insufficient power.

Self-Rated Connection of Identity Domains

Identity Overlap Circle Measure. I developed a novel measure for this dissertation based on the existing Inclusion of Other in the Self scale (Aron et al., 1992) as well as Juan and colleagues' (2016) measure, which captured whether there was a presence or absence of overlap between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class. The present measure, entitled the Identity Overlap Circle measure (IOC), included three separate sets of seven images, which each contained two overlapping circles representative of two identity domains at a time (e.g., social class and gender; see Figure 1). Participants were instructed to select the image that best represented their membership in the identity domains depicted on a scale ranging from A (circles are separate) to E (circles are highly overlapping). The images corresponded with letters A – E and were presented in alphabetical order. I subsequently coded participants' responses on a scale ranging from 1 – 7, with higher values indicating greater overlap between the identity domains of Ethnicity/Race-Gender, Ethnicity/Race-Class, and Gender-Class. In addition, participants viewed a version of this measure with three images that each contained three circles labeled as Ethnicity/Race, Gender, and Social Class, respectively. Participants were asked to indicate the image that best described their membership in the three identity domains on a scale of A (circles are separate) to C (circles are highly

Figure 1

Identity Overlap Circle Measure With Two Groups

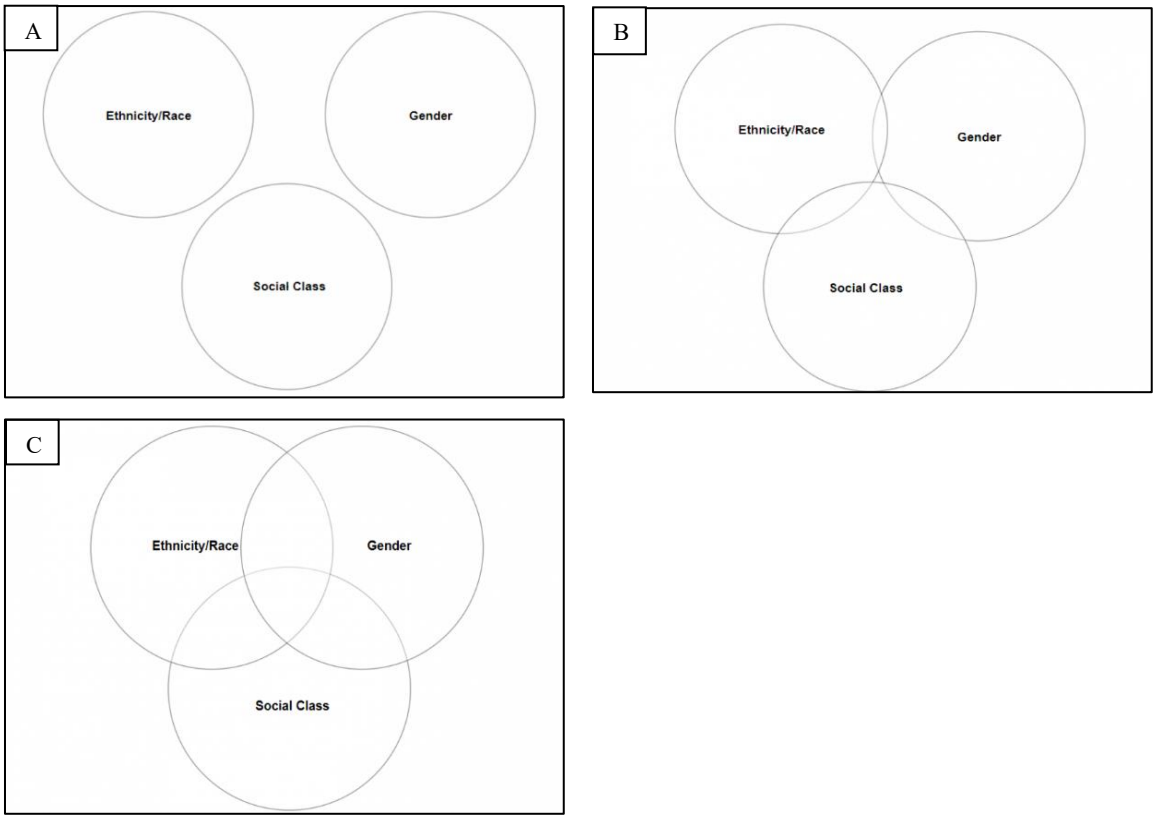


Note. Letters represent the response options available to the participant. Though this figure depicts the connection between ethnicity/race and gender, participants completed three different versions of this figure to assess connections between every possible pairing of the identity domains: race/ethnicity, gender, and social class.

overlapping; see Figure 2). I coded participants' responses on a scale ranging from 1 – 3, with higher values indicating greater overlap (see Table 1 for descriptive statistics).

Intersecting Identities Inventory. Participants also completed a novel measure named the Intersecting Identities Inventory (III), which was designed to capture the extent to which participants felt their race/ethnicity, gender, and social class were distant and in conflict. The III is based on the Bicultural Identity Integration scale (BII), which assesses the degree to which individuals feel that their heritage and national identities are distant versus blended (cognitive component) and in conflict versus harmony (affective component; BII, Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; BII-2, Huynh & Benet-Martínez, 2018). The III initially contained eight-items selected from the BII and BII-2 on the basis of their face validity and ability to translate well to the domains of race/ethnicity gender, and social class. III items captured the degree to which participants viewed their race/ethnicity, gender, and social class to be distant versus blended and in conflict versus harmony. Items representing distance included, "I feel as though my race/ethnicity, gender, and social class are connected" (R), whereas items representing conflict included, "I am conflicted between the way my race/ethnicity, gender, and social class does things". Participants completed four versions of this scale assessing distance and conflict between two identity domains at a time (e.g., gender and social class) as well as all three identity domains (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, and social class). Items were scored such that higher scores were indicative of greater distance and conflict, respectively. In an effort to establish the factor structure of the III, I conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with the eight items that I adapted from the BII and BII-2. I used a

Figure 2
Identity Overlap Circle Measure With Three Groups



Note. Letters represent the response options available to participants.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability of Self-Reported Measures

Measure	***M (SD)***	***Range***	**α**
Life Satisfaction	4.09 (1.27)	1.00 – 7.00	.83
Self-Esteem	2.74 (.23)	1.60 – 4.00	.86
Self-Concept Clarity	2.90 (.72)	1.17 – 4.83	.85
Ethnic Exploration	3.06 (.52)	1.20 - 4.00	.66
Ethnic Belonging	3.30 (.52)	1.57 – 4.00	.88
Racial Centrality	3.42 (.72)	1.25 – 5.00	.81
Female Centrality	3.76 (.65)	1.88 – 5.00	.78
Male Centrality	3.12 (.71)	1.25 – 4.63	.78
Gender-Class IOC	3.93 (1.86)	1.00 – 7.00	--
Ethnicity-Class IOC	4.77 (1.97)	1.00 – 7.00	--
Ethnicity-Gender IOC	3.39 (2.15)	1.00 – 7.00	--
Intersectional IOC	2.55 (.61)	1.00 – 3.00	--
III Conflict Aggregated	3.14 (.80)	1.00 – 5.00	.92
III Distance Aggregated	2.74 (.68)	1.00 – 4.56	.90

Note. $N = 177$ participants completed the online survey and narrative interview and are displayed in this table. IOC = Identity Overlap Circle measure. Conflict and Distance were measured using the novel Intersecting Identities Inventory (III).

CFA because the BII and BII-2 have a theoretically sound and statistically demonstrated two-factor solution. In addition, when I compared fit statistics for a one-and-two factor solution for the III subscales, the two-factor solution yielded better fit (see Appendix B for factor loadings and fit statistics for the one factor solution). Analyses were conducted using the "lavaan" package (Rosseel, 2021) in "R" (R Core Team, 2019). The latent variables were standardized, which allowed for free estimation of all factor loadings. Results from the CFA indicated that item eight did not load strongly onto either factor (see Table 2). For this reason, a second CFA with items 1 – 7 (excluding item eight) was conducted (see Table 3). The second CFA indicated that fit statistics for the III assessing distance and conflict between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class (CFI: .96, TLI: .94, RMSEA: .10 [.06, .14]) and race/ethnicity and gender (CFI: .98, TLI: .94, RMSEA: .10 [.06, .14]) were within the acceptable range. However, distance and conflict between race/ethnicity and social class (CFI: .92, TLI: .88, RMSEA: .13 [.09, .17]) as well as social class and gender (CFI: .91, TLI: .86, RMSEA: .16 [.12, .19]) yielded lower fit. Nevertheless, there was a high positive association between the distance composites across identity domains and the conflict composites across identity domains (see Table 4). This indicates that distance and conflict may represent two broad unitary factors rather than constructs that differ substantively when considering two identity domains at a time. For this reason, I aggregated the scores across each combination of identity domains for one total score of distance (M = 2.74, SD = .68, range = 1.00 – 4.56, α = .90) and one total score of conflict (M = 3.14, SD = .80, range = 1.00 – 5.00, α = .92). The high reliabilities of these subscales substantiated the use of aggregated composites.

Table 2

Intersecting Identities Inventory Confirmatory Factor Analysis Including Item 8

	Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Social Class		**Race/Ethnicity and Gender**		**Race/Ethnicity and Social Class**		**Gender and Social Class**	
Item	***Distance***	***Conflict***	***Distance***	***Conflict***	***Distance***	***Conflict***	***Distance***	***Conflict***
1. I do not see my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] as connected	.75	-	.70	-	.68	-	.68	
2. I keep my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] separate	.77	-	.78	-	.76	-	.87	
3. I feel as though my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] are connected	-.70	-	-.84	-	-.80	-	-.70	
4. I do not blend my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*]	.80	-	.56	-	.66	-	.80	
5. I am conflicted between the way my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] does things	-	.78	-	.51	-	.54		.67
6. I feel caught between the expectations of my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*]	-	.88	-	.99	-	1.03		.94
7. I don't feel caught between the expectations of my [*race/ethnicity,*	-	-.84	-	-.73	-	-.81		-.86

gender, and social class]								
8. I feel that my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] are incompatible	-	.25	-	.19	-	.22		.16
CFI	.95		.94		.90		.90	
RMSEA	.09 [.06, .12]		.08 [.05, .12]		.13 [.10, .16]		.13 [.10, .16]	

Note. For each possible combination of identity domains, participants were instructed: "Here are a series of questions about the way you may think about the relation between your [*ethnicity/race, gender, and social class*]. Please rate the degree to which you agree with each statement" and provided a five-point Likert type scale, ranging from "1" (Strongly disagree) to "5" (Strongly agree). Items 1-4 represent distance versus blendedness and items 5-8 represent conflict versus harmony. N = 173-175 for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (two factors specified).

Table 3

Intersecting Identities Inventory Confirmatory Factor Analysis Excluding Item 8

	Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Social Class		**Race/Ethnicity and Gender**		**Race/Ethnicity and Social Class**		**Gender and Social Class**	
Item	***Distance***	***Conflict***	***Distance***	***Conflict***	***Distance***	***Conflict***	***Distance***	***Conflict***
1. I do not see my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] as connected	.75	-	.70	-	.68	-	.68	-
2. I keep my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] separate	.76	-	.78	-	.76	-	.87	-
3. I feel as though my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] are connected	-.70	-	-.84	-	-.80	-	-.70	-
4. I do not blend my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*]	.80	-	.56	-	.66	-	.80	-
5. I am conflicted between the way my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] does things	-	.78	-	.52	-	.55	-	.67
6. I feel caught between the expectations of my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*]	-	.88	-	.98	-	1.01	-	.94
7. I don't feel caught between the expectations of my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*]	-	-.85	-	-.74	-	-.82	-	-.86
CFI	.96		.98		.92		.91	
RMSEA	.10 [.06, .14]		.06 [.01, .10]		.13 [.09, .17]		.16 [.12, .19]	

Note. For each possible combination of identity domains, participants were instructed: "Here are a series of questions about the way you may think about the relation between your [*ethnicity/race, gender, and social class*]. Please rate the degree to which you agree with each statement" and provided a five-point Likert type scale, ranging from "1" (Strongly disagree) to "5" (Strongly agree). Items 1-4 represent distance versus blendedness and items 5-8 represent conflict versus harmony. N = 173-175 for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (two factors specified)

Narrative Measures

Narratives from the spoken semi-structured interview were uploaded to Otter, an automated software that converts speech to text transcription. After the spoken narratives (audio files) were converted to text, I inputted them into five separate spreadsheets based on prompt type (i.e., ethnic/racial awareness narrative, gender salient narrative, social class awareness narrative, etc.). To address RQ1, I quantified each of the narratives using both a deductive as well as an inductive, data-driven approach (Adler et al., 2017; Dunlop, 2014; Dooley et al., 2019).

Deductive Theme

Meaning Making. I applied the narrative theme of meaning making deductively to each of the narratives based on its established ability to capture the degree to which one narrates self-understanding based on life experiences and uses this knowledge to guide behavior and/or thoughts about the self, others, or the world. Consistent with previous research (McLean et al., 2020), I coded each narrative for meaning making on a four-point scale including: 0 = No explanation of meaning of event, 1 = Lesson learned from event, 2 = Some growth or change in the self but specifics of the change are unclear, and 3 = Evidence that the narrator gleaned specific insight from the event that applies to broader areas of the narrator's life. Higher scores were indicative of greater meaning making.

Inductive Themes

Before coding commenced, I read 10% of the narratives provided in response to each narrative prompt (about 85 stories) and made notes on the content as well as features

Table 4

Interrelations Among Self-Reported Identity Measures Developed for the Dissertation

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Distance Aggregated	--													
2. Conflict Aggregated	-.36**	--												
3. Race-Gender D	.73**	-.42**	--											
4. Race-Gender C	-.24**	.80**	-.40**	--										
5. Race-Class D	.77**	-.20**	.32**	-.08	--									
6. Race-Class C	-.27**	.82**	-.29**	.53**	-.21**	--								
7. Gender-Class D	.82**	-.22**	.43**	-.08	.52**	-.14†	--							
8. Gender-Class C	-.37**	.84**	-.36**	.50**	-.18*	.59**	-.35**	--						
9. Race-Gender-Class D	.88**	-.31**	.54**	-.20**	.66**	-.22**	.64**	-.28**	--					
10. Race-Gender-Class C	-.36**	.88**	-.38**	.65**	-.20**	.61**	-.19*	.72**	-.35**	--				
11. Race-Gender IOC	-.50**	.46**	-.57**	.33**	-.22**	.34**	-.40**	.45**	-.37**	.40**	--			
12. Race-Class IOC	-.30**	.33**	-.16*	.27**	-.38**	.32**	-.21**	.22**	-.24**	.30**	.38**	--		
13. Gender-Class IOC	-.43**	.28**	-.28**	.16*	-.30**	.22**	-.46**	.32**	-.31**	.24**	.53**	.54**	--	
14.Race-Gender-Class IOC	-.48**	.38**	-.39**	.28*	-.42**	.26**	-.31**	.36**	-.42**	.38**	.54**	.58**	.64**	--
15. Perceived Connection	-.12	.04	-.07	.02	-.10	-.05	-.07	.08	-.10	.04	.08	.14†	.03	.09

Note. N = 173 -174. Perceived connection is perceived connection between identity domains quantified in the intersectional awareness narrative prompt. Conflict and distance subscales were measured using the novel Intersecting Identities Inventory (III). D is used to refer to Distance and C is used to refer to Conflict in the subscales for each combination of identity domains. IOC = Identity Overlap Circle measure. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

that were unique to each prompt type or shared across prompts. Based on my read of the data, I determined that themes of valence, positive resolution, connection to group, presence of ethnicity/race, gender, and social class, and perceived connection between ethnicity/race, gender, and social class were relevant. Narrative themes of valence and positive resolution have appeared in previous research (see McLean et al., 2020), whereas connection to group, presence of each identity domain, and perceived connection between identity domains represented original narrative themes that I developed for this dissertation. My selection of these narrative themes was made on the basis of the narrative data and thus represented an inductive, data-driven approach (see Dunlop et al., 2018 for parallel description). The extent to which participants narrated a perceived connection between all three identity domains was only quantified within narrative responses to the intersectional awareness prompt. In contrast, the extent to which participants narrated a connection to the group being discussed was only quantified within narrative responses to the ethnic/racial awareness, gender salient, and social class awareness narrative prompts. The remaining narrative themes (i.e., valence, positive resolution, and presence of ethnicity/race, gender, and social class) were quantified in all narratives. Below, I describe the coding system for each of these narrative themes (see Table 5 for a description and example of each narrative theme).

