ABSTRACT

BEHNEMAN, CARA N. Exploring Identity in Jewish College Students: Giving Voice to a Struggle. (Under the direction of Alyssa Bryant).

The purpose of this study is to explore identity in Jewish college students by exploring Jewish college students' understanding of their own identity. The present research is based on literature surveying cultural and religious identity, particularly in college students. This study uses qualitative methods to explore the experiences of four Jewish college students at one university. A case study approach was used to explore the importance of campus culture on identity. The findings revealed the importance of cultural identity to the student participants. Religious Jewish identity was generally less salient to these participants. The participants also focused on connectivity as a defining characteristic of Jewish identity. This study explores manifestations of Jewish identity, specifically, involvement in Jewish activities, social activism, family interactions, and expressing doubt. The findings are explored in relation to the campus context at this specific institution, the negotiations of Jewish identity in a larger context, and the influence of peers. This research found that although students understand their identity as primarily cultural and secondarily religious, the two aspects of identity are inextricably linked.

Exploring Identity in Jewish College Students:
Giving Voice to a Struggle

by
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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science

Higher Education Administration

Raleigh, North Carolina
2007

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family for their endless love and support. Thank you for giving me the *koach* (strength) to continue.

BIOGRAPHY

I grew up in a small town south of Annapolis, Maryland as the youngest of three children. I graduated from Southern High School of Harwood, MD in May 2000.   I attended University of Maryland, College Park for my bachelor's degree in Women Studies. After graduating in 2004, I worked for a year in a college student housing facility. My work there piqued my interested in working with college students. In 2005, I began my Master's program at North Carolina State University, where I worked as a Residence Director from July 2005 through May 2006. It was a challenging and rewarding experience, which further developed my love for the energy and diversity of experience that work in universities offers. After interning in the Dean of Students office during the Spring of 2006, I worked as a Residence Director at Meredith College from August 2006 to May 2007. In addition to my Residence Director role at Meredith College, I worked in the Career Center, the Academic Advising office, and advised the student judicial board.   I have accepted a position at the University of Arizona working with Jewish students, where I advise multiple student groups, engage uninvolved students, and work to develop Jewish identity among the students on campus.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Imagine arriving at college knowing you want to connect with campus life, but not knowing how, seeking to maintain a connection to those traditions that have always been important to you, or hoping to connect to something you have always been missing. Think of what it would be like to have an aspect of your identity that you have always considered cultural treated as only a religious identity. Consider the external pressures to develop a Jewish identity, get involved with other Jewish students on campus, and date/marry a Jewish person. These experiences capture many aspects that are common to Jewish students when they arrive at college, in addition to other traditional college woes about academics, finances, and social scenes.

Current research in the field of student development provides a limited understanding of the identity development of Jewish college students. As interest in college students' religious and spiritual development rises, it becomes increasingly important to understand the experiences of Jewish students on campus. Research suggests that Jewish students experience college in different ways than non-Jewish students (Sax, 2002). Literature also shows that Jewish adults experience both cultural identities and spiritual or religious identities. Recent research on college students has concentrated on religious and spiritual development as well as cultural identity development. However, we lack an understanding of the relationship between these two identities in Jewish college students. Research has shown that students with connected ethnic/racial identity and religious identities express their identities in ways other than religious observance (Sanchez & Carter, 2005). It has also been

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illustrated that spirituality and religion are separate though related, and that spirituality is also expressed through methods other than religious observance (Love, 2002). Thus, further research is necessary to understand the relationship between cultural identity and spirituality. The literature indicates as well the need for further research to deepen our understanding of Jewish students' identity development.

Background

In recent years the study of religious and spiritual development in college students has increased significantly (Lee, 2002; Chickering & Dalton, 2006; Bryant, Choi, & Yasuno, 2003). Prior to this surge, spirituality was mostly ignored in student development literature. However, many researchers in higher education and other fields have explored cultural identity development (Moss & Faux, 2006; Yinger, 1976; Sales & Saxe, 2006). Multiple identity dimensions are also beginning to be explored by an increasing number of researchers (Reynolds & Pope, 1991; Jones & McEwen, 2000). Student development research offers evidence that college is an important developmental time in students' lives because students are forming the identities they will carry into adulthood (Evans, Forney, Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

Historically, Jewish students have had to struggle to find their place on college campuses. American higher education began as a religious institution to educate men to become clergy (Rudolph, 1990). Over time, the religious nature of higher education faded and admission was extended to non-Christian students. Yet, Jews were often granted only limited access to higher education. Quotas, character tests, and interviews reduced the number of Jews at colleges and universities (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997). When Jewish

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students did attend institutions of higher education, they were often denied access to extracurricular activities including fraternities and sororities. Jewish students responded by increasing their academic involvements and by establishing Jewish social and academic organizations. Jewish students tended to "stick together" on campuses. Some Jews were afraid that the creation of Jewish organizations would reinforce the clannish stereotypes about Jewish students. By the mid-twentieth century, Jewish students assimilated completely into the campus culture (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997). Jewish students today remain a minority on campus. While they do not experience the institutional discrimination of the past, Jewish students still struggle to find their place within the larger campus community.

As the student affairs profession was developing in the 1960s and 1970s, student affairs took on the responsibility of furthering student development holistically (Evans, Forney, Guido-Brito, 1998). To do so, professionals need to have a full view of students' constantly changing identities. Administrators also need to recognize that the students with whom they work experience an ethos about religion and higher education; that is to say that each campus has a particular culture about religion on their campus and administrators will benefit from becoming familiar with this culture and helping students to navigate it. As such, it is necessary to become familiar with the nuances of this culture on the campus (Evans et al).

Jewish students are struggling with communal and familial pressure, fearing the lack of Jewish continuity. Literature reveals cultural fears that Judaism is dying (Ruttenberg, 2001). Ruttenberg's work illustrates that this is, at the same time, true and untrue. The

Judaism of the past, where Jewish identity is based on religious observance in a secluded Jewish world, might be dying. But Jews in their twenties and thirties are experiencing a new type of Jewish identity, a largely secular one that occurs within the larger American culture, in which they find meaning (Ruttenberg). This gives way to an experience for Jewish students that differs from that of their parents. Students are seeking to negotiate this struggle between secular identity and religious identity.

Throughout the history of higher education in America, religion has played differing roles in the mission of colleges and universities, and consequently, in the role of student affairs professionals. The current culture of higher education recognizes the importance of promoting religious identity development in college students, as seen by the large amount of research on this topic. Yet, similar to the experiences of the past, Jewish college students are still struggling with their experience in a way tangential to the overall discussion of religion in higher education.

Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this case study is to explore an understanding of identity in Jewish college students by exploring their understanding of their own identity. In doing so, it is necessary to bring together literature from both religious and spiritual development theorists and cultural and racial identity development theorists. This study adds to the larger body of literature by addressing issues that have previously been studied separately and without specific attention to Jewish college students. This research can be used to inform the practice of student affairs professionals when interacting with Jewish students on college campuses.

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This research seeks to address religious and ethnic identity in Jewish college students in a unified manner as they have previously been explored separately. The current study serves to give a voice to the struggle experienced by Jewish college students to negotiate the many dimensions of identity they experience. In doing so, this research will fill a gap in the literature as current research fails to provide a full understanding of Jewish student identity.

A number of private, not-for-profit organizations work with Jewish students on campus to provide various services. However, student affairs professionals also have a responsibility to further understand the identity of Jewish college students, as it will help them to better serve these students. By informing themselves about the identity issues Jewish are encountering, student affairs professionals will be able to provide better counseling supporting and programming opportunities for Jewish students. The current study will improve professionals' understanding of Jewish student identity.

Research Questions

Literature shows us that Jewish identity includes both religious and cultural identity. Yet we lack an understanding of both the specifics of this relationship and the way this relationship plays out in college students. The questions guiding this study are: How do Jewish college students understand their cultural identity and spiritual/religious? How does the current understanding of identity development in the literature, both spiritual/religious and cultural, apply to Jewish college students?

Delimitations and Limitations

The study is limited because the students were participating in a program aimed at developing their Jewish identity. Therefore, these participants are not a representative

sample of all, or even most, Jewish college students. However, the students do provide a general understanding of identity in Jewish college students. Another limitation is the brevity of the study. Ideally, a case study would follow the case over an extended period of time (Creswell, 1998). However, due to constraints of time, resources, and student commitment, the study was limited to a brief time period of two months. Yet I tried to spend a distinct amount of time with each student, between two and four hours each, to gain an understanding of his or her perspective.

The findings of this study are limited by inadequate language. In spite of the definitions provided within this study to clarify meaning, there is not a universally accepted meaning behind words like Jewish identity, Jewish, and Judaism. Although participants were asked to explain their own definitions of such words, they often contradicted these definitions when explaining other ideas. I have tried to account for the limitations of language by providing definition of terms and by unpacking participants' understanding by interrelating their statements.

Definition of Terms

Hamsa: a hamsa is a Judaic symbol of a palm and five outstretched fingers, which is considered a sign of protection that can ward off evil (The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, 2007).

Kashrut, kosher, or keeping kosher: referring to the larger body of Jewish dietary laws requiring separation of dairy and meat products, including restrictions about which animals can be eaten, as well as prescribed methods for slaughtering and preparing animals.

Pogroms: an attack or series of attacks on the Jewish community (The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2007), common in Europe pre-World War II, often requiring Jews to leave their homes and move to other areas.

Reform Movement: Modern movement of Judaism originating in 18th century Europe that regards Judaism as a rational religion adaptable to modern needs and sensitivities. The ancient traditions and laws, such as kashrut, are considered historical relics, but ethical commandments are still upheld. This is one of the largest movements in modern Judaism (The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2007). "Reform Judaism affirms the central tenets of Judaism - God, Torah and Israel - even as it acknowledges the diversity of Reform Jewish beliefs and practices" (Union for Reform Judaism, 2005).

Tikkun olam — repairing the world — is central to Reform Judaism (Union for Reform Judaism).

Shabbat: also known as the Sabbath, this is the seventh day of the week, which falls from Friday at sundown to Saturday at sundown. It is a day of rest as prescribed by the Torah, and

expanded on by the rabbis.   It is a day for joyous celebration, renewal, and study of Torah (The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2007).

Shabbat dinner: It is traditional to have a ritual dinner after services on the Sabbath.