Valence (1 – 5 Rating Scale). The positive relative to negative emotional content of each narrative as a whole (valence) was coded on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = Very negative to 5 = Very positive. This rating scale is consistent with previous research examining valence within narratives (e.g., McLean et al., 2020). Narratives with higher

negative relative to positive emotional valence typically contained mention of more negative events and a greater focus on negative emotions and/or outcomes.

Positive Resolution (1 – 5 Rating Scale). Consistent with valence, the narrative theme of positive resolution was also quantified in each narrative on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = Very negative to 5 = Very positive. Relative to valence, which was indicative of the overall emotional tone of the story, the theme of positive resolution captured the valence at the end of each narrative and the extent to which there was a sense of emotional closure (Pals, 2006).

Connection to Group (1 – 3 Rating Scale). The degree to which the participant narrated a connection to race/ethnicity, gender, and social class in the ethnic/racial awareness, gender salient, and social class awareness narratives, respectively was coded on a three-point scale ranging from 1 = Disconnected to 3 = Connected. This narrative theme captured whether participants narrated greater connection or disconnection with the group being discussed (e.g., connection to race/ethnicity in the ethnic/racial awareness narrative).

Presence of Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Social Class (0, 1 Rating Scale). The mention of ethnicity/race, gender, and social class in each narrative was coded using a dichotomous presence/absence scale where 0 = Absent and 1 = Present.

Perceived Connection (1 – 5 Rating Scale). Lastly, perceived connection of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class was coded in each of the intersectional awareness narratives on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = Highly disconnected to 5 = Highly connected. This narrative theme captured perceived overlap between race/ethnicity,

Table 5
Narrative Themes and Examples

Theme	Description	Coding Scheme	Example
Meaning Making α = .82	Degree to which one narrates self-understanding based on life experiences and uses this knowledge to guide behavior and/or thoughts about the self, others, or the world	0 = No explanation of meaning of event 1 = Lesson learned from event 2 = Vague meaning. Some growth/change, but specifics are unclear 3 = Narrator gleaned specific insight from event that applies to broader areas of their life	0 = "I am Mexican, female and middle class. I'll refer back to the quinceañera. Not lots of people are able to afford to have those types of parties and celebrations. We think that lots of girls who can't, like those types of parties would feel kind of down and think less of themselves and their culture." *Intersectional Awareness; Mexican, Female, Middle Class* 3 = "When I played soccer, I was surrounded with a bunch of kids from different areas and ethnicities. When I personally was able to interact with kids from different ethnicities, we had a lot of discussions about our personal race, and what we will do on the daily as being Hispanic or Black or Chinese or White. We all had different lives and different examples and experiences to talk about. However, being in a scenario where I was able to express myself, I was really able to talk about being a Hispanic male, who didn't have a lot of money. Being in a scenario where I was able to talk about those things kind of made me open my eyes to different options for myself. I was able to talk about not having a lot of money. I remember thinking this is a different outlet for myself. There's more jobs and opportunities, and justice. That was a scenario where it was okay to be a Mexican, Hispanic. That's a position that I will never forget because I was openly accepted, and not criticized or judged. I was offered new ideas. That's one particular event including the three of those." *Intersectional awareness; Mexican, Male, Working Class*
Valence α = .86	Positive relative to negative emotional content of the narrative as a whole	1 = Very negative 2 = Negative 3 = Neutral 4 = Positive	1 = "One of the first experiences where I became aware of my background was on the playground. Me and my cousins interacting with new kids and introducing my cousin as my cousin. And people being surprised or kind of off put by

	5 = Very positive	that. It made me realize that we look different, and that I wasn't only Filipino. Growing up, I felt more culturally Filipino. I thought, that's all I really was. My family invested that in me and told me this was who to identify as, and this is where we're from. Even though my skin color was darker, I didn't really put two and two together that this was more of my identity than I identified it as. I think I was like, put off I was kind of sad, because I was like, why are you confused? For me, it was so apparent my whole life that I was Filipino because of what I ate how I spoke the language, how I spoke to my family, and that's how I saw myself. It was really sad and hurtful being told that it was an impairment. It wasn't obvious that I was Filipino. I think it kind of made me feel less than or not as Filipino in a sense." *Ethnic/racial awareness; Filipino, Female, Middle Class* 5 = "Alright, probably the time I took a trip with my brother. We flew out to Oakland, California to go to a music festival. I would say we just went. We didn't even book a hotel or anything. We literally slept in an airport or didn't sleep. We were just awake for like 48 hours, just kind of enjoying it. We got there and had like the time of our lives. It was literally just us too. That that made me feel really euphoric. It's kind of combining like sharing a hobby with my brother, who I'm really, really close with. Just kind of like having that with me. It really made me feel alive. In a sense, I think it just has things that are just important to me. I have a twin brother, and he's kind of my life. It was probably one of my favorite artists. I think it was just a combination of happy memories and things that are really important to me." *Self-defining memory; Mexican, Male, Upper Middle Class*

Positive Resolution α = .86	Positive relative to negative emotional content of the conclusion of the narrative	1 = Very negative 2 = Negative 3 = Neutral 4 = Positive 5 = Very positive	1 = "I'm not trusting person. This is because I have had a lot of friends in the past that when we get close, something has to happen to ruin it. It's just normal for everyone. But, the main memory, I would say, is how we got to the United States. It was eight years ago. I was sitting with my sister in the living room, and my mom came, and she was like, you gotta go get your bags ready, we're leaving, we're traveling. She was like, we're going to the U.S., and we're excited and we're gonna have a vacation. Then she was like, no, we're not coming back. At this moment, I knew that I had to leave all my life behind, all my friends, or my family, everything that I know. And start from the beginning all over again. I was like, this is my life. This is who I am. I think at any moment, I just pick up and move. This became how I deal with things. If I'm not comfortable, I just pick up and move to a whole different community. For me as an Egyptian in the United States, I don't have many options of like, to have friends who are kind of like me. We have church communities. So if I'm not comfortable at one, I just like, leave and go to another one. And forget all my friends and everything. It became how I deal with things." *Self-defining memory; Middle Eastern/Egyptian, Female, Upper Middle Class* 5 = "A big one that sticks with me is that we used to own a doughnut shop in downtown LA. The parking lot is very small. Usually, it's hard to find parking. There was two parking spaces next to each other. It was me and my mom and my sister in my car. There's this other guy like driving his own car on the left side of us. And then so there's one space and one space and we can both go inside and park perfectly fine. But then, even though we are perfectly fine, and the other guy parks fine. He started yelling and honking his horn at my mom. Then my mom's like, my mom is a fighter. So she gets out of the car and starts screaming and yelling. Then she goes inside the shop and, she gets stuff from the shop. I don't know why we had like a golf club in

			the shop. But we did. And then she was like learning this guy pretty much. And then my mom turns around and tells us, don't say these words I'm about to say and then she starts cursing. After the whole thing, she's like never fear anybody. Those words, always stick with me no matter what I do. Even if it's a performance, or like presentation, I'm like, oh, don't fear. Don't fear it. Just be calm and it'll work out. Yeah, like that's like one of my big defining moments." *Self-defining memory; Chinese, Female, Middle Class*
Connection to Group α = .82	Degree to which one narrates feeling connected relative to disconnected from the group being discussed (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, social class)	1 = Disconnected 2 = Neither connected nor disconnected 3 = Connected	1 = "When I was growing up, I grew up here in America and my mom and dad were both born in Mexico. I remember, we would go to Rosarito, or Tijuana sometimes, and we would just go and experience the life there. I remember being like, Oh my gosh, I'm missing out. I want to see Mexico. My parents, they're just not comfortable, bringing us there because of all the things that can happen. I learned later that my mom never wants us to go to Mexico where she grew up, because she's scared of what could happen because we're not from there. I remember being sad I was missing out on truly feeling Mexican. Growing up, Spanish is my first language. My mom would go to work and my grandma would take care of us. We didn't go to preschool because of circumstances. I would stay home speaking Spanish. Then as I got older, I just lost it. I felt like I was missing out. I realized that my mom does it for a reason. She wants what's best for us. It makes me really sad. That if she wants what's best for us, we can't have that connection, the same way that she has to Mexico. It's heartbreaking to be Mexican, but not really feel it." *Ethnic-racial awareness; Mexican, Female, Middle Class* 3 = A vivid memory I have of being female was somewhat recent. I was shadowing my dad, who's an anesthesia tech, because I'm interested in the med field. I was watching a surgery, and I noticed as soon as I walked into the OR, it

	was just a bunch of guys, and like, two girls probably. The way the guys would interact with the girls disheartened me because they were really rude. The females were just trying to help them out, obviously, because it's a team. You're all supposed to be working as a team. And the guys are just being really rude and acting like, I know it all and you know nothing. That didn't sit well with me. It is something that drives me to continue my medical field track because it really bothers me how I feel like there's not enough women in STEM. And if there are women in STEM, they're not taken seriously. I remember in the moment, I was confused, because I had heard about women in STEM not having enough power and being not appreciated as much. And then I saw it firsthand. I was just really shocked. I didn't think this was actually true. I came from an all-girls high school. So strong women is something that we really talked about and was really preached upon. Coming from that background, and then seeing that was really heartbreaking. I believe it matters for me, because this is the future I want to go into and seeing how some of the women are being treated is absolutely disgusting. If anything, they did the same amount of school, they have the same level of education for some guy to be like, no, you're not doing this right. Even though they're on the same education level really angers me. It drives me to do better and be better and study harder. Even though it disheartens me in a way. I still think because I have my like strong background on woman empowerment from my high school. I still think it encourages me to encourage others for there to be more women in STEM because if anything I feel like it's overpowered by guys and I'm not a fan of that because women have equal to or more capabilities. It shows me that I need to empower other younger girls to do the same." *Gender salient memory; Filipino, Female, Upper Middle Class*

Perceived Connection α = .81	Degree of connection relative to disconnection that one narrates between identity domains	1 = Disconnected 2 = Some disconnection 3 = Neither connected nor disconnected 4 = Some connection 5 = Connected	1 = "My cousin, he's male. He's also Indian. But in our community, at least, depression, anxiety, and burnout isn't really talked about. He was a pre-med college student trying to pursue a career in medicine. He fell into depression, he fell into stress, a lot of anxiety, burnout. He didn't have that support from his parents, his peers, and as a male, because we often talk about this, as a male, he felt as if he shouldn't be feeling this way. It was wrong for him to feel this way because of what society said. He'd say, screw what our parents say. Screw it. What our religion says, but like society in general says, us as men, we're not allowed to talk about things, not allowed to show weakness, we're not allowed to cry, we're not allowed to show any weakness. We show pain we're considered weak. We're considered inadequate to care for our families. I'll talk to him just let him know, Hey, just because we may have a problem, we may feel pain doesn't make us weak. That just makes us stronger. It makes us stronger on how we handle it, and you're handling it perfectly. You're reaching out to people you can trust, and you should still continue reaching out to people you can trust. Nevertheless, he did not have that support group, and it ultimately led him to commit suicide. That's what made me think about my gender, my ethnic background, and I feel my social class as well, just all three coupled together. As a male, we're not allowed to talk about our feelings. Not allowed to talk, we're not allowed to be in pain, we're not allowed to show that we can feel pain, we're not going to show ourselves as weak. I don't agree with that." *Intersectional awareness; Indian, Male, Working Class* 5 = "The event that I can think of that kind of intertwined with all those three, like my race, economic class, and gender was folklorico dancing that we had in elementary school. Everybody was taught this dance in our grade. I think it's from certain parts of Mexico that that the dance originates from. It made me feel like our community, we're

			getting involved with our race. It kind of made me feel like involved. It felt like all those three were being brought out like where we're not from, you know, like we're not from a high class. We don't come from a high-class community, but we can still gather and, make these small events and work with what we have and perform a show. It also involves a little bit of our culture and stuff like that. So, yeah, that that kind of made me feel like we're getting involved. The females, they had to wear like these big dresses, and the guys might be dressed up like a cowboy. It kind of set the tone like gender roles, but at the same time, it was nice to see the beautiful dresses that the females worn. How the men were like chivalrous." *Intersectional awareness; Mexican, Female, Working Class*
Ethnicity/Race κ = .97	Indicates whether participant mentioned ethnicity/race in their narrative	0 = Absent, 1 = Present	--
Gender κ = .95	Indicates whether participant mentioned gender in their narrative	0 = Absent, 1 = Present	--
Social Class κ = .96	Indicates whether participant mentioned social class in their narrative	0 = Absent, 1 = Present	--

Note. Narratives were edited for brevity. α and κ represent the average reliability across the narrative prompts where the narrative theme was quantified. Meaning making, valence, and positive resolution were quantified in all narratives. Connection to group was quantified in the ethnic awareness, gender salient memory, and social class awareness narratives. Perceived connection was quantified in the intersectional awareness narrative. Examples are not provided for the presence of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class themes, as these were quantified simply based on whether these identity domains were mentioned by the participant.

gender, and social class in the context of narratives about experiences that incorporated two or more of these identity domains (see Table 5).

After I established the coding system for each narrative theme, I coded all narratives for the eight themes described above (~885 narratives total). To establish interrater reliability, two teams of two trained research assistants coded 60% of the narratives by prompt type. Two coders quantified narrative themes within the self-defining memory and gender salient narrative (216 narratives total) and two coders quantified themes within the ethnic/racial awareness, social class awareness, and intersectional awareness narratives (324 narratives total). Coding progressed based on prompt type and was distributed in batches of 30, 40, and 38 narratives. The first batch was intentionally shorter in length to allow coders to adjust to the content elicited by each narrative prompt as well as how each theme applied to the narratives at hand. Coding teams met weekly until coding completion to discuss discrepancies in the quantification of each narrative theme and were given the chance to change or maintain discrepant codes. Establishing interrater reliability has been described as a "process rather than a product" (Syed & Nelson, 2015, p. 377). As such, reliability can vary based on narrative theme and/or prompt type. This may reflect that certain narrative themes were more discernable to coders than others or were perhaps more relevant within responses to certain narrative prompts (e.g., Adler et al., 2016). Nevertheless, there was good average interrater reliability for narrative themes of meaning making ($\alpha = .82$), valence ($\alpha = .86$), positive resolution ($\alpha = .86$), connection to group ($\alpha = 82$), presence of ethnicity/race ($\kappa = .97$), gender ($\kappa = .95$), and social class ($\kappa = .96$), and perceived connection between

identity domains (α = .81) across narrative prompts (see Table 6 for reliability of each narrative theme by prompt type). The average length in words of participants' narratives was 351 words in the self-defining memory, 396 words in the ethnic/racial awareness narrative, 391 words in the gender salient narrative, 414 words in the social class awareness narrative, and 357 words in the intersectional awareness narrative. With regard to the intersectional awareness narrative, a majority of participants (*n* = 115) incorporated the three identity domains of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class. However, 40 participants focused on two identity domains, 9 participants focused on one identity domain, and 13 participants requested to skip this narrative prompt.

Analysis Plan

In this section, I detail the analysis plan for the research questions in the present dissertation. Specifically, I present each research question followed by the analysis(es) I conducted to address it.

RQ1. What narrative themes emerged in participants stories about ethnic/racial, gender, and social class experiences?

As detailed in the Method section above, I addressed RQ1 by using both a deductive and inductive approach to identify narrative themes of meaning making, valence, positive resolution, connection to group, presence of ethnicity/race, gender, and social class, and perceived connection between ethnicity/race, gender, and social class in the narratives gathered during the semi-structured interview. To fully address RQ1, I also computed the means and standard deviations of each narrative theme based on prompt type (see Tables 7 – 11). In addition, I conducted exploratory analyses testing whether

Table 6
Reliability of Each Narrative Theme Based on Narrative Prompt

	Self-Defining	Ethnic/ Racial Awareness	Gender Salient	Social Class Awareness	Intersectional Awareness	Average Reliability
Meaning Making α	.80	.85	.87	.85	.73	.82
Valence α	.92	.80	.88	.85	.83	.86
Positive Resolution α	.83	.88	.90	.88	.87	.86
Ethnicity/ Race κ	.92	1.00	.97	1.00	.97	.97
Gender κ	1.00	.97	1.00	.87	.93	.95
Social Class κ	1.00	.92	.91	1.00	.93	.96
Connection to Group α	--	.82	.85	.80	.95	.82
Perceived Connection α	--	--	--	--	.81	.81

Note. Labels in the rows represent the narrative themes and labels in the columns represent the narrative prompt. Cells are blank if the narrative theme was not quantified in the narrative prompt indicated.

ethnicity/race, gender, and social class predicted differences in the average of each narrative theme across prompts (see Tables 12 – 16).

RQ2. Do themes within narratives gathered during the semi-structured interview relate with self-reported measures of psychosocial adjustment, self-concept clarity, and other indicators of identity?

To address RQ2, I conducted a series of partial correlations controlling for the length in words of participants' narratives to examine how narrative themes related with psychosocial adjustment (i.e., life satisfaction, self-esteem), self-concept clarity, and other indicators of identity (i.e., ERI, racial centrality, gender centrality, IOC, conflict, and distance; see Tables 7 – 11). Consistent with previous research on narrative identity, I controlled for the length in words of participants stories in partial correlations (e.g., Wilkinson & Dunlop, 2020a).

RQ3. Do higher average scores of meaning making across the five narrative prompts relate with greater psychosocial adjustment, self-concept clarity, and other indicators of identity?

To address RQ3, I computed the mean average of meaning making across narrative prompts and examined whether average meaning making related with psychosocial adjustment (i.e., life satisfaction, self-esteem), self-concept clarity, and other indicators of identity (i.e., ERI, racial centrality, gender centrality, IOC, conflict, and distance; see Table 17). This was done using partial correlations controlling for the length in words of participants' narratives.

RQ4. Does perceived connection between identity domains (assessed using novel self-reported and narrative measures) vary based on one's self-identified race/ethnicity, gender, and social class?

Lastly, to address RQ4, I conducted a series of multiple regression models to determine whether mean differences in the identity measures I developed for the present dissertation (i.e., IOC, distance, and conflict) and perceived connection between the three identity domains within participants' intersectional awareness narrative existed based on ethnicity/race, gender, and social class. Differences based on ethnicity/race were only examined between Asian American and Latinx participants due to sample size. I examined mean differences based on one identity domain at a time, treating the additional identity domains as covariates. For example, when examining differences in perceived connection based on ethnicity/race, I controlled for gender and social class as covariates (see Tables 18 – 20).

Results and Discussion

In this section, I present the results of each research question and provide a brief interpretation of each finding. Results are ordered first by narrative theme and subsequently by prompt type (see Appendix A for narrative prompts). This was done to facilitate my interpretation of narrative themes within and especially across narratives about ethnicity/race, gender, and social class. For ease of interpretation, I only summarize results for narrative themes where a significant relation was observed (but see Tables 7 – 20 for all relations). I also present narrative examples throughout this section to ground the statistical findings and offer additional insight into how narrative themes functioned

in participants' stories. My interpretation of narratives includes a consideration of the systems of power and privilege that may have influenced how participants storied experiences around ethnicity/race, gender, and social class. I synthesize my interpretation of the results as well as discuss the limitations of this study and provide recommendations for future research in the following section titled, General Discussion.

RQ1: What Narrative Themes Emerged in Participants' Stories About Ethnic/Racial, Gender, and Social Class Experiences?

I used the narrative identity approach (described in the Method) to quantify eight themes evident within participants' narratives about ethnicity/race, gender, and social class. I quantified narrative themes of (1) meaning making, (2) valence, and (3) positive resolution in all narratives. Narrative themes of (4) connection to group and the presence/absence of (5) ethnicity/race, (6) gender, and (7) social class were captured only in the awareness of race/ethnicity, awareness of social class, and gender salient narratives. Lastly, I quantified the theme of (8) perceived connection between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class in only the intersectional awareness narrative (see Tables 7 – 11 for descriptive statistics of each narrative theme presented by prompt type). In this section, I will report descriptive statistics for each narrative theme based on prompt type to provide a sense of how prevalent each theme was in the data. I also report the results of exploratory analyses testing whether race/ethnicity, gender, and social class predicted differences in the average of each narrative theme across prompts (see Tables 12 – 16).

Prevalence of Meaning Making Across Narrative Prompts

The narrative theme of meaning making was most prevalent in the self-defining memory (M = 2.29, SD = .89, range = 0 – 3) and least prevalent in the intersectional awareness narrative (M = 1.65, SD = 1.13, range = 0 – 3). While some participants did engage in high meaning making in the intersectional awareness narrative, the lower prevalence of this theme may reflect that it was more challenging for participants to recall instances when all three identity domains were salient. On average, participants reported moderate levels of meaning making in the ethnic/racial awareness (M = 1.93, SD = 1.01, range = 1 – 3), gender salient (M = 1.90, SD = 1.08, range = 1 – 3), and social class awareness narratives (M = 1.92, SD = .92, range = 1 – 3). In a set of exploratory analyses, I used multiple regression to determine whether ethnicity/race, gender, and social class predicted differences in average meaning making across narrative prompts. I found that there were no mean differences in average meaning making across narrative prompts based on participants' ethnicity/race, gender, and social class (see Table 12).

Prevalence of Valence Across Narrative Prompts

On average, participants reported moderate levels of valence in the ethnic/racial awareness (M = 2.90, SD = 1.20, range = 1 – 5) and gender salient narratives (M = 2.97, SD = .99, range = 1 – 5) that hovered around the mid-point of the five-point scale I used to quantify this narrative theme. By comparison, valence was lowest in the social class awareness (M = 2.54, SD = .92, range = 1 – 5) and intersectional awareness narratives (M = 2.74, SD = 1.14, range = 1 – 5) and highest in the self-defining memory (M = 3.25, SD = 1.17, range = 1 – 5). Though there was some variability in valence, this theme was

Table 7

Partial Correlations Between Narrative Themes, Adjustment, Self-Concept Clarity, and Other Indicators of Identity in the Self-Defining Memory

	Meaning Making	Valence	Positive Resolution	Ethnicity/Race	Gender	Social Class	Connection to Group	Perceived Connection
Self- Defining Memory								
Life Satisfaction	.04	.03	.04	.01	.07	.08	--	--
Self-Esteem	-.02	.02	.04	.06	.07	.12	--	--
Self-Concept Clarity	-.06	.09	.08	.07	.02	.16*	--	--
Ethnic Belonging	.11	-.04	-.05	.26**	.02	.10	--	--
Ethnic Exploration	.01	.00	.07	.24*	.16*	.17*	--	--
Racial/Ethnic Centrality	-.05	-.06	-.04	.16*	.01	.08	--	--
Female Centrality	-.04	-.04	-.10	.07	.06	.15	--	--
Male Centrality	-.05	-.13	-.08	-.25*	-.00	.06	--	--
III Conflict Aggregated	.03	-.05	-.03	.14†	.00	.05	--	--
III Distance Aggregated	.03	.12	.10	-.22*	-.03	-.19*	--	--
M	2.29	3.25	3.75	.23	.09	.13	--	--
SD	.89	1.17	1.08	.42	.29	.34	--	--
Range	0 – 3	1 – 5	1 – 5	0 – 1	0 – 1	0 – 1	--	--

Note. Table contains partial correlations controlling for narrative length (i.e., word-count). $N = 170\text{-}177$. Blank cells are indicative that the narrative theme was not quantified for this narrative prompt.

†$p < .08$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$

Table 8

Partial Correlations Between Narrative Themes, Adjustment, Self-Concept Clarity, and Other Indicators of Identity in the Ethnic/Racial Awareness Narrative

	Meaning Making	Valence	Positive Resolution	Ethnicity/Race	Gender	Social Class	Connection to Group	Perceived Connection
Ethnic Awareness								
Life Satisfaction	-.08	.10	.08	.04	.19*	-.02	.06	--
Self-Esteem	-.02	.04	.03	-.02	.25*	.05	-.04	--
Self-Concept Clarity	-.04	.01	-.00	-.03	.18*	.02	-.02	--
Ethnic Belonging	.06	.06	.06	.06	.11	.10	.10	--
Ethnic Exploration	.12	.07	.09	.03	.14†	.01	.19*	--
Racial/Ethnic Centrality	.05	.07	.07	.03	.22*	.08	.13†	--
Female Centrality	-.07	.08	.08	.02	.11	.03	.09	--
Male Centrality	-.06	.06	.16	-.02	.30*	.26*	.32*	--
III Conflict Aggregated	.11	-.18*	-.12†	-.02	.05	.02	-.06	--
III Distance Aggregated	-.08	.10	.04	.02	-.13	-.04	-.04	--
M	1.93	2.90	3.07	.99	.08	.08	2.38	--
SD	1.01	1.20	1.29	.10	.28	.28	.84	--
Range	0 – 3	1 – 5	1 – 5	0 – 1	0 – 1	0 – 1	1 – 3	--

Note. Table contains partial correlations controlling for narrative length (i.e., word-count). Blank cells are indicative that the narrative theme was not quantified for this narrative prompt. $N = 170\text{-}177$.

$^{\dagger}p < .08$, $*p < .05$, $**p < .001$.

Table 9

Partial Correlations Between Narrative Themes, Adjustment, Self-Concept Clarity, and Other Indicators of Identity in the Gender Salient Narrative

	Meaning Making	Valence	Positive Resolution	Ethnicity/Race	Gender	Social Class	Connection to Group	Perceived Connection
Gender Salient								
Life Satisfaction	-.00	.10	.13†	.06	.00	.02	.09	--
Self-Esteem	.01	.07	.02	.04	.10	.04	.05	--
Self-Concept Clarity	.00	.12	.10	-.03	-.02	.02	.05	--
Ethnic Belonging	.04	.03	-.00	.11	-.02	.06	.05	--
Ethnic Exploration	.03	-.02	-.06	.14†	.05	.06	.03	--
Racial/Ethnic Centrality	-.03	-.05	-.04	.07	-.01	.05	.10	--
Female Centrality	.01	-.00	.06	-.04	.10	.07	.18†	--
Male Centrality	.01	.13	.08	-.03	-.09	-.09	.20	--
III Conflict Aggregated	.06	-.20*	-.19*	-.04	.03	.09	-.10	--
III Distance Aggregated	-.04	.16*	.13	-.02	-.06	-.05	.08	--
M	1.90	2.97	3.14	.21	.98	.06	2.38	--
SD	1.08	.99	1.03	.41	.15	.23	.74	--
Range	0 – 3	1 – 5	1 – 5	0 – 1	0 – 1	0 – 1	1 – 3	--

Note. Table contains partial correlations controlling for narrative length (i.e., word-count). Blank cells are indicative that the narrative theme was not quantified for this narrative prompt. $N = 170\text{-}177$.

†$p < .08$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$

Table 10

Partial Correlations Between Narrative Themes, Adjustment, Self-Concept Clarity, and Other Indicators of Identity in the Social Class Awareness Narrative

	Meaning Making	Valence	Positive Resolution	Ethnicity/Race	Gender	Connection to Group	Perceived Connection
Social Class Awareness							
Life Satisfaction	-.16*	.05	.05	-.04	-.05	-.10	--
Self-Esteem	-.04	-.04	-.07	-.06	-.05	-.08	--
Self-Concept Clarity	.01	-.05	-.12	.06	-.03	-.04	--
Ethnic Belonging	-.06	-.02	-.07	.06	-.06	-.02	--
Ethnic Exploration	-.04	-.07	-.08	.09	.04	-.09	--
Racial/Ethnic Centrality	-.08	.01	-.01	.03	-.00	-.08	--
Female Centrality	-.06	.09	.04	.03	-.08	-.12	--
Male Centrality	-.06	.14	.19	-.20	.00	.04	--
III Conflict Aggregated	.01	-.12	-.04	.02	.10	-.05	--
III Distance Aggregated	.04	.18*	.14†	-.02	-.08	.21*	--
M	1.92	2.54	2.92	.11	.02	1.99	--
SD	.92	.92	.97	.32	.15	.86	--
Range	0 – 3	1 – 5	1 – 5	0 – 1	0 – 1	1 – 3	--

Note. Table contains partial correlations controlling for narrative length (i.e., word-count). Blank cells are indicative that the narrative theme was not quantified for this narrative prompt. There was not sufficient variability to examine relations with social class, as all social class narratives mentioned class. N = 170-177.

$^{\dagger}p < .08$, $*p < .05$, $**p < .001$.

Table 11

Partial Correlations Between Narrative Themes, Adjustment, Self-Concept Clarity, and Other Indicators of Identity in the Intersectional Awareness Narrative

	Meaning Making	Valence	Positive Resolution	Ethnicity/Race	Gender	Social Class	Connection to Group	Perceived Connection
Intersectional Awareness								
Life Satisfaction	.08	.08	.15*	.04	-.02	.06	--	-.02
Self-Esteem	.08	.16*	.15*	-.06	-.06	.08	--	.00
Self-Concept Clarity	-.05	.02	.05	.00	.03	.09	--	-.03
Ethnic Belonging	.16*	.15†	.16*	-.06	.02	.07	--	.07
Ethnic Exploration	.15†	.09	.08	-.04	.00	.06	--	.14†
Racial/Ethnic Centrality	.12	.00	.02	-.08	-.09	-.07	--	.07
Female Centrality	.30*	.01	.08	-.02	.08	.14	--	.24*
Male Centrality	-.06	-.04	-.12	-.07	-.08	-.12	--	.08
III Conflict Aggregated	.06	-.09	-.05	.01	-.02	.01	--	.04
III Distance Aggregated	-.08	.00	.02	.06	.02	.01	--	-.12
M	1.65	2.74	3.00	.90	.77	.79	--	3.32
SD	1.13	1.14	1.26	.30	.42	.40	--	1.26
Range	0 – 3	1 – 5	1 – 5	0 – 1	0 – 1	0 – 1	--	1 – 5

Note. Table contains partial correlations controlling for narrative length (i.e., word-count). Blank cells are indicative that the narrative theme was not quantified for this narrative prompt. $N = 170\text{-}177$.

†$p < .08$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$.

relatively neutral across prompts. I also used multiple regression to determine whether ethnicity/race, gender, and social class predicted differences in average valence across narrative prompts (see Table 13). I found that men participants provided more positive narratives on average during the semi-structured interview relative to women participants ($\beta = -.26$, $p = .01$).