Torah: The Hebrew Bible, specifically referring to the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Tzedek: loosely translated as social justice. This is reflective of the Jewish commandment to repair the world, which is known as tikkun olam.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

A person's identity is made of many dimensions. "Religion provides the overarching framework for one's worldview and moral opinions, offering insight into human drives, hopes, and reasoning, as well as perceptions of the self in relation to others and the physical world" (Lee, 2002, p. 279). Many authors point out that religion has been largely absent from discussions and research in higher education (Lee, 2002; Chickering & Dalton, 2006; Bryant, Choi & Yasuno, 2003). Because religion is an important aspect of the identity development and exploration that occurs in college, it merits further research. As Lee (2002) points out, religion is not a fixed framework; it is influenced by environments, experiences, and peers. College is likely the first time that students are confronted with ideas that differ from their previously held convictions, including their religious convictions. These new ideas are considered, often causing dissonance, which leads to development.

Because existing research lacks an understanding of identity development in Jewish college students, it is necessary to bring several bodies of literature together to fully appreciate the characteristics and experiences of this group. The following sections explore an overview of the American Jewish experience, literature on Jewish identity, Jewish college students, identity development theory, religious and spiritual identity development, and literature addressing ethnicity and religion collaboratively.

A Brief History of Jewish Experience in America

Central European and German Jewish immigrants came to America from 1820-1880. Jews left Germany during this time because, among other reasons, they were denied the right

to marry. Many also left because their profession of peddling became obsolete after the industrial revolution. These immigrants brought their profession of peddling with them to America.

Democratic ideas and social reform movements influenced these immigrants. Central European Jewish immigrants wanted to modernize Judaism through shorter services and English sermons.   As such, it was these Jews who began the Reform Movement (Sarna, 2004).

Central European immigrants started many charity and benevolent organizations. The creation of these organizations was a result of social circumstances at the time. There was growing anti-Semitism in the early nineteenth century, and gentiles began blaming Jews for putting an extra burden on resources. In an effort to combat this sentiment, German Jewish women began benevolent societies including schools, orphanages, and homes for the elderly so that Jews in need would not be a burden to the resources of the larger society. Most members of this movement were middle or upper class, which allowed them to not work and spend more time working with benevolent causes. Benevolent societies were also evidence of assimilation as benevolent societies were similarly common among gentile women (Hyman, 1997).

Eastern European Jewish immigrants came later, most between 1880 and 1910. The Eastern European Jews left Russia and other Eastern European countries to flee from pogroms and other forms of persecution. Men usually worked, either in factories or, more rarely, as peddlers. The family was a closely-knit economic unit and necessary to survival as most members of this migration were of lower socioeconomic status. Women were in charge

of the family's economy while the men were responsible for spirituality and religion. Among the Eastern European immigrants, men were more responsible than women for upholding and passing on Jewish education to future generations. These immigrants were also more traditionally religious than the Central European Jewish immigrants. This meant that women played a lesser role in religion overall and that assimilation was in some ways more difficult because these Eastern European Jews held on to many traditions, including the laws of kashrut and Shabbat (Hyman, 1997).

The Jewish immigrant experience began to change as Jewish interest in public higher education rose. Jewish culture places a high value on education (Wechsler, 1984). The whole family was involved in ensuring that the children, particularly the boys, received a strong education (Hartman & Hartman, 1996). The most important factor to impact Jewish interest in American higher education was the realization that the desirable careers were ones that required a higher degree (Wechsler, 1984). This was a result of a change in higher education from being parochial to being professionalized (Rudolph, 1990). Education was seen as the key to social mobility for immigrants. This was especially true for immigrant Jews who had been coming from czarist Russia where they were denied access to higher education (Wechsler, 1984). Between World Wars I and II, Jews experienced a significant amount of racial discrimination on college campuses including the policy of instituting admissions quotas (Wechsler). In the past sixty years, this discrimination has largely ceased. Education continues to play an important role in the Jewish community and most Jewish youths attend college (Sales and Saxe, 2006). By remaining part of their collective narrative, the historical

experience of Jews on campus may influence the experience of today's Jewish college students.

<center>Jewish Identity</center>

To begin a discussion about Jewish student identity it is necessary to first understand the unique way in which Judaism is both a religious and cultural identity. MacDonald-Dennis (2006) discusses Judaism in this complex way. Ethnic identity is helpful in understanding Jewish identity, as Jews share a sense of peoplehood. Racial positionality, including oppression and privilege, and ethnic identity are passed from one generation to another (MacDonald-Dennis). Ethnicity is most helpful to the discussion of Jewish identity by illuminating the connectedness Jews feel toward one another (MacDonald-Dennis). Jewish college students, like Jewish adults, reflect similar feelings of connection with other Jewish students (Saxe & Sales, 2006). Research has found that Jewish identity is strengthened and sustained through Jewish education and practice (Saxe, Kadushin, Kelner, Rosen, & Yereslove, 2002). Both connectedness and Jewish education are important to Jewish students' self-understanding of identity.

MacDonald-Dennis (2006) proposed a developmental process of Jewish identity as a result of his study of Anti-Semitism, in which students traverse through five stages: (a) ethno-religious awareness, (b) acceptance/minimization, (c) awakening to historic and political consciousness of anti-Semitism, (d) rejection of Christian hegemony, and (e) redefinition. Ethno-religious awareness involves students becoming conscious of one's ethno-religious identity. The larger community in which they grew up influences this identity. That is, if they grew up in a predominantly Jewish area, they were more likely to

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identify as Jewish. Stage two, acceptance/minimization entails realizing that Jews are stereotyped and internalizing those ideas. In stage three, the individual realizes the social history of anti-Semitism characterizes awakening to historic and political consciousness of anti-Semitism. The fourth stage, rejection of Christian hegemony requires that the individual recognize that Christianity dominates society and rejects that domination. The final stage, redefinition necessitates that the individual move past their frustration with Christian hegemony and anti-Semitism to create a sense of one's own Jewish identity. Although specific to Jewish identity in response to Anti-Semitism, MacDonald-Dennis' work highlights the complex nature of Jewish identity and provides a framework that needs to be tested in future research as it is not tested in MacDonald-Dennis' work.

Research explores the complexity of Jewish identity in relation to the social standing of Jews in America. Biale (1998) discusses the role Jews had in helping create the concept of the American ideal of a melting pot, but, he says, Jews today are questioning whether they still have anything to contribute to the greater American identity. Biale suggests Jews want to be marked as both part of the majority culture and as different. "American Jews constitute a kind of intermediary ethnic group, one of the most quickly and thoroughly acculturated yet, … equally one of the most resistant to complete assimilation" (p. 31). Jews are now experiencing many different ways of being Jewish rather than a melting multiple identities together where one new identity might emerge (Biale). Contemporary Jews, unlike their ancestors, have the opportunity to pass as white; this affords Jews the choice of whether or not to express a Jewish identity at all (Biale). Thus, Jews choose when to convey a Jewish identity and when to convey another salient identity. Biale's work explains the unique

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position of Jewish identity in America, as well as illustrating the changes in the identity of the larger Jewish community.

Jewish College Students

A limited body of research exists to provide an understanding of Jewish college students. Current research suggests that Jewish college students behave somewhat differently on campuses than their non-Jewish colleagues. Jews are more likely to identify as politically liberal than their non-Jewish classmates (Sax, 2002). Jewish students are also reportedly less likely to attend organized religious services on regular basis (Sax, 2002). However, Jews are the most likely of any group on campus to attend religious services occasionally (Bryant, Yasuno, Choi, 2003).

Sales and Saxe (2006) conducted a study to understand campus climate and Jewish identity in college. The researchers come to this topic from a Jewish communal perspective, rather than from a higher education perspective. Yet, there is congruency between their work and research in the field of higher education. For example, like many other authors (Chickering & Dalton, 2006; Lee, 2002; Bryant et al, 2003), Sales and Saxe draw attention to the under-emphasized nature of religion and spirituality in campus life. The authors point out that while we have some literature about the enrollment of Jewish college students, we lack an understanding of the impact college has on the group. Sales and Saxe attempt to fill this gap with a mixed methods study exploring 20 campuses across the United States.

Saxe and Sales (2006) emphasize that campus climate affects Jewish identity. Climate is affected by the Jewish student community's size, strength, and reputation, as well as the role of Jewish studies, level of political discourse, and culture around the Israel-Palestinian

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conflict. Each of these aspects of campus climate affects identity in a way specific to the milieu on a given campus. When looking at multiethnic identity, Renn (2000) also found that campus culture plays a large role in a student's ability to become more comfortable with his or her own identity and to thus develop that identity. Further research is still necessary in this area.

Sales and Saxe (2006) explored the social nature of Jewish identity. Students tended to befriend others who are like them. This is reflected in Jewish students as well.   Jewish students explained that they felt a sense of understanding and connection to other Jews (Sales & Saxe). Not surprisingly, students were more likely to get involved in Jewish life on campus when they had a social network of Jewish friends. Sales and Saxe note the bidirectional nature of this finding: "having Jewish friends is both a cause and a result of involvement in Jewish activities" (p. 7).

Identity Development Theory

Judaism is comprised of both a religious and cultural ethnic identity. A discussion of cultural identity becomes necessary to understanding Jewish students. The theories explained here explore multiple identities; each discusses that identity comes from both within the self and is assigned by others. Sales and Saxe (2006) found that Jewish students speak of their multiple identities rather than their singular identity. The Jewish students in their study conveyed a desire to express at least two of their identities simultaneously. The following types of identity development theories thus illuminate this discussion of Jewish college students: cultural identity theory, multiracial identity theory, and multiple identities theory.

Cultural Identity Theory

As pointed out by MacDonald-Dennis (2006), Jewish identity is made up of both ethnic and religious identity. To understand the complex nature of ethnic Jewish identity, we must begin with a definition of general ethnic identity. Yinger (1976) offers, that ethnic identity is "a segment of larger society whose members are thought, by themselves or others, to have a common origin and to share segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which common origin and culture are significant ingredients" (p. 200).

Moss and Faux (2006) use cultural identity theory to attempt to understand social identity in college students. Cultural identity theory "reflects the ontological assumption that individuals enact multiple cultural identities constituted in and through discourse with others" (p. 22). Culture is seen as a social construction "where group members actively produce and reproduce culturally appropriate ways of interacting" (p. 22). Three components characterize cultural identity: (a) enactment that demonstrates group identity; (b) understanding what it takes to be a group member; and (c) performing social practices in a way acceptable to other group members. The authors point out that individuals create in-group/out-group concepts to maintain self and social identity. Students use labels to establish out-group membership (Moss & Faux, 2006).