Prevalence of Positive Resolution Across Narrative Prompts

Positive resolution was highest within the self-defining memory ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.08$, range = 1 – 5) and lowest within the social class awareness narrative ($M = 2.92$, $SD = .97$, range = 1 – 5). Participants reported moderate levels of positive resolution in the ethnic/racial awareness ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.29$, range = 1 – 5), gender salient ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.03$, range = 1 – 5), and intersectional awareness narratives ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.26$, range = 1 – 5). I used multiple regression to determine whether ethnicity/race, gender, and social class predicted differences in average positive resolution across narrative prompts (see Table 14). I found that men participants provided narratives with more positive resolution on average during the semi-structured interview relative to women participants ($\beta = -.23$, $p = .01$).

Prevalence of Ethnicity/Race, Gender, and Social Class Across Narrative Prompts

Ethnicity/race was mentioned most in the ethnic/racial awareness narrative ($M = .99$, $SD = .10$, range = 0 – 1). Gender was mentioned most in the gender salient narrative ($M = .98$, $SD = .15$, range = 0 – 1). The mention of social class was present in all social class awareness narratives. Participants mentioned ethnicity/race moderately within self-defining memories ($M = .23$, $SD = .42$, range = 0 – 1) and gender salient narratives ($M =$

Table 12

Exploratory Analyses: Regression Models Demonstrating Differences in Average Meaning Making Based on Ethnicity/Race, Gender, and Social Class

	Model 1		Model 2	
	b (SE)	β	b (SE)	β
Meaning Making				
Intercept	1.98 (.07)***	-	1.94 (.10)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	-.10 (.10)	-.09	-.08 (.11)	-.07
Covariates				
Gender			.05 (.10)	.04
Social Class			-.02 (.07)	-.03
Meaning Making				
Intercept	1.89 (.07)***	-	1.94 (.10)***	-
Gender	.06 (.10)	.05	.05 (.10)	.04
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.08 (.11)	-.07
Social Class			-.02 (.07)	-.03
Meaning Making				
Intercept	1.93 (.05)***	-	1.94 (.10)***	-
Social Class	-.04 (.06)	-.05	-.02 (.07)	-.03
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.08 (.11)	-.06
Gender			.05 (.10)	.04

Note. N = 145, (75 Asian American, 70 Latinx; 63 male, 81 female, 1 non-binary participant excluded from gender analyses); Ethnicity/Race coded as 0 = Latinx, 1 = Asian American; Gender coded as 0 = male, 1 = female; Social class = aggregated z scores of parental income and parental education.
$^{\dagger}p$ = .10, **p = .01, ***p = .001

Table 13

Exploratory Analyses: Regression Models Demonstrating Differences in Average Valence Based on Ethnicity/Race, Gender, and Social Class

	Model 1		Model 2	
	b (SE)	β	b (SE)	β
Valence				
Intercept	2.87 (.06)***	-	3.09 (.09)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	.06 (.09)	.05	-.03 (.10)	-.02
Covariates				
Gender			-.30 (.09)**	-.26
Social Class			.11 (.06)†	.15
Valence				
Intercept	3.06 (.07)***	-	3.09 (.09)***	-
Gender	-.28 (.09)**	-.25	-.30 (.09)**	-.26
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.03 (.10)	-.02
Social Class			.11 (.06)†	.15
Valence				
Intercept	2.90 (.04)***	-	3.09 (.09)***	-
Social Class	.12 (.05)*	.16	.11 (.06)†	
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.03 (.10)	
Gender			-.30 (.09)**	

Note. N = 145, (75 Asian American, 70 Latinx; 63 male, 81 female, 1 non-binary participant excluded from gender analyses); Ethnicity/Race coded as 0 = Latinx, 1 = Asian American; Gender coded as 0 = male, 1 = female; Social class = aggregated z scores of parental income and parental education.

†p = .10, **p = .01, ***p = .001

Table 14

Exploratory Analyses: Regression Models Demonstrating Differences in Average Positive Resolution Based on Ethnicity/Race, Gender, and Social Class

	Model 1		Model 2	
	b (SE)	β	b (SE)	β
Positive Resolution				
Intercept	3.17 (.07)***	-	3.34 (.10)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	.08 (.09)	.07	.02 (.10)	.02
Covariates				
Gender			-.27 (.10)**	-.23
Social Class			.06 (.06)	.09
Positive Resolution				
Intercept	3.35 (.07)***	-	3.33 (.10)***	-
Gender	-.26 (.09)**	-.22	-.27 (.10)**	-.23
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			.02 (.10)	.02
Social Class			.06 (.06)	.09
Positive Resolution				
Intercept	3.20 (.04)***	-	3.33 (.10)***	-
Social Class	.09 (.06)	.12	.06 (.06)	.09
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			.02 (.10)	.02
Gender			-.27 (.10)**	-.23

Note. N = 145, (75 Asian American, 70 Latinx; 63 male, 81 female, 1 non-binary participant excluded from gender analyses); Ethnicity/Race coded as 0 = Latinx, 1 = Asian American; Gender coded as 0 = male, 1 = female; Social class = aggregated z scores of parental income and parental education.
$^{\dagger}p$ = .10, **p = .01, ***p = .001

.21, *SD* = .41, range = 0 – 1) and less in the social class awareness narrative (*M* = .11, *SD* = .32, range = 0 – 1). In contrast, gender was mentioned less often in the self-defining memory (*M* = .09, *SD* = .29, range = 0 – 1), ethnic/awareness (*M* = .08, *SD* = .28, range = 0 – 1), and social class awareness narrative (*M* = .02, *SD* = .15, range = 0 – 1) and more in the intersectional awareness narrative (*M* = .77, *SD* = .42, range = 0 – 1). Lastly, social class was moderately present within self-defining memories (*M* = .13, *SD* = .34, range = 0 – 1) and less present within the ethnic/racial awareness (*M* = .08, *SD* = .28, range = 0 – 1) and gender salient narratives (*M* = .06, *SD* = .23, range = 0 – 1). I again used multiple regression to test whether race/ethnicity, gender, and social class predicted differences in the average mention of these identity domains across narrative prompts. I found no significant mean differences in the presence of domains across narrative prompts after controlling for race/ethnicity, gender, and social class as covariates. But effect sizes suggest that a significant difference in the mention of social class based on race/ethnicity and objective social class may have been detected with a larger sample size (see Table 15).

Prevalence of Connection to Group Across the Ethnic/Racial Awareness, Gender Salient, and Social Class Awareness Narratives

The narrative theme quantifying the extent to which participants narrated a connection to the group being discussed in the context of the ethnic/racial awareness, gender salient, and social class awareness narratives was fairly high within the ethnic/racial awareness (*M* = 2.38, *SD* = .84, range = 1 – 3) and gender salient narratives (*M* = 2.38, *SD* = .74, range = 1 – 3). Connection to group was somewhat lower in the

social class awareness narratives (M = 1.99, SD = .86, range = 1 – 3). This suggests that participants may have found it more difficult to narrate connections between the self and social class. It may be that the impact of social class on the self is more subtle or perhaps discussed less among college-going emerging adults relative to race/ethnicity and gender (see Radmacher & Azmitia, 2013). I also used multiple regression to determine whether ethnicity/race, gender, and social class predicted differences in average connection to group across narrative prompts and found no differences based on these identity domains (see Table 16). This narrative theme may have been too prompt specific to assess differences in its average across narrative prompts.

Prevalence of Perceived Connection Within the Intersectional Awareness Narrative

Perceived connection between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class was moderate within the intersectional awareness narrative (M = 3.32, SD = 1.26, range = 1 – 5). This theme was only quantified within the intersectional awareness narrative. I discuss mean differences in perceived connection based on race/ethnicity, gender, and social class in response to RQ4.

RQ2: Do Narrative Themes Relate With Self-Reported Measures of Psychosocial Adjustment, Self-Concept Clarity, and Other Indicators of Identity?

Associations between narrative themes and measures of psychosocial adjustment and other indicators of identity, controlling for the length in words of participants' stories, varied by prompt type (i.e., self-defining memory, ethnic-racial awareness, gender salient, social class awareness, and intersectional awareness narrative prompts), as indicated by partial correlations. The differing relations with narrative themes across

Table 15

Exploratory Analyses: Regression Models Demonstrating Differences in Average Presence of Ethnicity/Race, Gender, and Social Class Making Based on These Identity Domains

	Model 1		Model 2	
	b (SE)	β	b (SE)	β
Presence of Ethnicity/Race				
Intercept	.50 (.01)***	-	.50 (.02)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	-.03 (.02)	-.11	-.03 (.02)	-.12
Covariates				
Gender			-.00 (.02)	-.00
Social Class			-.00 (.12)	-.04
Presence of Ethnicity/Race				
Intercept	.48 (.02)***	-	.50 (.02)***	-
Gender	.00 (.02)	.00	-.00 (.02)	-.00
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.03 (.02)	-.12
Social Class			-.00 (.02)	-.04
Presence of Ethnicity/Race				
Intercept	.48 (.01)***	-	.50 (.02)***	-
Social Class	-.01 (.02)	-.10	-.00 (.02)	-.04
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.04 (.02)	-.12
Gender			-.00 (.02)	-.00
Presence of Gender				
Intercept	.39 (.01)***	-	.39 (.02)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	-.02 (.02)	-.10	-.02 (.02)	.06
Covariates				
Gender			-.01 (.02)	-.05
Social Class			-.00 (.01)	-.04
Presence of Gender				
Intercept	.38 (.01)***	-	.39 (.02)***	-
Gender	-.00 (.02)	-.03	-.01 (.02)	-.05
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.01 (.02)	-.06
Social Class			-.00 (.01)	-.04
Presence of Gender				
Intercept	.38 (.01)***	-	.39 (.02)***	-
Social Class	-.00 (.01)	-.04	-.00 (.01)	-.04
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.01 (.02)	-.06
Gender			-.01 (.02)	-.05
Presence of Social Class				
Intercept	.45 (.02)***	-	.44 (.02)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	-.06 (.02)**	-.22	-.04 (.02)†	-.16
Covariates				
Gender			-.00 (.02)	-.03
Social Class			-.02 (.01)†	-.15

Presence of Social Class				
Intercept	.42 (.02)***	-	.44 (.02)***	-
Gender	.00 (.02)	.01	-.00 (.02)	-.03
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.04 (.02)†	-.16
Social Class			-.02 (.02)†	-.15
Presence of Social Class				
Intercept	.41 (.01)***	-	.44 (.02)***	-
Social Class	-.03 (.01)**	-.22	-.02 (.01)†	-.15
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.04 (.02)†	-.16
Gender			-.00 (.02)	-.03

Note. N = 145, (75 Asian American, 70 Latinx; 63 male, 81 female, 1 non-binary participant excluded from gender analyses); Ethnicity/Race coded as 0 = Latinx, 1 = Asian American; Gender coded as 0 = male, 1 = female; Social class = aggregated z scores of parental income and parental education.
†p = .10, **p = .01, ***p = .001

Table 16

Exploratory Analyses: Regression Models Demonstrating Differences in Average Connection to Group Based on Ethnicity/Race, Gender, and Social Class

	Model 1		Model 2	
	b (SE)	β	b (SE)	β
Connection to Group				
Intercept	2.25 (.06)***	-	2.33 (.08)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	.04 (.08)	.04	.00 (.09)	.00
Covariates				
Gender			-.12 (.08)	-.12
Social Class			.06 (.05)	.10
Connection to Group				
Intercept	2.33 (.06)***	-	2.33 (.08)***	-
Gender	-.10 (.08)	-.10	-.12 (.08)	-.12
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			.00 (.09)	.00
Social Class			.06 (.05)	.10
Connection to Group				
Intercept	2.26 (.04)***	-	2.33 (.08)***	-
Social Class	.06 (.05)	.11	.06 (.05)	.10
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			.00 (.09)	.00
Gender			-.12 (.08)	-.12

Note. N = 145, (75 Asian American, 70 Latinx; 63 male, 81 female, 1 non-binary participant excluded from gender analyses); Ethnicity/Race coded as 0 = Latinx, 1 = Asian American; Gender coded as 0 = male, 1 = female; Social class = aggregated z scores of parental income and parental education.
$^{\dagger}p$ = .10, **p = .01, ***p = .001

prompts indicated that prompt type may be an important and often under considered predictor of variation in narrative identity (McLean et al., 2017a). Here, I present relations ordered first by narrative theme and subsequently by prompt type. For ease of interpretation, I only discuss relations with $p < .05$, however, all partial correlations may be viewed in Tables 7 – 11.

Meaning Making, Psychosocial Adjustment, and Identity

Meaning Making: Social Class Awareness Narrative. The narrative theme of meaning making was negatively associated with life satisfaction in the social class awareness narrative ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$; see Table 10). This may be because reasoning about social class experiences often led participants to identify disquieting inequities or negative feelings resulting from their social standing. As a case in point, let us turn to the social class awareness narrative of a Black woman participant who identified as "lower middle class" and shared,

> In seventh grade, I went to private school. I was one of the only black girls there. My mom lost her job, so we were struggling financially. I remember going to school the next day, and being so frustrated, because everyone at that school wouldn't understand what I was going through. It was even more frustrating because I felt like I couldn't tell anyone what I was going through because they wouldn't understand. I was just so angry and upset and I didn't understand why this was happening. I didn't see why she had to lose her job. I think it really

affected me because it made me very conscious of how I spend my money, and what we spend money on. I'm a very frugal person now. [5]

This participant (objective social class was not reported) demonstrated high meaning making by using knowledge about herself to guide how she interacted with peers and connecting this experience with her behavior over time ("I'm a very frugal person now"). For her, feelings of isolation due to differences in social class were compounded by race, which was, in turn, entangled with gender. This illustrates how multiple categories of identity work together even within narratives about a particular domain to produce unique lived experiences (Cole, 2009). Through sharing how she felt others would not understand her experiences due to differences in social class, she also demonstrated how participants were largely cognizant of variation in personal experiences based on an inequitable class system. This was also the case for individuals confronting privilege associated with belonging to a higher social class. For example, one Filipino woman participant (objective social class = 1.36) demonstrated greater meaning making of her higher social class when she shared,

I feel I am more privileged and upper class. There's one incident where it was Fourth of July, and I was driving my parents' car. It's a really nice car. It's a new Lexus. Some kid drove by and said, 'Oh, you're driving daddy's money', and I'm like, 'Oh, yeah, it really sucks sometimes'. So, I like to humble myself, and show I don't let it get to my head or anything. I'm not better than anyone just because of how much money my family has. I mean it, because my work ethic started before

[5] Narrative examples presented in-text were edited for brevity.

> I realized how much money we had. I think it really helped develop it more, knowing I don't want to depend on my parents every time. I'll depend on myself.

Evident from this narrative, social class was sometimes framed as a source of conflict that impacted participants' perception of their social standing and self (e.g., being frugal, striving to be self-sufficient). It may be that participants' complex feelings about social class contributed to the negative relation between meaning making and life satisfaction. This coheres with evidence that meaning making is not always beneficial and is dependent upon the person and context of reasoning (McLean & Mansfield, 2011; Wilkinson & Dunlop, 2020a). Ultimately, making meaning of social class experiences may have led to increased rumination about negative aspects of one's social class and/or increased attention to unfair discrepancies between one's social class and that of those around them that was detrimental to well-being.

Meaning Making: Intersectional Awareness Narrative. In contrast, participants who engaged in greater meaning making in the intersectional awareness narrative reported higher ethnic belonging ($r = .16$, $p < .05$) and female centrality ($r = .30$, $p < .05$; see Table 11). These results indicate that a deeper understanding of how multiple identity domains influence perceptions of the self, others, or the world may impact how positive and important these domains are to the individual. For example, one Filipino woman participant (objective social class = .35) recalled her decision of where to attend college, in her intersectional awareness narrative, sharing,

> When I went to visit the campus that I really wanted to go to in Texas, it was weird. You would see students walking on campus, and you could tell that they

were not my economic background. They were a higher economic status. We could also tell that they were all white passing.[6] I didn't see a single Asian person on that campus. It came to the point where I was walking on that campus, and I was like, I'm the minority of the minorities right now. I felt like I was this Asian girl with an upper-middle class background in front of all these white, extremely rich people. It scared me in a way, even though I wanted to go so badly to that school. I absolutely loved that school. It still scared me because it was like, I'm the underdog of the underdogs of the underdogs right now. No one is going to be able to relate to the experiences that I have, and I'm not going to be able to relate to theirs. Culture shock, plus gender shock, plus economic background shock all mixed into one. I was just like, that's kind of horrifying. I'm literally not gonna fit in at all. I will say at UCR, it's a lot different. I fit in with so many of these people. It baffles me how I really wanted to go to this one school so badly, even though I knew I wouldn't fit in. Here I am at the school where I'm extremely comfortable with every single person I meet. It's just a really big change.

This participant engaged in high meaning making by carefully considering how her race/ethnicity, gender, and social class impacted her feelings of belonging on a college campus. Moreover, she discussed how this knowledge led her to make what she framed to be a beneficial choice regarding where to attend college. Her story is consistent with previous research indicating that identity may influence one's life choices and behaviors

[6] 'White passing' is a colloquial term used to refer to one's ability to be perceived or judged as White, based on skin tone and other characteristics.

(Van Camp et al., 2010; Wilkinson & Dunlop, 2020b). It is important to note that such decisions are limited by what is within the persons' control and individuals do not come up to bat with the same opportunities and privileges. Still, narrative provides a way for the person to reason about how their identity fits with a particular context. The resulting story might impact individuals' feelings of belonging in a particular setting. For example, participants with greater meaning making in the intersectional awareness narrative often felt that these identities carried important implications for their lives. This is demonstrated in one Latina participant's (objective social class = .19) intersectional awareness narrative when she shared,

> In high school, I was part of a program called Latina leaders. I would say being part of that organization and being with those girls was so beneficial for me identifying strongly with being Mexican, being a woman, even my social class. We shared a lot of the same struggles being part of that social class. It felt good to be part of a group that I could share so many experiences with. Obviously, some of those experiences were negative, but still coming out and saying this is who we are, and I feel we're stronger for that. Feeling empowered and strong, mentally, and physically. It was comforting, because at times it feels like you're the only person who is going through this or you can't tell anybody because no one else would understand. Those girls really do understand. I think I became who I really was after that. When I first entered the program, I wasn't confident in myself. I didn't feel like I was good enough. Going through this program with those girls and having each part of my identity of being Mexican and being female and being

> a part of a social class that I was, I feel like it really embraced that part of me. These are things about you. All these experiences of those things make you who you are. When I came out of that program, I was a different person.

Through her narrative, it is evident that participants who engaged in greater meaning making in the intersectional awareness narrative tended to express that race/ethnicity, gender, and social class were more salient. In addition, it is evident in narratives with high meaning making that these identity domains impacted participants' feelings of belonging with those around them. The latter is indicative of how greater meaning making in the intersectional awareness narrative was often accompanied by an increased sense of communion (i.e., connection) with other group members. The heightened communion garnered through shared personal experiences may be an integral part of the story for participants from minority groups that empowers them to advocate for their communities (Syed & McLean, 2021). Indeed, this participant went on to note,

> I was able to finally make a stance for anything that was happening in the Mexican community. Now that I felt like my identity was clear, I felt finally comfortable in my own skin and with my identity, that now I was able to help other people in my group. I wanted it to be very apparent that this is who I am. This is what I believe in.

Valence, Psychosocial Adjustment, and Identity

Valence: Relations Across Narrative Prompts. The global valence of participants' narratives was also associated with other aspects of their identities. Specifically, participants who reported less conflict between their race/ethnicity, gender,

and social class evinced more positive ethnic/racial awareness (r = -.18, p < .05) and gender salient narratives (r = -.20, p < .05). Less intuitively, participants who perceived greater distance between these identity domains narrated more positive gender salient (r = .16, p < .05) and social class awareness narratives (r = .18, p < .05; see Tables 7, 8, and 9). The negative relation between valence and conflict within the ethnic/racial and gender salient narratives coheres with previous research finding that more positive valence within narratives about important life experiences is adaptive (McLean et al., 2020). Given the potential benefits associated with valence identified here and in previous research, the positive relation between distance and valence in the gender salient and social class awareness narratives suggests that there may be some advantage of compartmentalizing one's racial/ethnic, gender, and social class identities. It may be that individuals who perceived these identity domains to be more blended (as opposed to distant) were also more aware of challenges that might arise from intersections between these identity domains. For example, one Latina participant (objective social class = -.94) who reported lower distance between identity domains shared,

> Our dad was out of the picture for years. It's kind of common in my culture the man can leave, and the wife was left to raise the kids. It happened to [my mom] and it happened to her grandma. So, you know, it's a common thing in the culture. [My mom] would always tell me, 'Because of our social class you got to work for yourself. Make something for yourself.' And she was like, 'Never, ever rely on the man. Make enough where you can sustain you and your family.' That deepened the thing of like, 'don't ever count on anyone for you'. Especially as a

> woman, the men can leave you. It's that idea of everything you do, it's for you. Never count on anyone. Keep on doing what you're going to do as if you're gonna end up alone. Because you never know.

This participant appeared to see their identity as a Latina with lower SES, as being highly connected and potentially related to more difficult life circumstances. This coheres with the notion that identity integration is not always the sole optimal outcome and other identity configurations may be beneficial depending on the person and context of reasoning (Schachter, 2004). It is important to attend to diverse identity configurations that may manifest among emerging adults, especially those from minoritized groups (Syed, 2010).

Positive Resolution, Psychosocial Adjustment, and Identity

Positive Resolution: Intersectional Awareness Narrative. Positive resolution, which represented the negative relative to positive emotional valence at the end of the participants' narrative and sense of emotional closure, was also related with indicators of identity as well as well-being. Positive resolution in the intersectional awareness narrative was positively associated with ethnic belonging ($r = .16$, $p < .05$) and life satisfaction ($r = .15$, $p < .05$; see Table 11). These results indicate that individuals who narrated positive endings and increased emotional closure in their intersectional awareness narratives felt more positively about their ethnic group and life in general. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that feeling positive about one's identity is beneficial for well-being (Neblett et al., 2012). Participants with greater positive resolution in the intersectional awareness narrative often focused on feeling proud of their membership in

historically marginalized groups. This pride was often related to feeling that one is positively representing or advocating for their group. For example, one Latina participant who identified as “lower middle class” (objective social class = -.46) described her upcoming graduation from college in her intersectional awareness narrative sharing,

> The most relevant one is me finally graduating this year because it involves me being able to step up from where my parents came from, because neither of them even finished high school. That's an economic factor. I’ll finally be able to make more than what they have been able to provide me with. As for gender, I'm the first female, I'm the only daughter that is so far going to graduate from college first generation. For my ethnicity, it's a very big thing. I have co-workers who didn't get their degree or finish high school, always tell me, ‘Oh, congratulations, I'm gonna get you a cake’ or something. I'd be like, ‘it's not that important’. But it is important, because it's not every day that people of our race get this kind of accomplishment, especially from where we came from. It's not only my happiness for getting a bachelor's degree, but everyone around me gets to have that feeling also, just from where we came from and who I am.

This narrative demonstrated that feeling as though one is contributing to their group may lead to enhanced feelings of communion that are beneficial for the person. Positive resolution in the intersectional awareness narrative also manifested as feeling empowered by overcoming harmful group stereotypes. For example, one Latina participant (objective social class = -.78) shared,

> I am a Hispanic woman from a lower social status, economic status. The stereotype would be, ‘you’re going to have a lower income job, you’re going to drop out, you’re going to get pregnant’. They think women from my status can’t succeed. But I'm currently in university, I graduated high school, I was in the top 5%. I accomplished quite a bit.

In addition to feeling empowered by overcoming group stereotypes, participants’ who narrated intersectional awareness narratives with greater positive resolution again tended to emphasize enhanced communion. Indeed, one Arab American woman who identified as “middle class” (objective social class = .62) shared in her intersectional awareness narrative,

> Growing up, I was pretty stripped away from my cultural identity. I'm only recently trying to reconnect after losing it for so long. When I first started college, I was really nervous about my first year. I was nervous about how to make friends because I was commuter as well. The first thing that I decided to do was go to the Middle Eastern Student Center (MESC) and meet people through there. It was very touching. Ever since quarantine I have been immersing myself into my ethnicity. I feel more at home and related to them than before. I'd walk into the MESC, and we say something, everyone knows what we're talking about. Although I love all my friends. I've been hanging out most with my Arab friends from childhood. I feel like I can relate to them on a deeper level more than my other friends.

The increased sense of communion that appeared to manifest in intersectional awareness narratives with greater positive resolution may have contributed to relations between positive resolution, ethnic belonging, and well-being. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this interpretation is based on my observations of the narratives, and I did not code for communion in participants' narratives.

Connection to Group, Psychosocial Adjustment, and Identity

Connection to Group: Ethnic/Racial Awareness Narrative. Though I did not quantify communion within participants' narratives, I did code more specifically for the extent to which the participant narrated a connection to the group being discussed in the context of the ethnic/racial awareness, gender salient, and social class awareness narratives. I found that the narrative theme of connection to group was associated with greater ethnic exploration in the ethnic/racial awareness narrative ($r = .19$, $p < .05$; see Table 7). This demonstrates that individuals who narrated a higher connection to their ethnicity/race also reported actively exploring what it means to be a member of their ethnic/racial group. It is important to note that narratives containing a strong connection to race/ethnicity were not always positive and sometimes involved the internalization of systemic racism (Bivins, 2005; Hammack & Cohler, 2009). For example, one Latino participant (objective social class = -.94) who identified as "working class" shared in their ethnic/racial awareness narrative,

> I went to a predominantly Hispanic high school. Basically, they said the majority of our people don't really go to college. Instead of offering AP classes, they'd rather offer programs like welding and woodshop. They would rather fund those

> because we were more likely to go to the working force after high school instead of college. This was where I realized I'm Hispanic, so the expectancy is for us to go straight into the workforce. At first, I felt a bit offended, because it's like, you're gonna go to the workforce cause you didn't have a chance in education, so we're not going to fund classes for you. But after high school, I realized that it might be a little bit true that it's just better to start providing a basic foundation for those who are going to be in the workforce. Instead of forcing AP classes to students who really, school's not for them. Going into high school, I knew I wanted to expand my education. I've been working since a kid, and I knew that wasn't for me. I felt offended, but once I graduated, I was like, okay, it makes sense for them to do that.

This participants' narrative demonstrates how navigating what it means to be a member of a historically marginalized racial/ethnic group is complex and may influence what roles individuals feel that they are expected to fulfill in society. For this participant, this appeared to involve wanting to overcome but also feeling pressured to accept restrictive expectations associated with one's racial/ethnic group. This participants' narrative coheres with research finding that ethnic exploration is not always positive and can involve rumination on adverse experiences associated with being a member of a particular group (Syed et al., 2013). Interestingly, male participants who narrated an increased sense of connection with their ethnicity/race in the ethnic/racial awareness narrative also reported greater gender centrality ($r = .32$, $p < .05$). This points to the possibility that feeling connected to one's racial/ethnic group may also carry implications

for gender identity. In male participants' narratives this sometimes manifested through an awareness of the physical characteristics associated with being a male member of their racial/ethnic group. For example, one Latino participant (objective social class = -.31) who identified as "working class" shared,

> I didn't have people that looked like me. I remember this guy made fun of my mustache. It was pretty dark like the hairs are pretty black. And this guy, he would make fun of me. He's like, 'Dude, you have facial hair. You're like 13. That's weird'. I didn't realize a lot of people in my family, like my dad and my uncles, they all went through the same thing. They were just in a different setting, so it was normal. But here in America, I don't know what it is in the water, but people don't grow as much facial hair when they're young. So, I was like, I want a clean face, and I shaved. I got rid of my mustache, and I regret it to this day. I wish I hadn't done it. That guy made fun of me because I had facial hair, and I shaved it. And it got worse, right? It got longer. More hair started to come everywhere. I got to the point where I'd have to shave every morning, or I would use a trimmer. I'd have to do that every day just to have a clean face. My hair grows like crazy everywhere. I realized I didn't want to keep shaving. Hair is not a bad thing. It's natural. Some people just have a little less. Some people have lighter hair, so you can't really see it. The way I am, I should just keep it. That's when I realized I'm shaving my chest, I'm shaving my arms, my face, just to look like somebody else who I will never look like, I'll never be like, who I don't need

to look like and don't need to be like. Throughout high school just trying to be somebody I'm not made me realize who I was. Accept it, be proud of it.

This narrative also demonstrated the broader tendency for participants to focus on the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender within the racial/ethnic awareness narratives. The narrative theme of connection to group was also associated with greater distance between identity domains ($r = .21$, $p < .05$) in the social class awareness narrative (see Table 9). This is consistent with the pattern of relations suggesting that greater distance between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class might hold some advantage, at least when it comes to narratives about these specific identity domains.

Presence of Ethnicity/Race, Gender, and Social Class in Relation to Psychosocial Adjustment and Identity

Presence of Identity Domains: Self-Defining Memory. Presence of ethnicity/race, gender, and social class were unrelated with measures of psychosocial adjustment and indicators of identity in the gender salient and social class awareness narratives. However, the presence of race/ethnicity in the self-defining memory was related with greater ethnic belonging ($r = .26$, $p < .001$) and ethnic exploration ($r = .24$, $p < .05$) as well as lower male centrality ($r = -.25$, $p < .05$) and distance between identity domains ($r = -.22$, $p < .05$). In addition, greater ethnic exploration was related with the mention of gender ($r = .24$, $p < .05$) and social class ($r = .16$, $p < .05$) in self-defining memories. The mention of social class in self-defining memories was also related with greater self-concept clarity ($r = 16$, $p < .05$) and lower distance between identity domains ($r = -.19$, $p < .05$). These results showcase the interconnected nature of race/ethnicity,

gender, and social class and demonstrate that the spontaneous mention of these domains within decontextualized narratives of the self is relevant to individuals understanding of their identities within and across domains.

Presence of Identity Domains: Ethnic-Racial Awareness Narrative. The presence of gender in the ethnic/racial awareness narrative related positively with measures of psychosocial adjustment including life satisfaction ($r = .19$, $p < .05$), self-esteem ($r = .25$, $p < .05$), and self-concept clarity ($r = .18$, $p < .05$) as well as other indicators of identity including racial/ethnic centrality ($r = .22$, $p < .05$) and male centrality ($r = .30$, $p < .05$). This indicates that the presence of gender within stories about race/ethnicity may be particularly important for psychosocial adjustment and understanding of one's identity.