Moss and Faux (2006) found that identity enactments establish a hierarchy among members of the larger identity group. This plays a role in the Jewish student community as some members may feel more or less Jewish than other members depending on their own or their parents' level of religiosity, membership, or involvement. Members within a group tend to use specific language to show their affiliation with that group (Moss & Faux). This can be

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seen in the Jewish community through the use of Yiddish or Hebrew words in English conversation. An action such as this identifies the speaker as both within the Jewish community and outside of the normative "white" community (Moss & Faux). Identity is "enacted, challenged, and reinforced" through avoval and ascription (Moss & Faux). Ascription is the identity assigned by others, both positive and negative, often based on stereotypes. Ascription is related to hierarchy within one's identity group, whereas avoval allows the student to express his or her own voice in his or her identity formation.

Many participants in the study described a feeling of having both a private and public identity (Moss & Faux, 2006). This finding was also reflected in Sales and Saxe's (2006) study as being part of the Jewish student experience, in that public identity is shown in activities such as Jewish organizations, and private identity is explored in home-based holiday practice. Whereas cultural and ethnic identity theories offer insight into the complex identity of Jewish college students, these arguments do not provide a complete understanding; multiracial identity theory yields further insight.

Multiracial Identity Theory

Renn (2000) looks at biracial and multiracial student identity development. She states that most racial identity theories only address students who identify as part of a singular race. She argues that students who exist in multiple identity groups "cannot engage in an immersion in one of their component cultures without putting aside...other aspects of their heritage" (p. 402). Renn goes on to explore models of identity development. She points out that many less successful models are stage based and progressive. The nature of Jewish identity is changing to include more multiple identities (Biale, 1998). Because of this recent

change, current college students are struggling with their identity in a way that incorporates these identities. Renn's theory offers insight into this struggle.

Renn (2000) found that it was highly important to students who identified as multiracial to have a space on campus. Participants defined space as both physical and psychological. "Access and inclusion in public spaces created opportunities to explore or to validate privately held ideas about identity" (Renn, p. 408). As Renn notes, having a space on campus promotes identity development in students by making them feel more comfortable. This feeling of comfortability promotes development in that it is difficult for students to develop if they feel attacked or uncomfortable. Students stated the importance of common knowledge of food, language, religion and cultural values, whereas lack of shared cultural understanding led to students not participating in a given space. Another finding emphasized the importance of peer culture in welcoming multiracial students (Renn, 2000).

Incorporated biracial identity develops as students become more secure in their personal identity; this often requires rejecting others' expectations (Evans et al, 1998). This development tends to occur later in a student's college years. However, not all students develop their identity by incorporating multiple aspects of self into a single identity, other students experience multiple identities simultaneously.

Multiple Identities

Jones and McEwen (2000) propose a model to be used in understanding multiple identities. The authors point out that while past work has explored multiple oppressions, the understanding of relationship between multiple identities has previously been underdeveloped. Reynolds and Pope (1991) established the Multidimensional Identity

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Model, which explores four possible solutions for resolving identity from multiple oppressions. The first possible resolution is identifying with only one identity aspect passively, that is, as assigned by others. Another resolution involves self-selecting only one aspect of identity. A third resolution involves identifying with multiple dimensions in a segmented fashion, usually moving between identities based on setting. The final resolution involves choosing to identify with multiple aspects of identity (Reynolds & Pope).

Jones and McEwen's (2000) model illustrates a person's identity construction at one particular time. Rather than describing multiple dimensions of identity, the model emphasizes, "living comfortably with multiple identities" (Jones & McEwen, p. 408). Similar to Moss and Faux's (2006) study, participants in Jones and McEwen's study described inside and outside identities, in which inside identities are more complex. Inside identities are those defined within a person and outside identities are those assigned by others. Jones and McEwen argue that identity can only be understood when dimensions are explored in relation to other dimensions. The authors define identity as externally defined, internally experienced, and influenced by different concepts (Jones and McEwen). A feeling of difference also shapes identity, but social and personal identities are interrelated. The author's description of multiple identities is congruent with the multiple identities described by participants in Sales and Saxe's (2006) work.

Jones and McEwen's (2000) model is limited as it only provides a snapshot of identity at one point. While the authors do not report exploring identity over time, an understanding of identity over time is necessary as the authors do recognize that identity changes as experiences cause identity dimensions to become more or less salient. Although

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this model is extremely helpful in understanding identity, it does not illuminate the *development* of identity, but does recognize the role of the environment in influencing identity.

Similarly, Root (1996) established a theory that is not stage based, rather it depends on an individual's ability to be comfortable with one's own self identity in, across, and/or between multiple identity groups. Root names four possible options to negotiate these identities.   The first, holding multiple perspectives simultaneously involves experiencing multiple identities concurrently without preferring one or another. The second, choosing situational identities, requires choosing an identity to outwardly express that is dependent on one's situation. The third, claiming a multiracial reference point, allows a student to announce his/herself as experiencing multiple racial identities, where this experience of multiple identities becomes his/her identity. The fourth and final option, creating a primary identity in one group while making foray into another, provides students the opportunity to exist within a given identity but participate occasionally in some aspects of another part of their identity. Although the authors explore here do not address religious identity, it is one of many possible identities college students, especially Jewish college students, are negotiating.

Religious and Spiritual Identity Development Theory

Necessary to this exploration of Jewish college students, is an exploration of literature regarding religious and spiritual development.   In recent years, research in this area has grown as religious and spiritual development becomes more integrated into a discussion of college student development (Love, 2002). Religion and spiritual identity are compulsory to our discussion of Jewish college students as Judaism is, after all, a religion, albeit one

attached to an ethnicity. It is necessary to first define spirituality and religion, and look at what differentiates the terms. Parks defines spirituality as a personal search for meaning, transcendence, and purpose (Love); Fowler's work utilizes the term "faith" but faith and spirituality will be regarded synonymously in this work. Spirituality is related to religion, although with distinctions. Chickering and Dalton, (2006) describe religion as a life-changing moral aesthetic. Bryant et al. (2003) describe religion in a practical manner, as represented by one's actions including attendance at religious services, prayer or meditation, or participation in a religious group. This exploration will focus primarily on faith and spiritual development by using the work of Fowler (1981), Tisdell (2003), and Parks (1986, 2000).

Faith and Spiritual Development

Fowler's Faith Development Theory (FDT) draws on Kohlberg and Piaget's ideas of moral and cognitive development. FDT is stage based and includes the following stages: (a) intuitive projective faith, (b) mythic literal faith, (c) synthetic-conventional faith, (d) individuative-reflective faith, (e) conjunctive faith, and (f) universalizing faith (Fowler, 1981). Stage one usually occurs between ages three and seven. It is a "fantasy-filled, imitative phase" where the child mimics and responds to the expressed moods, values, and opinions of influential adults (Fowler, p. 133). Stage two, mythic literal faith, is characterized by a child's acceptance of stories, beliefs, and observances that are accepted by the community. This stage typically occurs from late childhood to early adolescence (Fowler). The third and fourth stages, occurring between puberty and early adulthood, are likely the most relevant to college students.

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The transition to the third stage usually occurs when there is a conflict between previously accepted ideas of the community and one's experience, or newly acquired knowledge (Fowler, 1981). Synthetic-Conventional faith occurs in early adolescence, where individuals are integrating aspects of identity into a whole while continuing to require the approval of others. This is the first point where humans incorporate the ideas of non-familial others. As people are incorporating ideas from many sources, including school, peers, and media, this stage affects many aspects of development. Beliefs and values are tacitly held, rather than self-reflective at this stage. Authority is still held outside the self. Fowler notes that some adults never progress from the third stage. Transition to the next stage involves dissonance, usually brought on by an event that leads the person to question an authority figure (Fowler).

Individuative-Reflective faith occurs in early adulthood: this stage involves determining one's own beliefs and value systems. This stage requires that people take responsibility for their beliefs and attitudes. Struggles between individual identity and membership in a group are common. There is a "question of being committed to the relative versus struggle with the possibility of an absolute" (Fowler, p. 182). One's identity is no longer comprised of one's roles or meaning to others. This stage can continue into later adulthood.

An understanding of the paradoxes and contradictions of one's faith and beliefs characterize Fowler's fifth stage, Conjunctive faith. This stage rarely occurs before mid-life, and involves a reworking of one's past experiences. The sixth stage, universalizing faith, is

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characterized by further developed and complex ideas of one's faith. Development to this stage is rare and occurs late in life (Fowler, 1981).

Tisdell (2003) criticizes the linear arrangement of Fowler's theory. She says that a person might be in a stage and move back in times of crisis or dissonance. Tisdell finds FDT helpful in "contributing to our knowledge of how people construct knowledge through image and symbol" (p. 99). Tisdell states experimentation and questioning are more important for identity development in early adulthood. Early adulthood is also a time of questioning because young adults encounter many new ideas, which challenge their assumptions. This is also true in other stages, but is particularly relevant in early adulthood.

Tisdell (2003) describes spiritual identity development as a spiral, where development involves both spiraling back and moving forward. She points out that looking back informs the future. Spiritual development literature has defined development in five distinctive ways: (a) the highest of developmental lines, (b) sum of all developmental lines, (c) its own developmental line, (d) an attitude of openness at any stage, (e) about peak experiences, not stages. Tisdell recognizes that no one aspect of development can be completely separated from another. She suggests focusing on spiritual development as the method to integrate aspects of development. As such, spiritual identity would become the lens through which one views his/her life experiences.

Parks' (2000) theory has four stages of development: (a) adolescent/conventional, (b) young adult, (c) tested adult and (d) mature adult. Stages are made up of three elements: (i) forms of knowing, (ii) forms of dependence, and (iii) forms of community. Forms of knowing involve the cognitive development of faith, the thinking about faith. Forms of

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dependence involve the emotional development of faith, the feeling about faith. Finally, forms of community involve the social development of faith, the understanding of faith in relation to one's social network (Parks, 1986). In the adolescent/conventional stage, the individual finds truth externally and depends on others for ideas about his or her faith. In the young adult stage, the individual looks to the community for mentoring, but begins to create his or her own ideas about faith. In the tested adult stage, the individual depends on his or her own understanding of faith, exists within a self-selected group and is committed to one's own ideas, but is not yet open to the ideas of others. In the mature adult stage, the individual has moved to a point where he or she is thoroughly committed to his or her thoughts about faith, is capable of interdependence and open to others' ideas about faith (Parks, 2000).