Perceived Connection in the Intersectional Awareness Narrative, Psychosocial Adjustment, and Identity

Lastly, perceived connection across race/ethnicity, gender, and social class in the intersectional awareness narrative was associated with greater female centrality ($r = .24$, $p < .05$; see Table 11). That is, female participants who viewed gender as central to their identity also narrated intersectional awareness narratives with stronger perceived connection across race/ethnicity, gender, and social class. For example, one Black woman participant (objective social class = .12) who identified as "upper middle class" shared in her intersectional awareness narrative,

> I keep going back to North Carolina. I loved it. I really did enjoy living there, but I definitely had a racial, economic, and gender identity reckoning because it is so

different from what I had been taught growing up, and from what I experienced prior and after. I remember being at a private school and being a person of color. You definitely stand out. Especially in that area, most people of color aren't in the economic status to afford private school. Being a person of color at a private school, it was always looked at confusingly, ‘How can you afford this? You're Black, you should go down to the public school where the rest of you guys are.’ It's kind of like, well, dang. In my mind, I'd seen successful Black people in my family. I never thought Black people are just inherently poor. There's plenty of successful Black people. That was the first time where race and economic status felt intertwined to me. Another one was being Black and male. I really didn't have any experience with Black women until high school. For a long time, my experience with being Black was mainly the male experience. It took me a long time to realize the Black female experience is something completely different because they're fighting on two fronts. Being oppressed on two fronts. Being a woman and being Black. That was something that when I got to high school, and started talking to Black women, it was very eye opening, to say the least. Because when I saw race, it was always a Black man. Look at the civil rights movement, and all these things that we learned about in history, it's the Martin Luther King's it's the Malcolm X's the John Lewis's. I was in college when I started to hear about female activists and leaders. It shouldn't have taken until college to realize it. But when I did, it was very eye opening for me.

Women participants, especially those of color who are well-represented in this study (84% of women identified as Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, or Asian American), may be more attuned to how race/ethnicity, gender, and social class are connected in their lives (Juan et al., 2016). This is further evidenced by the negative relation between female centrality and distance between identity domains as assessed via the III (r = -.35, p < .01).

RQ3: Do Higher Average Scores of Meaning Making Across Narratives Relate With Greater Psychosocial Adjustment, Self-Concept Clarity, and Other Indicators of Identity?

This research question was assessed via partial correlations controlling for the length in words of participants narratives. The average score of meaning making across the self-defining memory, ethnic/racial awareness, gender salient, social class awareness, and intersectional awareness narrative prompts did not relate significantly with measures of adjustment or other indicators of identity (see Table 17). The lack of relations with meaning making across narrative prompts may have occurred for at least two reasons. First, I did not capture specific forms of meaning making found to relate with positive outcomes (e.g., "positive processing"; Graci et al., 2018). Therefore, it may be necessary to quantify different forms of meaning making across narrative prompts to best articulate relations between meaning making and measures of psychosocial adjustment and identity. Second, it may not have been possible to detect a significant effect due to a lack of statistical power given the sample size.

RQ4: Does Perceived Connection Between Identity Domains Vary Based on One's Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Social Class?

I used simple linear regression and multiple regression to test whether ethnicity/race, gender, and social class predicted differences in measures of perceived connection between identity domains (i.e., III, IOC, and perceived connection between identity domains in the intersectional awareness narrative; see Tables 18 – 20). In each model, the identity domain was representative of the predictor and measures of perceived connection were representative of the outcome. Analyses were conducted in a hierarchical fashion. In step one, I used simple linear regression to test whether race/ethnicity, gender, and social class predicted differences in each measure of perceived connection one identity domain at a time. In step two, I used multiple regression to test whether race/ethnicity, gender, and social class predicted differences in measures of perceived connection when these identity domains were treated as covariates. For example, when examining relations between ethnicity/race and measures of perceived connection, gender and social class were treated as covariates. Below, I report the results of these analyses for each measure of perceived connection between identity domains.

Mean Differences in the III. With regard to the III subscales, I found that conflict was higher among Latinx participants relative to Asian American participants ($\beta = -.22$, $p < .05$), whereas distance was higher among Asian American participants relative to Latinx participants ($\beta = .23$, $p < .01$). In addition, I found that men participants reported greater distance between identity domains relative to women participants ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .001$). Distance was also positively related with objective social class ($\beta = .22$, p

< .01), whereas conflict was negatively related with objective social class (β = -.22, p < .05). It is worth noting that the distance and conflict subscales themselves were negatively correlated (r = -.36, p < .001). This is in contrast to previous work noting a positive relation between distance and conflict when assessing the relationship between heritage and national identities (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Huynh & Benet-Martínez, 2018). These findings are suggestive of the possibility that distance and conflict may function differently in the context of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class.

Mean Differences in the IOC and Perceived Connection in Narratives. I also examined mean differences in the IOC measure based on race/ethnicity, gender, and social class one at a time, and controlling for the additional identity domains as covariates. I found that women participants perceived greater overlap between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class relative to men participants (β = .18, p < .05). This builds upon previous research indicating that women perceived a greater connection between race/ethnicity and gender (Juan et al., 2016). Lastly, there were no mean differences in the perceived connection between identity domains within the intersectional awareness narratives based on ethnicity/race, gender, or social class (see Tables 18-20).

General Discussion

In the present dissertation, I used the narrative identity approach (Bühler & Dunlop, 2019) and an intersectional framework (Collins, 2019) to examine personal narratives of emerging adults lived experiences around race/ethnicity, gender, and social class. As personal identity is fluid and contextual (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017), it is critical

Table 17

Partial Correlations Between Average Meaning Making, Adjustment, and Other Indicators of Identity

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Average Meaning Making	--									
2. Life Satisfaction	-.05	--								
3. Self-Esteem	.01	.50**	--							
4. Self-Concept Clarity	-.04	.28**	.60**	--						
5. Ethnic Belonging	.12	.02	.22*	.11	--					
6. Ethnic Exploration	.10	.12	.20*	.03	.68**	--				
7. Racial/Ethnic Centrality	.01	.10	.06	-.06	.56**	.60**	--			
8. Female Centrality	.06	.07	-.19	-.19	.24*	.17	.50**	--		
9. Male Centrality	-.05	.18	-.03	-.03	.08	.25*	.45**	.00	--	
10. Conflict Aggregated	.10	-.06	-.18*	-.18*	.12	.18*	.24*	.18	-.06	--
11. Distance Aggregated	-.05	-.02	-.01	-.01	-.10	-.32**	-.38**	-.32*	-.21	-.40**

Note. Table contains partial correlations controlling for average narrative length across prompts (i.e., word-count). $N = 170\text{-}177$.

[a]Meaning making is aggregated across the narrative prompts: self-defining memory, ethnic awareness, gender salient, and social class awareness.

*$p < .05$, **$p < .001$.

to examine how personal experiences vary on the basis of such identity domains (Dunlop, 2015). This work also built upon previous research on identity, by using a combination of self-report and behavioral measures that supplied a more robust assessment of contextualized identity (Dunlop et al., 2021; Roberts et al., 2006). Prior research has yet to use the narrative identity approach to examine experiences within and across the domains of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class in conjunction with an intersectional framework, which reveals how identity is embedded within unequal systems of power and oppression (Collins, 2019; Moffitt et al., 2020; Syed & McLean, 2020). As such, this research represents one step towards integrating the narrative identity approach and intersectional framework to shed light on the content and impact of racial/ethnic, gender, and social class experiences. In this dissertation, I developed a semi-structured interview and online survey to examine the content, structure, and process of emerging adult college students' experiences with race/ethnicity, gender, and social class in relation to self-reported measures of psychosocial adjustment and identity. My dissertation was guided by four RQs:

> ***RQ1.*** What narrative themes emerged in participants' stories about ethnic/racial, gender, and social class experiences?
>
> ***RQ2.*** Do narrative themes relate with self-reported measures of psychosocial adjustment, self-concept clarity, and other indicators of identity?
>
> ***RQ3.*** Do higher average scores of meaning making across the five narrative prompts relate with greater psychosocial adjustment, self-concept clarity, and other indicators of identity?

Table 18

Regression Models Demonstrating Differences in Perceived Connection of Identity Domains Based on Ethnicity/Race

	Model 1		Model 2	
	b (SE)	β	b (SE)	β
III Conflict Aggregated				
Intercept	3.38 (.09)***	-	3.22 (.12)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	-.47 (.12)***	-.30	-.34 (.14)*	-.22
Covariates				
Gender			.14 (.12)	.09
Social Class			-.14 (.08)	-.15
III Distance Aggregated				
Intercept	2.45 (.08)***	-	2.81 (.10)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	.50 (.10)***	.37	.32 (.11)**	.23
Covariates				
Gender			-.41 (.10)***	-.29
Social Class			.19 (.07)**	.22
Ethnicity/Race-Gender IOC				
Intercept	3.61 (.26)***	-	3.31 (.38)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	-.38 (.36)	-.08	-.07 (.42)	-.02
Covariates				
Gender			.18 (.38)	.04
Social Class			-.36 (.25)	-.13
Ethnicity/Race-Class IOC				
Intercept	5.10 (.23)***	-	4.98 (.34)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	-.76 (.32)*	.20	-.65 (.38)	-.16
Covariates				
Gender			.10 (.34)	.02
Social Class			-.13 (.22)	-.05
Gender-Class IOC				
Intercept	4.00 (.22)***	-	3.85 (.33)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	-.22 (.32)	.06	-.04 (.36)	-.01
Covariates				
Gender			.06 (.32)	.02
Social Class			-.28 (.22)	-.12
Ethnicity/Race-Gender-Class IOC				
Intercept	2.64 (.07)***	-	2.44 (.10)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	-.20 (.10)*	-.17	-.10 (.11)	-.08
Covariates				
Gender			.23 (.10)	.18
Social Class			-.06 (.07)	-.08
Perceived Connection Narrative				
Intercept	3.51 (.14)***	-	3.48 (.21)***	-
Ethnicity/Race	.28 (.20)	-.12	.26 (.23)	-.10
Covariates				
Gender			-.02 (.20)	-.01
Social Class			.06 (.14)	.04

Note. N = 145, (75 Asian American, 70 Latinx; 63 male, 81 female, 1 non-binary participant excluded from gender analyses); Ethnicity/Race coded as 0 = Latinx, 1 = Asian American; Gender coded as 0 = male, 1 = female; Social class = aggregated z scores of parental income and parental education. III = Intersecting Identities Inventory. IOC = Identity Overlap Circle measure.
**p = .01, ***p = .001

Table 19

Regression Models Demonstrating Differences in Perceived Connection of Identity Domains Based on Gender

	Model 1		Model 2	
	b (SE)	β	b (SE)	β
III Conflict Aggregated				
Intercept	3.00 (.09)***	-	3.22 (.12)***	-
Gender	.22 (.13)	.14	.14 (.12)	-.09
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.34 (.14)*	-.22
Social Class			-.14 (.08)	-.15
III Distance Aggregated				
Intercept	3.01 (.08)***	-	2.81 (.10)***	-
Gender	-.48 (.10)***	-.34	-.41 (.10)***	-.29
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			.32 (.11)**	.22
Social Class			.19 (.06)**	.22
Ethnicity/Race-Gender IOC				
Intercept	3.27 (.28)	-	3.31 (.38)***	-
Gender	.23 (.37)	.05	.18 (.38)	.04
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.07 (.42)	-.02
Social Class			-.36 (.25)	-.14
Ethnicity/Race-Class IOC				
Intercept	4.57 (.25)***	-	4.98 (.34)***	-
Gender	.25 (.34)		.10 (.34)	.02
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.66 (.38)	-.16
Social Class			-.13 (.22)	-.05
Gender-Class IOC				
Intercept	3.83 (.24)***	-	3.85 (.33)***	-
Gender	.10 (.32)	.02	.06 (.32)	.02
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.04 (.36)	-.01
Social Class			-.28 (.22)	-.12
Ethnicity/Race-Gender-Class IOC				
Intercept	2.38 (.07)***	-	2.44 (.10)***	-
Gender	.27 (.10)*	.22	.23 (.10)*	.18
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.10 (.12)	-.08
Social Class			-.06 (.07)	-.08
Perceived Connection Narrative				
Intercept	3.31 (.15)***	-	3.48 (.21)***	-
Gender	.06 (.20)	.02	.02 (.20)	-.01
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.26 (.23)	-.10
Social Class			.06 (.14)	.04

Note. N = 145, (75 Asian American, 70 Latinx; 63 male, 81 female, 1 non-binary participant excluded from gender analyses); Ethnicity/Race coded as 0 = Latinx, 1 = Asian American; Gender coded as 0 = male, 1 = female; Social class = aggregated z scores of parental income and parental education. III = Intersecting Identities Inventory. IOC = Identity Overlap Circle measure.
**p = .01, ***p = .001

Table 20
Regression Models Demonstrating Differences in Perceived Connection of Identity Domains Based on Social Class

	Model 1		Model 2	
	b (SE)	β	b (SE)	β
III Conflict Aggregated				
Intercept	3.12 (.06)***	-	3.22 (.12)***	-
Social Class	-.23 (.08)**	-.24	-.14 (.08)	-.15
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.34 (.14)*	-.22
Gender			.14 (.12)	.09
III Distance Aggregated				
Intercept	2.76 (.05)***	-	2.81 (.10)***	-
Social Class	.28 (.06)***	.34	.19 (.06)**	.22
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			.31 (.11)**	.22
Gender			-.41 (.10)***	-.29
Ethnicity/Race-Gender IOC				
Intercept	3.39 (.18)***	-	3.32 (.38)***	-
Social Class	-.36 (.22)	-.13	-.36 (.25)	-.14
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.07 (.42)	-.02
Gender			.18 (.38)	.04
Ethnicity/Race-Class IOC				
Intercept	4.86 (.16)***	-	4.98 (.34)***	-
Social Class	-.31 (.20)	-.13	-.13 (.22)	-.05
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.65 (.38)	-.16
Gender			.10 (.34)	.02
Gender-Class IOC				
Intercept	3.86 (.16)***	-	3.85 (.33)***	-
Social Class	-.30 (.19)	-.13	-.28 (.22)	-.12
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.04 (.36)	-.01
Gender			.06 (.32)	.02
Ethnicity/Race-Gender-Class IOC				
Intercept	2.52 (.05)***	-	2.44 (.10)***	
Social Class	-.08 (.06)	-.12	-.06 (.07)	
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.10 (.12)	
Gender			.23 (.10)*	
Perceived Connection Narrative				
Intercept	3.29 (.09)***	-	3.48 (.21)***	-
Social Class	.00 (.12)	.00	.06 (.14)	.04
Covariates				
Ethnicity/Race			-.26 (.23)	-.10
Gender			-.02 (.20)	-.01

Note. N = 145, (75 Asian American, 70 Latinx; 63 male, 81 female, 1 non-binary participant excluded from gender analyses); Ethnicity/Race coded as 0 = Latinx, 1 = Asian American; Gender coded as 0 = male, 1 = female; Social class = aggregated z scores of parental income and parental education. III = Intersecting Identities Inventory. IOC = Identity Overlap Circle measure.
**p = .01, ***p = .001

RQ4. Does perceived connection between identity domains, assessed using multiple measures, vary based on one's self-identified race/ethnicity, gender, and social class?

In what follows, I synthesize my interpretation of findings for each RQ and provide recommendations for future research. I then discuss the limitations of this study and offer broader recommendations for work in this area.

RQ1: Narrative Themes in Stories

To address RQ1, I used the narrative identity approach to derive and quantify eight narrative themes within stories gathered during the semi-structured interview. These narrative themes captured the content, structure, and process of identity related experiences and included: (1) meaning making, (2) valence, (3) positive resolution, presence of (4) ethnicity/race, (5) gender, and (6) social class, (7) connection to group, and (8) perceived connection of identity domains. Overall, I found that men told more positive stories with greater positive resolution, relative to women. This finding suggests the experience of being a woman from a particular race/ethnicity and/or social class group is much different relative to men. Women's experiences with sexism may combine with racism and classism and lead to the narration of more negative stories about these identity domains (Collins, 2019; Crenshaw, 1991). This vulnerability is particularly concerning for women of color and demonstrates the need for more research on intragroup variability in women's stories. This finding also provides evidence of gendered pathways in storying and understanding intersecting identities (McLean &

Breen, 2009) and is consistent with findings that the experience of gender is closely tethered with race/ethnicity and social class among women (Juan et al., 2016).