Tisdell (2003) points out that adults often move away from the religion of their childhood either temporarily or permanently. Faith must doubt itself to become mature (Parks, 2000). Most adults however spiral back to embrace/remember "the life-enhancing elements" of their religion of origin (Tisdell, 2003). Adults usually develop and express a spiritual identity of some kind, whether that is a new identity or that of their childhood religion (Tisdell).

Social interactions affect one's spiritual development. As such, one's environment is incorporated into his/her development process. Spiritual development is about the search for wholeness and integration to include those external factors. Yet, faith is both outside of the realm of the ordinary and completely within the individual (Parks, 2000).

Faith development is a dynamic, constantly changing process of making meaning. "Meaning making is the activity of seeking pattern, order, form and significance (Parks,

1986, p. 14). Parks argues that faith "primarily denotes the activity of composing meaning in the most comprehensive dimensions of our awareness. Thus, to speak of faith is to point toward the meaning making that frames…the everyday" (Parks, 1986, p.16). Beliefs, unlike faith, are often more static (Parks, 2000). Parks (2000) recognizes that a person can be a person of faith, yet not believe in the existence of God because one might center his or her meaning making on some other point than God.

Research has illustrated spiritual development promotes mental health (Poll & Smith, 2003). Recent literature in the field of psychology emphasizes that counselors and psychologists need to address a client's spirituality in therapy (Poll & Smith, 2003). As one of the roles student affairs professionals take on is that of a counselor, it is important that administrators are capable of addressing the spirituality of their students. Poll and Smith point out that individuals often gain the similar benefits of resiliency from spiritual identity and personal identity. The authors developed a model for working with clients to understand their spirituality, which could be used with students. The stages in this model are pre-awareness, awakening, and integration. The authors recognize that development is not always linear. This might be particularly true to Jewish students who might move between different developmental stages dependent on their context, that is, whether they are in a group or non-group setting. Their work differs from Fowler's theory in many ways. One such way is that development occurs as a result of external spiritual experiences rather than spiritual development occurring from reflection through the individual's cognitive development.

Spiritual identity development theories contribute to our understanding of development in Jewish college students because they offer a potential explanation of

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developmental processes these students may experience. More research needs to be conducted with this specific population to understand what is unique to their development as compared to non-Jewish students. One question requiring further attention is whether spiritual development even resonates with Jewish college students and their experiences.

Religious Change in College

Research has shown that students experience religious change while in college (Lee, 2002). Students' religious convictions strengthen in college more often than they are weakened (Lee). This and other studies (Bryant, Yasuno, Choi, 2003) reflect both a possible decline in religious observance, such as observing the Sabbath or attending services. Yet, more students reported a strengthening of religious convictions, than those who reported a decline (Lee). However, Lee found that approximately half of the participants reported no change in religious conviction in college and that peers have a strong influence on the frequency of religious activity. Religious behavior such as attending services leads to stronger religious convictions. Lee points out that identifying as part of a given religious group does not necessarily require acceptance of all the beliefs or theology of that group, but rather an identification as part of a community. Lee's work illustrates the complexity of religious identity in college students, emphasizing that student affairs practitioners cannot regard religious observance as the same as religious convictions. It also helps administrators to realize that students are at all points on the continuum ranging from weaker conviction to stronger conviction. These data are important to this discussion of Jewish college students because it influences the ideas of college administrators working with this group.

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Sales and Saxe's (2006) study briefly explored religious change in Jewish college students. They found that approximately two-thirds of students changed their level of Jewish observance during their time in college. Of those who changed, more became less ritually observant than those who became more observant. Decline in observance was most often seen in those who felt uncomfortable expressing their religious identities at college, and amongst those who felt college had caused them to question their religious beliefs.

Fowler (1981), Parks (1986, 2000), and Tisdell (2003) offer frameworks for understanding the development of faith in young adults. These frameworks could be used to understand another aspect of identity in Jewish college students. Research also provides us with evidence that students experience change in religious observance when they transition to college. This again provides insight to the experiences of Jewish college students. Now that we have surveyed the literature related to both ethnic identity and spiritual identity, to continue our understanding of Jewish college students' identity, it is necessary to bring these bodies of literature together.

<center>Bringing Ethnicity and Religion Together</center>

Past research has brought ethnicity and religion together in useful ways. Sanchez and Carter (2005) explore race and religion in the development of African American college students in an attempt to articulate a more complex understanding of identity. For African Americans, measures such as church attendance are not sufficient to explain religious attitudes (Sanchez & Carter). Similarly, synagogue attendance does not provide a complete understanding of Jewish religious attitudes (Sales & Saxe, 2006). Sanchez and Carter's analysis describes the relationship between race and ethnicity and religion and spirituality.

Although the experiences of African Americans cannot be completely generalized to Jewish Americans, the study illuminates this complex relationship in a way that is comparable and thus applicable to an understanding of Jewish college students. Their work found that racial and religious issues are both integral parts of the self-identity processes. Students who were struggling with their racial identities were often struggling with their religious convictions as well. This would seem possible in Jewish college students as well: if they were struggling with their ethnic Jewish identity it might also cause a struggle in their religious Jewish identity.

<div align="center">Limitations in the Literature</div>

The literature provides an understanding of Jewish identity as made up of cultural and religious identity. Past research provides insight into both of these identities separately. There even exists a limited body of literature exploring Jewish college students specifically. Yet there are many limitations in the current literature.

Many researchers criticize the usefulness of stage-based theories in understanding development. Renn (2000) rejected early biracial identity development theories because they were too stage-based, she instead suggested the use of postmodern models. Tisdell (2003) critiqued the strict stages of Fowler's theory. Poll and Smith (2003) point out that Fowler's theory posits two distinct and sequential processes of development, one that involves becoming spiritually autonomous and one that involves "transcending the self to relate to God" (p.139). However, Poll and Smith argue that these processes are often concurrent. Stage-based theories can be restrictive, especially when applied to groups who experience multiple dimensions of identity simultaneously, but they are helpful in understanding a

progression from one point in identity development to another. Tisdell's (2003) model, which accounts for individual regression, likely provides the most accurate depiction of development. Snapshot-like models such as Jones and McEwen also provide a useful illustration of identity, as they take into account multiple identities. Yet these models fail to contribute to a developmental understanding of individuals. In the end, there is no model that fits each student or group of students. Utilizing a combination of models will provide the most accurate and complete understanding of multi-dimensional identity development.

Renn (2000) points out the need for more research about the impact of campus climate on identity development. Specific to the current study, the literature lacks an understanding of the impact of college on Jewish students.

In short, this literature provides only an initial explanation of identity in Jewish college students. There is much more research that is necessary before a complete understanding is possible. It is important to consider religion, spirituality, and multiple dimensions of identity in work with college students, as they are often struggling with their identity in these areas.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The questions guiding this research seek to understand the relationship between religious and cultural identity in Jewish college students. Qualitative inquiry is the appropriate paradigm for this research, as identity in Jewish college students is an area of study that requires initial exploration (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative inquiry provides an opportunity for a rich, detailed understanding of identity development in the Jewish college student population (Creswell). The use of qualitative inquiry enables the exploration of many variables in just a few cases, rather than looking at a number of cases and only a few variables, as afforded by quantitative research (Creswell). Qualitative methods enable students to express their experiences in their own words, which lends a more in depth understanding of their identity (Creswell).

Creswell (1998) defines an instrumental case study as a study that uses the case being studied instrumentally to illustrate an issue. In the present research, the experiences of the participants will be used to explain the identity of Jewish college students on campus. This study occurred in a two-month period during the spring of 2007 at a public research institution in the Southeastern United States. The time and place, as well as the program in which the students participated, bind the case. Tamid[1] is a national organization aimed at developing Jewish identity on campus, and this study serves to illuminate the relationship between cultural identity development and religious/spiritual identity development among students involved in Tamid.

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[1] Tamid is a pseudonym used to protect anonymity of the participants and organization.

Sample

This case study employed purposeful sampling, which involves the researcher choosing an appropriate group of participants who can provide insight into the case being studied (Creswell, 1998). This study used criterion sampling by selecting students to participate who were Jewish, at least sophomores in college, and involved in Tamid. The researcher identified the student participants as providing the most useful data because they were thought to have reflected on Jewish identity to some extent as part of their participation in the Creative Enterprising Program (CEP). Students were contacted for participation via email through the Tamid employee overseeing the program. Participants were selected upon the criteria that they were both Jewish and participating in the program. A total of ten students participate in the program at this institution. Four students were selected on a first come, first serve basis. Students were compensated with a small monetary incentive for their participation in the study.

Two of the participating students were male and two were female. Two students were sophomores and two students were graduating seniors, a male and female of each academic year. All of the participants identify most with the Reform sect of Judaism, a liberal sect of Judaism committed to the major tenets of Judaism, but acknowledging the diversity of the Jewish experience (Union for Reform Judaism, 2005). The descriptions of the following students are based on demographic information collected through a demographic information sheet completed by the participants through the interview process. Pseudonyms have been used for anonymity.

Table 1, below, offers demographic information about the study's participants.

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Table 1. Demographic Information

Name	Year in school	Major(s)/Minor	Parent's Religious Identity
Rachel	Sophomore	International Studies/Hebrew	Both Jewish
Adam	Sophomore	Dramatic Arts & Public Policy/Music	Father: Jewish Mother: apathetic toward religion, grew up Christian
Brad	Senior	Political Science & Pre-Med	Both Jewish, father converted from Catholicism
Melanie	Senior	Elementary Education	Both Jewish

Rachel is a sophomore International Studies major with a Minor in Hebrew. She grew up in the same state as South University in an area with a strong Jewish community. Her father is a rabbi. Both of Rachel's parents identify as Jewish.

Adam is a sophomore Dramatic Arts and Public Policy major with a minor in Music. He grew up in a Jewish neighborhood and is from out-of-state. Adam's father identifies as

Jewish but his mother does not. He describes his mother as apathetic toward religion. He attended a private Catholic high school.