In contrast, men were often less comfortable providing narratives about race/ethnicity, gender, and social class due to increased feelings of privilege associated with being male ("Okay, so I mean, I don't know if this applies to this situation or not, but after I graduated two of my cousins who were female made me realize how privileged I am to be male in an Indian household."). This may have led to more shallow engagement with certain experiences that resulted in more positive stories among men, overall. Indeed, participants with privileged identities were often less at ease describing their experiences within and across identity domains. It was frequently necessary to assure these participants during the interview that there were no right or wrong answers to the narrative prompts. This coheres with previous research indicating that initiating open discussions about identity domains including race/ethnicity is difficult and can generate emotional responses such as shame and guilt (Tatum, 1992). This emotional response can lead individuals with privileged identities to avoid confronting advantages associated with their identity and deep-seated discussions of identity altogether (e.g., Whiteness; DiAngelo, 2018; Helms, 1990). Future research involving interventions and training that provide concrete ways for individuals with privileged identities to become social justice advocates is needed (e.g., disrupting discrimination in action; Hazelbaker et al., 2022; Loyd & Gaither, 2018). This dissertation suggests that cultural humility may be a key component of future work in this area. Cultural humility entails, "respect and lack of superiority towards individuals background and experience" (Hook et al., 2013, p. 353).

In other words, rather than assigning blame to individuals that exist within an unequal system, it is important to assign responsibility to "identify and interrupt cycle[s] of oppression" (Tatum, 1992, p. 4). These findings also demonstrate that narrative methods may be vital for capturing feelings of privilege, oppression, and perhaps, resistance to the status quo (Rogers et al., 2021; Westberg, 2022).

RQ2: Narrative Themes in Relation to Psychosocial Adjustment and Identity

In terms of RQ2, relations with narrative themes were found to vary on the basis of narrative prompt type. Previous research indicates that variability in narrative identity based on prompt type is important and can even exceed person-level variability (McLean et al., 2017a). This speaks to the highly contextualized and dynamic nature of identity that can make it complex to assess. While this dissertation revealed heterogeneity in stories based on race/ethnicity, gender, and social class, future research would benefit from greater consideration of prompt type. To pay credence to the role of prompt type and streamline interpretation of results, I organize discussion of how each narrative theme related with psychosocial adjustment and indicators of identity loosely by prompt type.

To begin, the unprompted mention of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class in decontextualized self-defining memories was associated with several indicators of identity. This demonstrated that individuals who naturally narrated topics around race/ethnicity, gender, and social class tended to have higher levels of identity development and saw identity domains as more connected. These findings point to the value of indirectly examining race/ethnicity, gender, and social class within

decontextualized stories of the self. From a methodological standpoint, gathering stories using an indirect approach (e.g., requesting a cultural deviation; Westberg, 2022) may circumvent psychological discomfort associated with discussing these identity domains (Syed & McLean, 2020). Nevertheless, previous research indicates that constructs pertaining to a specific domain should be stronger predictors of outcomes in that domain (i.e., "bandwidth fidelity tradeoff"; Dunlop et al., 2019, p. 764). Thus, I turn now to discussion of the contextualized stories gathered in the present dissertation.

In the racial/ethnic awareness narrative, the theme of connection to group was positively associated with ethnic exploration. Thus, narratives about an identity domain may foster identity work related to that domain (Syed & Azmitia, 2008). However, my dissertation revealed that narratives about a particular identity domain (race/ethnicity) also carried implications for other identity domains (gender and social class). For example, men with greater connection to group in their ethnic/racial awareness narrative reported greater gender centrality. In addition, participants with more positive racial/ethnic awareness and gender salient narratives reported lower conflict between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class on the Intersecting Identities Inventory (III). These findings demonstrated how qualities of stories pertaining to race/ethnicity and gender carried implications for participants' understanding of their intersecting identities. This was also evident in how social class was often an underlying component within narratives about race/ethnicity and gender. For example, participants often discussed resisting racial/ethnic and/or gender norms with implications for social class (e.g., racial/ethnic or gender expectations regarding higher education and occupation). This was especially true

within this sample of diverse (in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class) emerging adult college students who often storied academic and career goals. On the basis of the narratives gathered in this study, it may be fruitful to use stories about race/ethnicity and gender to capture perceptions related to social class in future studies. In so doing, researchers should distinguish how perceptions of social class in stories about race/ethnicity and gender differ based on these identity domains.

While previous research has often examined the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender (e.g., Rogers et al., 2021; Rosario et al., 2021), the role of social class has been assessed less often (see Crenshaw, 1990). It may be that there is something particularly salient about the relationship between race/ethnicity and gender. Indeed, in the present dissertation, I found that the presence of gender in narratives about race/ethnicity related with several indicators of psychosocial adjustment and identity among all participants. Nevertheless, ethnicity/race, gender, and social class each shape independently and in tandem the experiences of individuals with oppressed and privileged identities (Azmitia et al., 2008). Thus, unpacking how individuals narrate experiences within and across groups is paramount in understanding identity at the level of the person (Dunlop, 2015). Using narrative and self-report measures, this study revealed how race/ethnicity and gender intersect and may inform class identity. However, additional work is needed that assesses subjective perceptions of social class directly in relation to race/ethnicity and gender.

Shifting to discussion of social class awareness narratives, participants who engaged in higher meaning making in stories about social class reported lower life

satisfaction. At the same time, social class awareness narratives tended to be more negative, overall. While previous research finds that greater meaning making of negative relative to positive events is more beneficial for well-being (Adler et al., 2015; McAdams et al., 2001; McLean et al., 2020), the *type* of meaning made (e.g., positive relative to negative; Graci et al., 2018) may be a critical determinant in this relationship. In addition, characteristics of the context and the person have been found to impact relations between meaning making and adjustment (McLean & Mansfield, 2010). For example, when making meaning of negative past experiences, researchers found that greater external locus of control among inner-city African American girls with low socioeconomic status was associated with increased depressive symptoms (Sales et al., 2013). In this way, meaning making can come to reflect increased rumination regarding negative social class experiences as opposed to resolution. Participants in this dissertation identified primarily with racial/ethnic minority groups (82%) and reported lower objective social class (44% of participants reported parental income lower than $50,001 and 60% of participants reported parental education = High school graduate, general education diploma, or some college). It may be that lived experiences within a marginalized group increase awareness of systematic inequalities that influence social class. This is evident within participants' social class awareness narratives, wherein mention of how race/ethnicity and gender compound challenges with social class was often present. For example, in their social class awareness narrative, one Latino participant with lower objective social class narrated how their race/ethnicity and social class overlapped,

> In my neighborhood, I saw a common theme that Hispanic kids and kids from my neighborhood, were kind of living in similar scenarios. We were kind of low on money, and every kid that I went to school with had similar shoes. Whereas when I went to go play soccer, I was able to see kids living in big houses, having new shoes. I started to take account like, whoa, maybe it's a product of my environment. Maybe it's the city that I come from. I started to ask more questions. That's where I decided to become more aware of like, why is it the people in my school are living in similar shoes, whereas I go a city down and kids they're not living in the same shoes as I am.

This may also explain why greater perceived distance between identity domains assessed via the III corresponded with adaptive narrative themes in the social class awareness and gender salient narratives (i.e., greater connection to group and more positive valence). Challenges that might arise based on intersections of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class may be less salient to those who compartmentalize these identity domains. In this way, greater perceived distance between identity domains may have been indicative of lower levels of ego development among emerging adults in this study (Schachter, 2004).

Developmental theory and research indicate that emerging adults are in the midst of major identity work (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1994; Katsiaficas et al., 2015). In the realm of personality, this is evident through an increased focus on change and transition within emerging adults' goals and narratives (McAdams & Olson, 2010; Wilkinson & Dunlop, 2019). By contrast, older adults tend to emphasize stability and coherence within their stories (McLean, 2008). Thus, the emerging adults studied in this dissertation may

be exploring how race/ethnicity, gender, and social class function independently and in tandem. While greater separation between identity domains related with adaptive narrative themes, compartmentalizing these domains may not be conducive to a coherent identity over time. Additional research is needed that examines how perceived distance between identity domains functions in a sample of older adults from diverse socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, and gender groups.

In addition to the developmental context, the UCR context may have also influenced relations between distance and adaptive narrative themes. According to social identity theory, underrepresentation within a particular context can lead to increased salience of marginalized identity domains (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Considering over half of UCR students are Asian American or Hispanic/Latinx and from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (in terms of family income and education; UCR Institutional Research, 2018), it is possible that connections between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class were less salient (but see Syed, 2015 for discussion of "hot" and "cold" contexts, pp. 36-38). Of the three identity domains assessed here, the least is known about narratives pertaining to social class (but see Azmitia et al., 2008; Radmacher & Azmitia, 2013). Although this dissertation provided insight into how features of social class narratives corresponded with psychosocial adjustment and were relevant to identity within and across domains, future research should assess how the content and correlates of social class narratives differ across time and contexts.

Lastly, relations with themes in the intersectional awareness narrative indicated that these stories may inform well-being and be important for understanding intersecting

aspects of identity. In other words, directly examining the content, structure, and process of intersectional narratives, provided insight into adjustment and identity development (Lilgendahl, 2015). In particular, meaning making of intersectional narratives was particularly important for aspects of racial/ethnic and gender identity (i.e., racial/ethnic belonging and female centrality). Thus, the way people story intersectional experiences has implications for identity within and across domains. Future research should include a measure of class identity to determine whether stories about intersectional experiences relate directly with this identity domain. Researchers are encouraged to use qualitative responses to construct a self-report measure of class identity that best captures "affiliation with social class and the meaning class holds for one's sense of self" (Radmacher & Azmitia, 2013). Measurement construction would ideally occur among a sample of participants with diverse socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, and gender identities.

Interestingly, themes in intersectional awareness narratives (i.e., meaning making and perceived connection) were also uniquely associated with gender centrality among women. This is consistent with previous research indicating that women may be particularly attuned to connections between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class (Juan et al., 2016). Narrating greater perceived connections between identity domains and making more meaning of such connections may enhance the perceived importance of gender to identity among women. While constructing narratives about intersecting aspects of identity can be challenging (Azmitia et al., 2013; Galliher et al., 2017; Juan et al., 2016), these findings reveal that stories of intersectional narratives may inform adjustment as well as understanding of identity within and across domains.

RQ3: Meaning Making Across Narrative Prompts

In response to RQ3, I found the average score of meaning making across narrative prompts was not related with self-reported measures of psychosocial adjustment or identity. This lack of relations may have occurred for at least two reasons. Firstly, variability in narrative identity based on prompt type may have undermined the predictive ability of aggregated scores of meaning making across narrative prompts. Previous research indicates that certain narrative prompts may produce stories that are more-or-less related to measures of psychosocial adjustment and identity (McLean et al., 2020). For example, Adler et al. (2015) found narrative themes within stories about negative as opposed to positive experiences were particularly important for mental health trajectories among mid-life adults. Additionally, McLean et al. (2017a) discussed how consistency in certain narrative themes may be more important for certain types of stories relative to others. For example, it is adaptive for participants to consistently narrate resolutions of negative events; however, making meaning within turning point narratives may not always be beneficial. In this way, meaning making may have been more adaptive *within* narratives about race/ethnicity, gender, and social class, rather than across. Future research is needed that sheds light on how different narrative themes function within and across stories of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class and how prompt-level variability may impact relations with psychosocial adjustment and identity. This may require advanced analytic techniques, such as structural equation modeling (SEM) that is able to account for how narratives are nested within prompt type (e.g., McLean et al., 2020).

Secondly, nuances in the theme of meaning making may have masked how average scores of this narrative theme across prompts related with psychosocial adjustment and identity. In the present dissertation, meaning making included instances when the participant gained *positive* as well as *negative* insight that influenced their understanding of the self, others, or the world. Previous research has demonstrated that different aspects of meaning making are differentially associated with well-being outcomes. For example, Graci and colleagues (2018) identified four components of meaning making including positive and negative processing, which each corresponded with lower and higher distress about traumatic experiences, respectively. Further, Sales et al. (2013) found that certain types of meaning making resemble rumination as opposed to resolution and are related with increased depressive symptoms. To best understand the role of meaning making within and across narratives about race/ethnicity, gender, and social class, additional research is needed that disentangles different forms of meaning making. It is also the case that meaning making is traditionally associated with growth and maturity as opposed to global positive affect, which may have made it difficult to detect relations with the indicators of adjustment included in this study (King et al., 2000). Thus, future work should also examine relations between meaning making and indicators of eudaimonic well-being (e.g., increased maturity, growth, wisdom; Bauer et al., 2018) within and across racial/ethnic, gender, and social class narratives.

RQ4: Mean Differences in Perceived Connection of Identity Domains

Lastly, with regard to RQ4, no mean differences were noted in perceived connection within the intersectional awareness narrative based on race/ethnicity, gender,

and social class. However, there were differences in the novel measures I developed for this dissertation (i.e., III, IOC) based on these identity domains. To begin, conflict between identity domains, measured using the III, was higher among Latinx relative to Asian American participants. Previous research indicates increased salience of a marginalized identity domain may heighten perceptions of adverse experiences associated with that domain (e.g., racial/ethnic discrimination; Sellers et al., 1998; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Thus, connections between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class may have been more salient among Latinx participants and led to greater perceived conflict between these identity domains. Increased salience of these identity domains may stem from perceived cultural expectations among Latinx individuals (Wilkinson & Dunlop, 2020b). Recent research found that many Latinx emerging adults reported deviating from perceived expectations of their racial/ethnic group by attending college rather than beginning serious romantic relationships, becoming married, or having children (Westberg, 2022). In this way, expectations pertaining to race/ethnicity may be intertwined with gender and social class for Latinx participants. Perceived pressure to conform to group expectations and stereotypes may lead to greater perceived conflict between these identity domains (Syed & McLean, 2020).

In contrast, distance between identity domains measured using the III was higher among Asian American relative to Latinx participants. As previously mentioned, distance between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class may have served a protective function by minimizing perceived challenges that may result from intersecting identities. For Asian American participants, compartmentalizing these identity domains may have also been a

form of resistance to the model minority stereotype (Yip et al., 2021). As a case in point, cognitive separation of race/ethnicity and social class may reflect resistance towards stereotypes that pressure Asian Americans to pursue professions in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM; Cooc & Kim, 2021). While lower distance and conflict between heritage and national identities are found to be adaptive in research on bicultural identity integration (e.g., Hong et al., 2000), findings of this dissertation indicate that there are divergent implications of these constructs in the context of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class.

In addition to differences in the III based on race/ethnicity, the III also differed on the basis of gender. Specifically, men reported greater distance between identity domains relative to women. Overall, findings of this dissertation indicated that men may have a less developed understanding of their intersecting identities relative to women. This is further evidenced by mean differences in the Identity Overlap Circle measure (IOC), which showed women perceived greater overlap between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class relative to men. As women are encouraged to elaborate more on relational domains in narratives (Fivush et al., 2000; Lilgendahl & McAdams, 2011), they may experience greater encouragement (or pressure) to explore and connect race/ethnicity, gender, and social class. They may also simply possess a higher threshold for perceived connection of these identity domains based on interconnected experiences of racism, sexism, and classism (Crenshaw, 1990). In contrast, men may be less apt at engaging with inherently relational identity domains and/or experience greater discomfort exploring how their male privilege may impact other aspects of the self. These findings

highlight the need for future research examining gender differences in narratives about race/ethnicity, gender, and social class (see McLean & Breen, 2009; McLean et al., 2017b). In addition, these findings stress the need for interventions and trainings that encourage identity work and advocacy among individuals with privileged identities (see Helms, 1993 for similar contention in the context of privilege associated with Whiteness).