Brad is a senior Political Science and pre-med major. He lived in a predominantly Jewish area as a child and is from another state. Brad's parents both identify as Jewish, although his father grew up in a Catholic family. Brad planned to spend the summer after graduation studying Judaism and politics in Israel.

Finally, Melanie is a senior Elementary Education Major from the same state as the institution. She did not grow up in a predominantly Jewish area. Both of Melanie's parents identify as Jewish. Melanie has done a significant amount of traveling, including visiting Jewish communities in other countries. Melanie planned to move to Argentina after graduation to teach.

Setting

This research takes place at a large public research institution in the Southeastern United States, South University. Student organizations are highly visible on campus; representatives are often seen in traveled areas of campus promoting programs and recruiting members. Activism is an important characteristic of campus life. Students express an understanding of social responsibility to one another and to the larger society.

Participants describe the campus as having an open discourse about religion. Students state that there is an outward appearance of the student population as being largely Christian. Christian ministers can be seen in public areas of the campus preaching damnation. However, there is a large population of Jewish and Muslim students on campus, and there are a number of ways for these students to get involved within these identity groups on campus.

Jewish life on campus is available through a number of resources. This residential campus has slightly less than one thousand Jewish undergraduate students. The university offers a minor in Jewish Studies as well as a number of Hebrew classes. The campus has two physical spaces devoted to Jewish life on campus, both local chapters of private national not-for-profit organizations.

Participants in this study were participants in a program coordinated by Tamid, one of the non-profit organizations. Like a number of other Jewish organizations on college campuses, Tamid hopes to encourage Jewish students to develop a lasting Jewish identity, while creating a welcoming environment on campus for Jewish college students.

The CEP program in which the students were participating intended to use student's existing social networks to increase Jewish identity in students. The student participants were asked to meet with their peers to discuss various aspects of Jewish identity including Israel, social activism, and Jewish learning. The students were recruited to this program because they were thought to be well connected on campus but not highly involved in Tamid. Through participation in the group, the interns met regularly to discuss Jewish identity and the connections they made with other students. They were asked to coordinate an experience in which other students could participate. These experiences varied among the participants of this study. Melanie coordinated a program about negative stereotypes of cultural groups, including Jews. Adam initiated a theater group to explore the Jewish Southern experience. Rachel started a food tasting program. Brad organized a social activism group that included Muslim, Jewish and Christian students.

Data Collection

As required by Creswell (1998), data collection took multiple forms. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, a focus group, campus observations, and artifact review. I also kept researcher notes and a journal. Students were asked to complete a questionnaire to collect demographic information. I used research notes and a research journal to reflect on literature, findings, and methodology as it unfolded. Each student participated in two semi-structured interviews for a total of eight interviews. Interviews lasted one hour to two hours each, for a total interaction of between two and four hours person student. All interviews and focus groups were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed. A third party was used for transcriptions.

Analysis Plan

For the semi-structure interviews and the focus group, I coded the data, using transcriptions, with a line-by-line analysis using open codes and literature based codes. That is, I first formed categories by segmenting the ideas discussed by participants (Creswell, 1998); I then reviewed the transcripts looking for themes proposed in the literature, making naturalistic generalizations, that is, generalizations that appear evident and provide insight into the larger issue being examined (Creswell, 1998). Literature based codes were largely based on the work of Moss and Faux (2006) and Parks (2000), and Fowler (1981) (Appendix E). Campus observations and artifact review were used to further explain any phenomenon not explained by the students in their own voice. These forms took secondary importance to the interviews and focus group because a major goal of this research was to use the students' own voices to describe their previously underrepresented experience. Campus observations

were used to explain the setting as well as to frame the findings within the context of the campus community. Researcher journal and researcher notes allowed me to reflect on my work, including the literature, findings and methodology.

Reliability and credibility of this study were verified through the peer review process, member checks, clarification of researcher bias, and triangulation. Peer review was accomplished by soliciting feedback from other trained qualitative researchers, throughout the writing and coding process. Member checks were performed by offering participants the opportunity to read through transcripts of interviews and the focus group. Clarification of researcher bias was achieved by explicitly describing my history and relationship to the topic. Triangulation, looking for the convergence of information, was realized through the use of multiple data collection methods (Creswell, 1998).

Researcher Bias and Lens

Interest in this topic comes out of my own experience as a Jewish woman and through previous academic interests. My passion to explore Jewish identity arose first as interest in Jewish women's identity, which coincided with my exploration of Judaism as a religion of choice. Continued academic classes, extracurricular reading, outside Jewish education, and acceptance into a Jewish family led to my eventual conversion to Judaism. Further interest in Judaism as a culture and ethnicity came from many classes that explored concurrent identities, specific to African American women and Latinas. Through observation at the University of Maryland, I noticed many Jewish women on campus were experiencing a similar double consciousness to that described in classes about the identity of African American or Latina women. My undergraduate papers explored double consciousness in

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adult Jewish women. In the first semester of my master's degree, I attended a conference that explored the development of Jewish college students. My attendance at this conference sparked the idea that I should look into the duplicity of identity on campus.

My own experience as a Jewish woman as well as my previous academic interests drives my interest in this topic. My interest in Jewish identity arose first as interest in Jewish women's identity specifically. During my undergraduate career at the University of Maryland, College Park, I enrolled in a class titled "Judaism and the Construction of Gender." This class, and others taken in subsequent semesters, explored the implications of being a Jewish woman in postmodern society. Interest in the subject arose in conjunction with my exploration of Judaism as a religion of choice. I grew up in a secular Christian home, and rejected Christian identity in early adolescence largely because it did not fit with my feminist political beliefs.

Although hypotheses are not appropriate to the qualitative paradigm, it is appropriate to reveal my theoretical preconceptions in this research. The findings of previous research as well as my own observations led me to believe that Jewish students would identify primarily with cultural and ethnic identity, possibly as a method of expressing their religious identity.

I have worked to clarify research bias as suggested by Creswell (1998). In doing so, I have explained my own bias and interest in the area of research as well as my attempts to account for those biases. To overcome a bias in interpreting the findings, I continually sought outside feedback from people who did not identify as such.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The primary goal of this research was to develop an understanding of identity in Jewish college students, particularly the relationship between religious identity and cultural identity. Through the analysis process described in the previous chapter, five major themes emerged. This chapter will explore these themes in order as follows: (a) the dynamics of cultural Jewish identity, including (i) connectivity as the defining essence of Jewish cultural identity and (ii) manifestations of Jewish identity, specifically, involvement in Jewish activities, social activism, family interactions, and doubting faith; (b) the relationship between cultural and religious identity, and (c) the contextual implications of the campus environment, including a discussion of the influence of peers on Jewish identity. This research also revealed many minor themes, including the importance of education about Judaism and the salience of identity based on setting.

Understanding Cultural Jewish Identity

Students were asked to define both Judaism and Jewish identity. Participants noted a difference in meaning between Judaism and Jewish identity. Some answered this question in relation to their own life, whereas others responded with their view of how they see the topic from a more general perspective. For example, Rachel explained a sense of difference between cultural and religious Judaism and the complex relationship between the two by saying, "I think it's culture [be]cause a lot of people love Jewish foods and learning about the history and the Diaspora… it brings together religion but it's also very cultural."

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Connectivity

When asked to describe Jewish identity, the participants overwhelmingly described a sense of connection as necessary to one's Jewish identity. Melanie, Brad and Rachel all used connection to define Judaism and Jewish identity.

Melanie has considered her understanding of Jewish identity a great deal. She characterized Jewish identity as a cultural identity shaped by shared experience:

I think [Judaism is] more of a culture than a religion. When I went to Israel in December it was to discuss things like this, what is Judaism, with kids from all over the world. We came to the conclusion that it is a culture because even though we all came with our own cultures… Friday night we still all came together and we still knew all of the same songs, all the same basic traditions and little things, the way that we did things, the way that we went about things, it was very interesting coming from different parts of the world and still having that in common. I'd definitely say it's a culture because you feel like you identify with people who are Jewish automatically… you have the same set of morals behind you.

Aspects of shared experience such as singing the same tunes and sharing a connection illustrate the cultural nature of Jewish Identity.

Brad defined Judaism as a religion. Yet he defines Jewish identity as an ethnic identity. He stated, "being Jewish does not entail practicing Judaism." He expands on Melanie's idea that Jewish identity is felt through a connection between people:

I think the core identifier of someone being Jewish is whether or not they feel it...I think it's an ethnic identity…you can feel a connection to any number of factors, you

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can feel a connection to the language, you can feel a connection to the cultural, you can feel a connection to the religion, you can feel a connection to the people, you can feel a connection to the history, you can feel a connection to the food, so I think all those factors are important.

Rachel describes connection as an aspect of her definition of Jewish identity as well:

I think it's a connection with the Jewish people through ancestry, through conversion, just kind of that you have a bond with the history and the people and the holidays and everything like that, and Jewish identity is just being proud and affiliating with Judaism.

In both Melanie and Rachel's definitions, ritual observance is related to the notion of shared experience in Jewish identity. Melanie discussed sharing Shabbat traditions with Jews from around the world, while Rachel mentioned having a connection to holidays.

Unlike the other participants, Adam does not specifically refer to the connective nature of Jewish identity in his definition, but he does treat his Jewish identity as a cultural one:

What I define Judaism as is something I don't always define myself as, which is interesting…My Jewish identity is something that is very cultural and societal based…the religious aspect is what creates the culture so that's where I find the religion in it, but my identity is really in the more cultural and societal ways.

Although Adam did not initially define Judaism in relation to connectivity, he later related, "I affiliate with Judaism in a big way because I feel like I have an important role to play in carrying on those traditions that have gone on for thousands of years." Implicit in this

statement is an understanding of a connection between himself and other Jews who have carried on Jewish tradition.

Rachel further detailed connectivity within the Jewish community; she suggested an immediate connection between herself and other Jewish students. She stated:

Meeting other Jewish people you can know nothing about them but at the same time have that connection. They may be more religious or less religious, but there's just those ideas that everybody knows, or maybe not everybody, but the same ideas growing up about holidays.

Unlike Rachel, however, Brad and Adam both described feelings of difference from other members of the Jewish community on campus. That is, they were thought to be not Jewish enough by more religious Jews because of their cultural identities. Adam even described thinking of himself as less Jewish, or not Jewish enough. Yet, in the end, even the feelings of difference became feelings of connectivity for Adam. In college, he traveled to Israel for the first time. He described this trip as a self-affirming experience, because he saw people who had strong Jewish identities but were not religious. Now when encountering others who question his identity, he thinks, "I'm just as Jewish as you are."

Also related to feelings of connectivity are feelings of difference from those outside the Jewish community. Rachel expressed, "My favorite thing about Judaism is that you can have doubts and you cannot believe and can still be fully Jewish. I have the hardest time explaining that to non-Jews." In this statement, she expressed that her non-Jewish friends do not understand an important aspect of her identity. Her struggle with this is reflected in her statement, "I have the hardest time explaining that to non-Jews." Likewise, Melanie relayed

a story of how her friends do not understand the cultural nature of Jewish identity. She described a friend from Spain who did not understand how she could identify culturally as Jewish but not religiously.

Rachel and Melanie described feeling a shared connection not only to the larger Jewish community but also with other Jewish students. Rachel described meeting her suitemate her freshman year and going into her room and seeing a hamsa, a Judaic symbol thought to ward off evil, on this suitemate's wall and immediately sharing a connection with her. Melanie expressed that she can relate to her Jewish friends in a way that she cannot relate to her non-Jewish friends because they have a shared experience.

Manifestations of Jewish Identity

Just as participants discussed connectivity as a defining factor of Jewish cultural identity, they also understood that identity as taking on many different forms. Students related that their Jewish identity manifests in different forms, including family interactions, involvement in Jewish activities, social activism, and expressing doubt. Although these expressions of identity are primarily expressions of cultural aspects of Jewish identity, some are related to religious and spiritual identity as well.

Family interactions. Participants described Jewish identity in relation to feelings of family. Adam stated that Jewish identity had been a tie to family for him: "I would say the time I am at home with family, especially big family time, I would consider Jewish time." Brad conveyed:

in my own life, fundamentally, Jewish identity is about family. Being Jewish became

important because that's how my family spent time together…I always felt very

connected to my family and my family's history even though I know so little about it.

He described a time when he didn't want to uphold Jewish traditions but then considered that

his ancestors came to the US to be able to practice their Judaism, and not carrying on the

Jewish tradition would be disrespectful to his family. Rachel affirmed, "family is number

one…growing up with certain customs and standards, there's nothing you have to explain to

anybody."

Involvement in Jewish activities. The Jewish activities the students participated in

were largely not religious experiences. These activities simultaneously expressed and

influenced the development of the students' Jewish identity. Each student mentioned the

frequency with which they attended religious services, but for the most part this was only

occasional.

Adam attended services on high holidays and worked at a Jewish summer camp. He

also worked to create a Jewish theater group on campus as part of his participation in the

Creative Enterprising Program. Adam described his role as a leader to be the most important

aspect of his identity. To him, this was related to his commitment to pursing truth and

honesty, which come out of his Jewish identity. Melanie went to Shabbat dinner relatively

often, but rarely attended services. However, she participated in a number of cultural

activities that she considered Jewish: "I've traveled to Israel twice now. I participated in the

Muslim-Jewish arts fest last year, and a little bit of everything." Brad attended services

somewhat regularly, but described his major Jewish activities as being related to social action and community service.

Rachel expressed her Jewish identity through occasional ritual observance, although she pointed out that this was not related to a belief in God. She also explained the importance of taking Hebrew classes for her identity:

My Jewish identity has changed through taking Hebrew class. With your bar/bat mitzvah, you learn to read, but at least for me, you don't know what it says, and now I can read Hebrew passages and understand what they're saying. That has changed my identity in that I enjoy it more now that I've realized what the content is rather than just reading something and not understanding what you're saying.

Each participant described activities that were related to his or her own interests, but all found meaning in their activities. Importantly, the extent to which an activity was considered "Jewish" depended on definitions determined by each individual.

Social activism. Just as the outside eye might not associate Adam's theater group or leadership activities as an expression of religious Jewish identity, Brad and Rachel's commitment to social justice is another example of individually defined expressions of Jewish identity. Brad's Jewish identity motivates his activism. This association began after he became bar mitzvah; his parents gave him the option of continuing Hebrew school or volunteering. Brad chose to volunteer every week:

Tzedek [social justice] is a really important principle to me and that came from being Jewish…When I'm working in solidarity with others, that to me is a very spiritual experience….The reason why service is a [spiritual] experience for me is that when

I'm doing service its really this different understanding of the world and my place in

it and my function in it; it facilitates this connection between people.

Like Brad, Rachel stated that volunteering is one way she expresses her Jewish

identity. She experienced a sense of difference from her non-Jewish classmates when she

was asked to write a paper about volunteerism. She felt she experienced volunteering

differently:

I volunteered my entire life starting when I was a little kid with my family because

that's just what I did. I learned that in Judaism, volunteering and tikkun olam,

repairing the world, is an obligatory thing for all Jews…as Jews we are obligated to

fix and to repair and to do.

My campus observations showed that community service was a common

extracurricular involvement for many students at South University, both Jewish and non-

Jewish. Opportunities to get involved in service are advertised all over campus and in some

classes. The department of residence life offers a living learning community for those

interested in becoming involved in service projects. Even the university's mission statement

reflects the importance of giving back to the community.

Social activism is an important aspect of identity to explore as it comes directly out of

a religious commandment to repair the world. The participants understand activism as a

manifestation of cultural and spiritual identity.

Expressing doubt. Students described expressing doubt in religious faith. However,

rather than understanding this doubt to be in juxtaposition to their Jewish identities, they saw

doubt as another way of expressing Jewish identity.

Brad stated, "I don't think there's ever been a time when I haven't doubted my faith. I don't consider myself a person of faith. But there have been times when any sort of faith has been a struggle for me." He described a particular point in his life when he questioned his faith in the world. "I questioned what good could be done and what was the purpose in trying to do good things if the bad stuff was so overwhelming....Now I think that it's our responsibility to impact those things that we can." This likely relates to the manifestation of the importance of social activism in his life, as described in the above section. Despite feeling that at the end of the day he might not be able to affect global change, Brad insisted, "Fighting towards good is a far more noble goal than not." Brad's discussion reflects that his doubts are not only tied in with his Jewish identity, but also that his negotiation of those doubts is a manifest of his Jewish identity. In that, rather feel torn about how his doubts fit into his Jewish identity, he commits his time to tikkun olam, repairing the world.

Melanie also related doubt of religious faith by expressing doubt in the existence of God and the divine nature of the Torah.

> I think there are constant times when I doubt the idea of God in general, which is nice because in Judaism that's ok. There are so many things that happen that make me doubt a lot of things. As far as what happened in the Bible and Noah's ark, I honestly don't think that a bit of it is true; I think it's just a set of stories with a set of morals. I don't think it necessarily happened and if it did it's exaggerated on a large scale, so I guess [I] constantly [doubt my faith], everyday.

There is no sense of struggle with her Jewish identity in Melanie's expression of religious doubt. Rather than be tormented by the disconnect between her doubts and the religious tradition, Melanie finds meaning in the message offered by the story.

Rachel also relayed a sense of doubt about the existence of God:

I would definitely say that I don't know what my beliefs are in God, whether I have any or don't. And it's kind of been something that I don't know if I ever did, but only recently have I thought about whether I do or not and I'm still kind of, 'I don't know.'

Unlike Brad and Melanie, Rachel is still working out the negotiation between her doubts and her identity. However, she still went on to describe herself as religious. The fact that she even feels like she can have this doubt and still be religious, illustrates yet another way that doubt can be a manifestation of Jewish identity.

Relationship between Religious and Cultural Jewish Identity

Participants described their understandings of religion and spirituality in a way that is inextricably tied to culture. Brad discussed being connected to other people, a cultural notion, as a spiritual experience for him. Rachel found spiritual meaning in attending services, not because of a belief in God, but because of the connection she feels to the history and the Jewish people.

Brad discussed spirituality as an understanding of a world greater than oneself:

Anything that enhances your understanding of the world as greater than yourself, I think is a spiritual experience. A facet of that is feeling connected to the world and other people and that can be very separate…It's this kind of overwhelming feeling that just fills you, and you feel very connected to things.

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Again, there is a notion of connectivity in Brad's description of Jewish identity, this time in a spiritual way. Brad goes on to say, religious holidays "feel like a spiritual experience not because of a oneness with any kind of deity but with a oneness with the people who are there and sharing a common experience I think is really powerful." Here, we see the connectivity, a cultural aspect, becoming a religious experience because of the meaning made by the participants.

Rachel talked about struggling with spiritual issues, but still finding cultural meaning in religious practice:

People can't comprehend what it means to not believe in God and still be religious. To me, I think that I'm still really religious in that I still really enjoy going to services and [understanding] the meaning behind things, not necessarily God, but there's so much more meaning besides the belief in God, like the history and the people.

Whereas Brad experienced a cultural aspect of Judaism in a religious way, Rachel experienced a religious aspect in a cultural way. This suggests that religious and cultural Jewish identity reinforce one another. Services are largely a religious experience, yet Rachel found meaning in the connection with the Jewish people and history, a cultural aspect. Both Brad and Rachel's statements are again related to the connectivity found amongst the Jewish people.

Brad explored the relationship between religious laws and cultural Jewish identity in his life. He explained that would not take on religious commandments, such as keeping kosher or adhering to Shabbat restrictions, because he is not religious. Yet he describes an appreciation for Jewish laws:

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I've always appreciated Jewish laws that have something to say about them. Kashrut (the set of laws regarding food), the idea of not eating meat, a symbol of death, with milk, a symbol of life, I thought there was power in that…so I can appreciate them from that point of view.

He stated that if a religious practice helps him to feel connected, which is related to cultural identity, it is something he will uphold. "If I can find something that makes sense for me and makes me feel enriched, makes me feel connected, makes me feel spiritual, then I follow it." Although Brad understands his own Jewish identity as cultural, he describes an appreciation for religious laws and seeks to find cultural, as well as spiritual, meaning in them.

Of the relationship between religious and cultural Jewish identity, Adam stated, "the religious aspect is what creates the culture." While Adam did not specifically expand on this idea, there is important merit to his perspective. Historically (and still today in observant communities), Jews were insulated in their communities, creating a stronger cultural identity because of such religious commandments as kashrut and Shabbat observance.

Contextual Implications of the Campus Environment

Students highlighted the importance of context for their notions of identity. Thus, it is necessary to explore both the context specific to South University and negotiating Jewish identity within the larger context of college.