Finally, the III was also found to vary on the basis of objective social class. I found individuals with lower social class perceived greater conflict between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class. As underrepresentation leads to greater salience of marginalized identities and increased identity work (Galliher et al., 2017; Juan et al., 2016; Syed et al., 2011), it may be that individuals with lower social class think more about how their class relates with other aspects of their identities. In contrast, I found that individuals with higher objective social class perceived greater distance between identity domains relative to individuals with lower social class. As was potentially the case for men, greater separation between identity domains may protect the person from feelings of guilt that arise from a privileged identity status. Individuals with privileged identities may perceive lower connections between identity domains due to a lower overall need (or desire) to engage in identity work around these domains (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Still, identity domains do not exist in a vacuum, and it is important to note that a privileged social class does not translate to privilege in other domains. For example, racial/ethnic minority individuals with higher social class may experience greater difficulty reconciling privilege felt on the basis of social class with experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination. Future research is needed that explicitly compares the content of

racial/ethnic, gender, and social class narratives between individuals with particularly high and low levels social class. This may shed light on why perceived distance between identity domains was greater among individuals with higher social class.

Limitations and Broad Recommendations

Although this study possessed a number of strengths, it is important to review its limitations and provide broad recommendations for future research in this area. The present sample was diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class. However, it was composed of college-going emerging adults who are overrepresented in identity research (Mitchell et al., 2021). Future work is needed that examines how the phenomenological experience of intersecting identity unfolds and relates differentially with adjustment and indicators of identity throughout the life span and in non-college attending individuals. Such work would benefit from the consideration of additional identity domains including nationality, immigration status, and dis/ability, which were not considered in the present study. An additional characteristic of these participants that may have influenced the results of this study is the UCR context. As discussed, UCR students in this study were uniquely diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class. In many ways, this makes UCR an ideal place to conduct research at the intersection of these identity domains, as it increases representation of diverse perspectives. At the same time, greater representation of minority groups may render findings of this study less generalizable to contexts with lower diversity in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class. This is evidenced by previous research finding that racial/ethnic minority students make sense of experiences with race/ethnicity

differently when they are the numeric minority in a particular context (see Ethier & Deaux, 1994; French et al., 2006). Additional research is needed that examines intersections between identity domains beyond UCR psychology students.

While participants in this study were diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, due to the sample sizes of each racial/ethnic group, I was only able to examine differences in narrative themes and perceived connection of identity domains between Asian American (n = 75) and Latinx (n = 71) participants. In future work, researchers should seek to recruit larger samples of additional racial/ethnic groups. Ideally, this research would also ask participants what race/ethnicity they identity with using both forced-choice assessment (as demonstrated in this study) as well as coded open-text responses (Mitchell et al., 2018). This approach may lead to more precise identification of differences in narrative identity, and perceived connection of intersecting identities, based on race/ethnicity (Brittian et al., 2013).[7]

This dissertation was also somewhat limited in its assessment of narrative identity. Though this study revealed how meaning making functioned within narratives about race/ethnicity, gender, and social class, it was limited in its capacity to demonstrate how this theme functions *across* narratives from these identity domains. This may be because I did not quantify different forms of meaning making (e.g., positive versus negative meaning) within participants' narratives. Quantifying different forms of meaning making within narratives may be essential for identifying how average scores of

[7] The present study used forced-choice assessment to sort participants into mono-racial categories in order to compare narrative themes and measures of perceived connection between Asian American and Latinx participants.

meaning making across identity domains function in relation to adjustment and identity (Graci et al., 2018; McLean et al., 2020). In addition to examining different forms of meaning making, narrative identity research examining intersections between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class would benefit from quantifying themes of agency (e.g., power, status, control) and communion (e.g., unity, connectedness, harmony). This may provide insight into gendered pathways of storying intersecting identities (Fivush et al., 2000) and clarify the role of communion in stories told by individuals from marginalized groups (Syed & McLean, 2021). Capturing communion in stories evinced by those from marginalized groups may also provide insight into how individuals resist the status quo and potentially initiate cultural change. Ultimately, examining how additional narrative themes manifest in stories about race/ethnicity, gender, and social class with an intersectional framework will advance the study of narrative identity.

Examining the role of prompt type in eliciting certain narrative themes is also essential for future research investigating intersecting aspects of identity. While the role of prompt type was not examined here, it may have impacted what participants storied and how features of stories corresponded with psychosocial adjustment and identity (McLean et al., 2017a; McLean et al., 2020). Indeed, previous research indicates that narrative themes (i.e., redemption, contamination, agency) within stories about low-point experiences and physical health challenges, specifically, predicted better mental health trajectories over a four-year period (Adler et al., 2015). In this way, it may be of particular import to examine how narrative themes function within and across stories about *challenges* in the racial/ethnic, gender, and social class domains. The way

individuals story challenges with these identity domains may provide important insight into perceptions of intersecting aspects of identity as well as health disparities associated with race/ethnicity and social class. Overall, prompt type may represent an important and often excluded predictor of variation in narrative identity. Future research is needed that interrogates the role of prompt type in stories within and across race/ethnicity, gender, and social class.

Refinement of self-reported measures of intersecting identities is also recommended for future research. While I developed two novel self-report measures (viz. III, IOC) in this dissertation to examine intersecting aspects of identity, additional research is needed to further validate these measures and determine how they might function in different populations. Findings of this dissertation indicated that distance and conflict (measured via the III) functioned differently regarding the relationship between race/ethnicity, gender, and social class relative to national and heritage cultures. Additional research is needed to determine how and why these constructs may function differently based on identity domains. Research examining intersecting aspects of identity would also benefit from greater consideration of intragroup variability. One way to do this would be to examine correlations between perceived connection of identity domains and psychological outcomes *within* rather than across racial/ethnic, gender, and social class groups. This would shed light on within group variability in how perceived connection of identity domains relates with psychosocial adjustment and identity. Such an assessment would also encourage the use of an intersectional framework for which consideration of heterogeneity within identity domains is essential (Cole, 2009).

Conclusion

This dissertation examined the content, structure, and process of narrative identity in relation to measures of psychosocial adjustment and identity within and across the domains of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class. An intersectional framework was used to reveal how social position based on these identity domains impacted narratives about lived experiences as well as psychological outcomes (Syed & Ajayi, 2018). This research contributed to the study of contextualized narrative identity (Dunlop, 2015) and expanded the multi-method assessment of personality using novel self-report and behavioral measures. Findings shed light on how the content, structure, and process of narratives about race/ethnicity, gender in social class relate with adjustment and identity development. This may be relevant to understanding educational and health disparities, which are rooted in systematic marginalization of certain groups in the United States (Abo-Zena et al., 2019). Ultimately, this research represents one step towards integrating the narrative identity approach and intersectional framework to best understand how lived experiences and individual identities are guided by larger cultural systems and stories.

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Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Over the next hour, we will discuss many important experiences from your life. Please know that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, and you are not expected to respond in a certain way. We are interested in your understanding of your life and you are the expert on this topic.

Our conversation will include questions about ethnicity/race, gender, and social class. **For each question, please try to think of a specific experience that addresses the prompt.** If there is a question that you do not wish to answer, please feel free to tell me that you would prefer to skip the question. To ensure that we get to know you as much as possible, I would like you to spend about five minutes or so responding to each question. Don't worry too much about the time, though. I will let you know when we have about a minute left before we should move on to the next question. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Great, then let's get started!

Self-Defining [5 minutes]

1. My first question concerns the recall of a special kind of personal memory called a self-defining memory. To understand best what a self-defining memory is, imagine you have just met someone you like very much and are going for a walk together. Each of you is very committed to helping the other get to know the "Real You". You are not trying to play a role or to strike a pose. While, inevitably, we say things that present a picture of ourselves that might not be completely accurate, imagine that you are making every effort to be honest. In the course of the conversation, you describe a memory that you feel conveys powerfully how you have come to be the person you currently are. It is precisely this memory, which you tell the other person and simultaneously repeat to yourself, that constitutes a self-defining memory.

I would now like you to please describe this memory. Please be as detailed as possible. What happened? Who was there? How did this event make you feel? Why is this event important to you?

[If participant has difficulty with prompt: what moment would you describe to help someone else (or someone in your life) understand who you are?]

Ethnicity/Race

Next, I would like to spend some time discussing your experiences as a member of your ethnic/racial group.

2. First, can you please describe your ethnic-racial background for me? **[1-2 minutes]**

3. Next, please describe a specific experience from your life when you became particularly aware of your ethnic-racial group. Please describe this event in as much detail as possible. When did this event occur? What were you thinking and feeling?

[Follow up prompt: This is not necessarily the first time you became aware of your ethnicity/race but may be an experience from life when your ethnicity/race was particularly salient to you.]

Did this event affect what you think about or how you view your own ethnicity and race or ethnicity and race in general? **[5 minutes total for entire question]**

4. Thank you for sharing. Next, I would like you to describe a specific challenge that you have faced as a member of your ethnic-racial group. For the purposes of this prompt, please try to identify the single greatest challenge that you feel you have faced as a member of
your ethnic-racial group. When did this event occur? What were you thinking and feeling? Why is this event important to you? **[5 minutes total for entire question]**

Gender
You are doing great! Thank you for the responses you have shared so far. Next, I would like to spend some time discussing your experiences with gender.

5. First, can you please describe your gender or gender identification? In other words, when someone asks you about your gender, what do you say? **[1-2 minutes]**

6. **Original Wording:** Next, please describe a specific experience from your life when you became particularly aware of your gender or gender identification. Please describe this event in as much detail as possible. When did this event occur? What were you thinking and feeling?

Final Wording: Next please describe a salient memory that is relevant to your gender or gender identification. This may be a positive memory or a negative memory, it only matters that this event be an emotionally important experience for you. Please describe this experience in as much detail as possible. Who was there? What were you thinking and feeling? Why is this memory important to you? **[5 minutes total for entire question]**

[rephrase for participant based on their gender identification - e.g., please describe a specific experience from your life when you became particularly aware that you were a {woman}, that you were {female}].

Did this event affect what you think about or how you view your own gender or gender in general?

7. Thank you for sharing. Next, I would like you to describe a specific challenge that you have faced as a person who identifies with your gender. For the purposes of this prompt, please try to identify the single greatest challenge that you feel you have faced as a person who identifies with your gender. When did this event occur? What were you thinking and feeling? Why is this event important to you? **[5 minutes total for entire question]**

[again, may need to reframe based on their gender identification. Remind the participant there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, and they do not necessarily need to provide a discrimination experience but any challenge they may have faced that pertains to their gender or, perhaps, genders role in our society].

Social Class/Economic Background

Thank you so much for all your responses! Next, I would like to discuss some experiences about
your economic background or social class.

8. To begin, can you please describe your economic background or social class? **[1-2 minutes]**

[For example, do you feel that you align most closely with the lower/working, middle, or upper class?]

9. Next, can you please describe a specific experience from your life when you became particularly aware of your economic background or social class? Please describe this event in as much detail as possible. When did this event occur? What were you thinking and feeling?

Did this event affect what you think about or how you view your own economic background and social class or economic backgrounds and social class in general? **[5 minutes total for entire question]**

10. Next, please describe a specific challenge that you have faced as a member of your economic background or social class. For the purposes of this prompt, please try to identify the single greatest challenge that you have faced as a member of your economic background or
social class. When did this event occur? What were you thinking and feeling? Why is this event important to you? **[5 minutes total for entire question]**

We have almost reached the end of the interview! Thank you so much for your time and responses. I have a few more questions for you, which ask you to think about the self across each of the domains that we have talked about.

Intersectional Awareness
I have asked you questions pertaining to your life as a member of your ethnic-racial group, gender, and economic background. However, there are many experiences that are relevant across these social groups. I would like to take a moment to consider how you see yourself across these social groups.

11. So far, I've asked you questions about gender, ethnicity/race, and social class and now I'm wondering if you can describe a salient moment from your life that involves at least two of these domains. For example, this may be an experience where your gender and ethnicity/race were both relevant, or maybe your ethnicity/race and social class. Like many of the prompts we've worked through, the most important thing is that this experience be emotionally meaningful to you. When did this event occur? Who was there? What were you thinking and feeling? Do you feel that your identities were harmonious or opposing? Why is this event important to you? **[5 minutes total for entire question]**

12. Thinking back over your life, please identify a specific experience that describes who you are as a member of your ethnicity/race, gender, and economic background or social class. For example, a person who identifies as Black, female, and middle class may describe an experience that defines who she is across each of these domains. If you feel that your life contains no such event, then describe a particular episode in your life that comes closer than any other to describing how you think of yourself as a member of each of these groups. When did this event occur? What were you thinking and feeling? Do you feel that your identities were harmonious or opposing? Why is this event important to you? **[5 minutes total for entire question]**

[If participant struggles: Repeat the prompt but with their descriptions of their ethnicity/race, gender, and social class.]

Thank you so much for answering all my questions and for your time spent completing this interview! I will now review the debriefing form with you

Appendix B

Confirmatory Factor Analyses With One Factor Solution

Intersecting Identities Inventory Confirmatory Factor Analysis Including Item 8

	Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Social Class	**Race/Ethnicity and Gender**	**Race/Ethnicity and Social Class**	**Gender and Social Class**
1. I do not see my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] as connected	.76	.72	.66	.70
2. I keep my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] separate	.69	.74	.72	.83
3. I feel as though my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] are connected	-.72	-.84	-.83	-.72
4. I do not blend my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*]	.73	.52	.62	.77
5. I am conflicted between the way my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] does things	.47	.37	.24	.39
6. I feel caught between the expectations of my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*]	.45	.55	.38	.38
7. I don't feel caught between the expectations of my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*]	-.53	-.48	-.35	-.47
8. I feel that my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] are incompatible	.00	.17	.03	.00

CFI	.56	.67	.44	.54
RMSEA	.27 [.24, .30]	.21 [.18, .24]	.30 [.27, .33]	.29 [.26, .32]

Note. For each possible combination of identity domains, participants were instructed: "Here are a series of questions about the way you may think about the relation between your [*ethnicity/race, gender, and social class*]. Please rate the degree to which you agree with each statement" and provided a five-point Likert type scale, ranging from "1" (Strongly disagree) to "5" (Strongly agree). Items 1-4 represent distance versus blendedness and items 5-8 represent conflict versus harmony. N = 173-175 for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (one factor specified).

Intersecting Identities Inventory Confirmatory Factor Analysis Excluding Item 8

	Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Social Class	**Race/Ethnicity and Gender**	**Race/Ethnicity and Social Class**	**Gender and Social Class**
1. I do not see my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] as connected	.76	.72	.66	.70
2. I keep my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] separate	.70	.74	.72	.83
3. I feel as though my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] are connected	-.73	-.83	-.83	-.72
4. I do not blend my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*]	.73	.53	.62	.77
5. I am conflicted between the way my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*] does things	.47	.37	.23	.39
6. I feel caught between the expectations of my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*]	.45	.54	.37	.38
7. I don't feel caught between the expectations of my [*race/ethnicity, gender, and social class*]	-.53	-.48	-.35	-.47
CFI	.58	.67	.47	.55
RMSEA	.31 [.28, .34]	.21 [.18, .24]	.34 [.31, .38]	.34 [.31, .38]

Note. For each possible combination of identity domains, participants were instructed: "Here are a series of questions about the way you may think about the relation between your [*ethnicity/race, gender, and social class*]. Please rate the degree to which you agree with each statement" and provided a five-point Likert type scale, ranging from "1" (Strongly disagree) to "5" (Strongly agree). Items 1-4 represent distance versus blendedness and items 5-8 represent conflict versus harmony. N = 173-175 for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (one factor specified).