Contexts on campus. It is necessary to place this discussion in context of the overall campus environment. Participants stated that they appreciated the presence of the Jewish community – and a physical space – on their campus. Participants expressed that having a

space (two spaces at South University) on campus to express Jewish identity made them feel more comfortable, even when they did not take advantage of those spaces.

The social climate of South University is largely Christian. Brad describes his reactions to preachers in the quads when he first arrived on campus:

Ironically enough, it almost did make me feel more comfortable exerting my identity…it made me feel Jewish because even though at that time I wasn't involved Jewishly on campus, the way that I reacted to that reminded me that I was different.

This speaks not only to climate on campus but also to the feelings of difference experienced by Jewish college students on campuses with Christian climates.

As suspected by the importance of connectivity within the Jewish community, Jewish students find value in connecting with other Jewish students on campus. Rachel asserted:

I like having Jewish friends, which helps my identity in that, especially here, I've felt like my Jewish friends understand me better and that there's something I don't have to explain. I don't have to give background information I guess.

It is important for Jewish students to feel connected to other Jews on campus. This indicates that Jewish students understand their experience as outside the normative campus context. That is, they need the support of other Jewish students to have an ideal experience on campus.

Two large Jewish organizations represented on campus help promote Jewish identity. Resonating with Rachel's assertion that Jewish students need to feel connected with one another, Melanie explained, "having Tamid here helps Jewish students feel more comfortable, even if they don't go, it's just knowing it's there that helps." Melanie went on

to say that having a community on campus makes her feel more comfortable expressing her identity. "Having a community here is important, we have two…and its so nice to be able to pick one or go to both…it's just so important to know that there is someone like you." Brad echoed Melanie's idea by saying, "Tamid's presence helps students feel more comfortable."

While on campus, I observed a larger dialogue around diversity. The campus hopes to promote conversations amongst students through the creation of living learning communities intending to promote understandings of diversity, including religious and spiritual diversity. There is also an academic discourse about religious identity reflected by a number of classes about religion, including but not limited to, Jewish studies courses.

Negotiating Jewish identity within the college context. Students characterized their Jewish identity as changing when they came to college. Brad described his Jewish identity as becoming less passive in college than it was in high school:

Jewish identity was more or less taken for granted because I lived in an area with a lot of Jews... it was a passive identity….that changed when I came to school, like it does for many people. There's a displacement effect, when you're cut off from the things you know, you have to re-figure out things, and in the process of re-figuring out what's important to you, what you want to do, how you connect to people, how you function, really that's the first time that I began exploring my own identity and the vehicle for allowing me to do that was being in a place where I didn't know anyone.

It was not that Jewish identity did not matter to Brad before he came to college, but that he was not forced to think about his identity. As he formed an identity independent of his

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parents at college, he was forced to question whether the integration of Jewish identity was important. In Brad's experience, it proved to be.

Melanie also recognized a difference in her understanding of her Jewish identity between high school and college. She first began to care about her Jewish identity in college:

I didn't have any Jewish friends until I got to college, and it was the first time that I wanted to know more about it. Before that it was just like, yeah, it's who I am, but it didn't really matter.

In delineating why her Jewish identity has become more important in her life, Melanie attributed the change to a number of potential factors, including a shift in the size of her Jewish community, moving from a smaller community at home to a larger one at college, and maturation. "I don't know if it's me growing up, or moving from home where there were like five other Jewish kids, but I've realized that [Jewish identity] is a more important part of my life." Nonetheless, she stated that Jewish identity would continue to play a larger role in her life.

Being Jewish has become more important to Rachel in leaving high school and coming to college. She stated: "I value being Jewish more as I realized and recognized what being Jewish was and what it meant, and what it was to be a minority." Yet she described resisting being defined only by her Jewish identity. "I don't want to feel like everything I do and every opportunity I have is Jewish."

The change Adam noted in his identity differed somewhat from that of the other participants. He noted coming to understand the diversity of Jewish identity in his peers. Before I came to college, "I always assumed that Jews were one way…and then coming

down here, I realized that there were very different ways of being Jewish, especially ethnically." Adam did not comment on any change in the strength or salience of his Jewish identity in coming to college, but he did describe a difference from when he first arrived:

> At first, I didn't want to be socially Jewish; I just wanted to be religiously Jewish. I would come to services and then leave before the free meal…then I moved to my own self-reflection as prayer and then became more socially Jewish. I came to college more religiously affiliated…this is an opportunity for me to really make Judaism my own and I thought I had to do that by going to services every Friday, but I realized I don't want to do that, I don't need to do that for myself. I want to educate people to understand the culture of a Jewish person is and I hope that they'll respect that.

This change could be in reaction to the change in community. Adam attended a Catholic high school where religion and religious identity were discussed and openly expressed. This would likely bring out in him the religious aspects of his Jewish identity. Yet when he arrived at South University, he came to see the largely cultural nature of Jewish life on campus—thus, he came to understand that expressing cultural identity was another manifestation of Jewishness. Transitioning to college further developed the participants' own Jewish identity, as well as increasing their understanding of Jewish identity in a larger context.

Peer influence on identity. Because Creative Enterprising Program (CEP) sought to increase Jewish identity in college students by using peer interactions on campus, it is useful to explore the participants' thoughts on the affect of peers on identity. Students held differing opinions about the affect of their peers on their identity.

Rachel discussed how she and her friends talk about religion from time to time, but did not feel that those conversations affected her understanding of her identity. She explained that when she and her non-Jewish hall-mates talked about identity they were mostly explaining their own identity to one another. She stated, "People are interested and people want to get to know you for who you are and what makes you different."

Melanie, however, expressed that her peers influenced her Jewish identity in that she finally had a peer group around whom she felt comfortable expressing Jewish identity. She stated, "I never realized there are so many people out there or never knew very many Jewish people… it makes you want to learn more about the traditions."

Brad took the middle road stating that his peers influence his identity very little, yet he tries to learn a lot from his friends. He described how friendships outside of the Jewish community have shaped his understanding of cultural difference, as well as making him aware of aspects of his own identity. He stated:

> My sophomore year I started making a lot of Black friends… that shaped my cultural knowledge. I started learning about Black experience in this country…and how faith is a part of the Black community. And that made me aware of how faith was part of my life.

Adam asserted that his peers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, strengthen his identity. "I think whenever anyone asks questions about your identity, it makes that identity stronger because you have to educate others about it." Students come to understand aspects of their identity from both those inside and outside the Jewish community on campus.

Although students had differing views about the effect of others on their identity, they agreed that they were able to affect the identity of other students through CEP. Brad recognized through participation in CEP that he did have an influence on the identity of his peers: "I wish this was someone who had reached out to me… I think it's mutually beneficial to be actively involved in cultivating the Jewish identity of other individuals." He explained how Jewish identity "has been a much more personal journey for me." He told of two other program participants who encouraged him to try a different Jewish experience on campus that he ended up enjoying more than he had expected.

Rachel felt that the programs she initiated through CEP, which involved Jewish food tasting, allowed for an increased identification with Jewish cultural identity in the students with whom she worked as well as within herself. "the students who participated in my program all had connections to a Jewish tradition related to food and wanted to explore that more…We all did research on different foods so we were all able to learn together." She described learning about the traditions of other people. "It was cool because people brought in recipes that were different from my family, so I got to learn about other people's culture. So I think it was very reciprocal in how we affected each other." In these statements, Rachel both recognized the multiplicity of Jewish experience and how she and her peers learn from one another.

Students understand their Jewish identity as a largely cultural identity. Although they do experience religious and spiritual aspects of their identity, these seem inextricably tied to cultural aspects. Participants highlighted the notion of connectivity as the primary indicator of Jewish identity. They experienced their identity as manifesting in specific ways, through

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family interactions, Jewish involvements, both on and off campus, through social activism and through doubting religious faith. Having a culture on campus that promotes the expression of identity is important to Jewish college students. Participants reflected change in their Jewish identity in coming to college, largely finding that Jewish identity strengthened in the transition to college. Overall, the participants agreed that in one way or another, peers affected one another's Jewish identity.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

This research sought to understand the relationship between cultural identity and religious identity in Jewish college students. This study found that Jewish identity is largely a cultural identity for Jewish college students. Yet this finding points to the significance of the complex relationship between cultural and religious Jewish identities. Participants pointed to the importance of social activism as a manifestation and expression of their Jewish identity. Social activism is an important part of Jewish identity that is often ignored and will be further explored in this section. Finally, the hierarchy of Jewish identity, as described by the participants, will be examined in more detail. Each of these conclusions arose as significant and requiring more consideration when reviewing the findings.

Complex Nature of Jewish Identity

The findings point to the complex nature of Jewish identity. The religious and cultural aspects of Jewish identity cannot be separated and often reinforce one another. When asked for the definition, participants described Jewish identity as a cultural identity; yet they often made references to religion as part of Jewish identity. Judaism was more often defined as a religion, but the set of cultural values accompanying the religion were often mentioned.

Participants recognized their identity as different from the identity of their non-Jewish peers and they also perceived non-Jews as not understanding the complex nature of Judaism and Jewish identity. The participants of this study each touched on how others interpreted Jewish identity and Judaism. To students outside the Jewish community, Judaism was a religion, and one that, like Christianity, required the belief in God. Thus, the participants in

this study expressed frustration that their non-Jewish peers did not understand the cultural identity. This frustration illustrates the complexity Jewish students see in their own identities.

Although the participants understood their own Jewish identities as primarily cultural and ethnic rather than religious or spiritual, the students related an understanding of religious and cultural Jewish identity as linked to one another. Students showed that these are linked in two major ways: (i) by making religious meaning out of cultural experience; (ii) and by finding cultural meaning in religious experiences. When struggling with spiritual issues, students created cultural meanings out of their experiences. The participants also described finding religious significance in cultural experiences, such as having a spiritual experience because of a connection to other Jews. In their responses to interview questions, participants illustrated meaning making as explained by Parks: "the activity of seeking pattern, order, form and significance" (1986, p. 14). This illustrates the reinforcing nature of cultural and religious Jewish identity. For each individual, one aspect of identity might be more salient than another, but overall, aspects of Jewish identity are inextricably tied in a way that reinforces one another.

Social Activism

Students with connected ethnic and religious identities express their identities in ways other than religious observance (Sanchez & Carter, 2005). The students in this study explicitly stated that getting involved in service activities is an expression of their Jewish identity. They understand this to be an expression of both their cultural and spiritual Jewish identity. The importance participants find in social justice activities comes out of a tenet of

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Judaism, the commandment to repair the world. This further illustrates that commitment to social activism is a manifestation of Jewish identity. By finding spiritual significance in community service, students are illustrating Parks (2000) concept of meaning making. As this finding is notably absent from current research about Jewish college students, it requires further research.

Hierarchy of Jewish Identity

Although participants explored feeling connected to other Jewish students, they also described an informal hierarchy within the campus Jewish community. Brad and Adam both discussed not feeling Jewish enough because of their cultural, rather than religious, identity. This is congruent with Moss and Faux's idea of ascription, where identity is assigned by others based on stereotypes of what it means to be part of a given group. In this situation other Jewish students considered Brad and Adam as outside the boundaries of the group because their ascribed stereotypes require a strong religious identity. This illustrates enactment of a hierarchy within the Jewish community on campus. One's self-concept is likely to be affected by the ascriptions of others. In this case, it leads Jewish students to feel "less Jewish" because the stereotype necessitates a religious identity rather than a cultural one. This is related to the previous discussion of the complex nature of Jewish identity.

Participants tended to express one of two ideas about the affect of their peers on their identity: (a) that their identities were strengthened as a result of interactions with their peers, or (b) that peer interactions were a place for educating and learning from one another. Both of these notions position students within a hierarchy of students on campus. In the first scenario, Jewish students react to their peers by strengthening their own identity positioning.

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This can happen in response to positive or negative feedback from peers. Where if one

receives positive feedback, his/her identity is strengthened through affirmation. If one

receives negative feedback, his/her identity is strengthened by furthering an understanding of

who he/she is not, thus reinforcing one's placement within the hierarchy. In the second

example, one's positioning becomes that of a teacher or a pupil. Students might play either

role, but both result in an increased understanding of one's self-concept, including one's

positioning in the larger Jewish community on campus.

Implications

Implications for Practice

The participants of this study and Renn (2000) both highlighted the importance of

having both a physical and psychological space on campus to express identity. The students

pointed out that it helps them to feel more connected to other Jewish students on campus.

Renn indicated that space on campus validates privately held notions about identity in

students. This study has shown that when a university promotes an open discussion that

embraces difference, students felt comfortable expressing their identity even when it was

outside the norm. Renn urges faculty to reflect on identity in their courses and staff to

become aware of identity issues facing students and campuses to create and support

welcoming physical spaces for students. Sanchez and Carter (2005) also emphasize the

importance of creating a space on campuses for students to express simultaneous identities.

For Jewish students, this requires an understanding that Jewish identity is both a cultural and

religious identity. Any campus dialogue intended to develop cultural or religious identity in

college students needs to be aware of the interaction between the two identities in this student population.

The topic of identity development in Jewish college students is further complicated by fears reflected in the Jewish community that Jewish identity is fading (Sales & Saxe, 2006). This fear comes out of the increasing ease of assimilation for Jews, especially for Jewish college students (Sales & Saxe). Such anxieties are not irrational, but rather based in research: an increasing number of Jewish children receive little to no Jewish education and Jews are increasingly marrying outside of their faith (Sales & Saxe). Regardless of one's perspective on the future of Jewish American identity, practitioners should be aware of the pressure Jewish college students experience as a result of this anxiety. It is useful to develop a campus dialog about identity and include in that dialogue conversations about the longevity of ethnic identities.

Although there are numerous issues affecting identity in Jewish college students including a misunderstanding of their identity, ambiguous positioning within the larger religion on campus conversation, and concerns about the longevity of Jewish identity, there are already many useful resources available to students and student affairs administrators. Tamid and other Jewish organizations are private entities that serve the purpose of developing Jewish identity in college student while supporting the academic mission of the institutions. The relationships between universities and Tamid tend to be underdeveloped (Sales & Saxe, 2006). It might be helpful to students and administrators alike to work to strengthen this relationship, so that when administrators encounter a Jewish student who is struggling to find their place on campus or within Jewish identity, they can refer them to

professionals or other students at Tamid. However, it is important to keep in mind, as the participants in this study have pointed out, that there is diversity to the experience of Jewish students on campus. Thus, some students do not identify as Jewish in the same way as the perceived Tamid identity. Therefore, not all students will feel comfortable even within the Tamid environment.

When working with Jewish students, it is of the utmost importance that college professionals remember that there is not one way of being Jewish; rather, Jewish students need to be able to express multiple identities simultaneously. Keeping in mind that campus climate also plays an important role in student's identity (Renn, 2000; Sales & Saxe, 2006), each campus will need to address Jewish identity through a unique, institution-appropriate, student-appropriate method. That is, if a given campus has a culture of social activism, it would be helpful to talk to Jewish students about how this activism is related to their Jewish identity. Another example, though not explicitly addressed in this study, is to be aware of the campus conversation about Israel and how that relates to Jewish students' notion of their cultural identity as a people. Yet another possible example is that, like the students in this study, Jewish students on campus may make religious meaning of the cultural aspects of their Jewish identity. Thus, it is necessary for practitioners to legitimize this development when interacting with Jewish students by developing open dialogues about religion on campus, without excluding cultural development.

Love (2002) and Chickering and Dalton (2006) stress that it is necessary for student affairs practitioners to be aware of their own spiritual development. "This means considering how they create meaning, purpose, and direction in their lives, the forms of dependence that

exist in their relationships, and the types of communities to which they belong (Love, 2002, p. 370). Practitioners might also ask themselves how their own cultural identities are tied to their religious identities.

Many authors (Love, 2002; Chickering & Dalton, 2006) also emphasize the importance of separating spiritual development from religious observance. This is true for all students, but likely especially true for students who, like Jewish students, express their cultural identity in relation to their spiritual and religious development.

Limitations

This study is limited by its nature as a case study. That is, it occurs on a specific campus during a specific time period and cannot be generalized to all campuses or experiences. By looking at these students during only one semester, this study provides only a snapshot of the students' identity and cannot begin to analyze their *development* through observation, only through the experiences relayed by the students themselves.

The current research is limited because the participants were recruited and selected because of their involvement in a Jewish program on campus. Thus, this study is limited by not providing any indication about the experiences of those students who have grown up Jewish, but are not participating in Jewish activities on campus. This study does not provide insight to Jewish students who do not identify with the Reform sect of Judaism, as all of this study's participants identify as Reform. Students from more traditionally observant families might reflect a stronger religious identity.

Implications for Further Research

The limitations explored above suggest areas for further research. Identity development needs to be looked at over a longer period of time in Jewish college students. Ideally, a study would look at identity over the course of students' entire college experience so that changes in manifestation of Jewish identity can be tracked as well as students' understanding of their identity and the salience of aspects of that identity.

More research is required to explore identity in many subsets of Jewish populations on college campuses, including students from interfaith families, immigrant students, and biracial Jewish students. Trends show that these groups of Jewish students are growing at a rapid pace. As there is diversity within the Jewish student community on campus, it is likely that these students experience something unique; further research would provide insight to what is specific to their experience.

It would be useful for research to explore the experience of Jewish student identity in comparison to the identity of non-Jewish students on campus. The participants in this study indicated feeling a sense of difference in identity compared to other students. This is an idea that requires further attention to understand what is unique among this student population. The specific questions requiring further inquiry include: (i) do non-Jewish students understand their cultural identity as related to their religious identity, and is this different for specific populations, that is, do African American students, for example, experience something different than white students? (ii) What observable differences can be seen between Jewish and non-Jewish students on campus? (iii) and what different perspectives do Jewish students and non-Jewish students have in their struggles with the existence of God?

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Moreover, many models require further testing. Through his grounded theory research MacDonald-Dennis (2006) developed a model of ethno-religious identity. Jones and McEwen (2000) offered a conceptual model for multiple dimensions of identity. Neither of these models has been specifically applied to Jewish students. Although it was developed through research of Jewish college students, MacDonald-Dennis' model requires further research to understand its applicability to the larger population, rather than the fifteen participants of his study. To further understand multiple identities in Jewish college students, it would be helpful to test only Jones and McEwen's model rather than bringing together many bodies of literature as the current study does. Testing these models will illuminate a further understanding of the similarities and differences between Jewish students and other college students. More quantitative research is also necessary. Many of the studies are based on qualitative research at a relatively few number of institutions. This provides an in depth understanding of the specific case being studied but is not easily generalized. Future research should employ quantitative methods in an attempt to provide for further testing of the models in a generalizable manner.

Conclusion

Ethnic identity and religious Jewish identity are intertwined, with both aspects influencing one another. This complex identity leads to students forming a hierarchy within the campus community based around their stereotypes and expectations of Jewish identity. The complex nature of Jewish identity also leads to unexpected manifestations of Jewish identity, especially in relation to social activism. It is important that practitioners come to

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understand these manifestations as well as the complexities of Jewish identity and their

implications for the campus community.

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APPENDICES

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: Exploring Identity in Jewish College Students: Giving Voice to a Struggle
Principal Investigator **Cara Behneman**
Faculty Sponsor (if applicable) **Dr. Alyssa Bryant**

We are asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to increase understanding of the identity development in Jewish college students.

INFORMATION

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in two one-on-one tape recorded interviews, each approximately an hour long, as well as a focus group with other participants, also approximately one hour long. You will also be asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire. The interviews will discuss your Jewish identity, how that identity has changed and struggles you have had with your identity. The focus group will center on your opinions regarding the Hillel Campus Entrepreneurs Initiative Program.

RISKS

Involvement in interviews or focus groups might bring up psychological or emotional issues that were previously not realized. As participants will be asked to discuss religious beliefs and backgrounds, you will be asked to disclose information that might be uncomfortable to disclose. Participating in the focus group may cause some uneasiness if you are not comfortable sharing in a group setting. Although attendance of the focus group is required as part of participation in the study, you are not required to share in this setting. If this is the case, I would like to set up another interview to discuss ideas shared in the focus group.

Please be reminded that counseling services are available to students through UNC at Counseling and Wellness Services (CWS), Campus Health Services, James A. Taylor Building, Campus Box 7470, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599-7470, Phone: 919-966-3658

BENEFITS

Through participation in this study, you may make discoveries about your own development. You could develop relationships with other participants. You will hopefully develop a stronger understanding of your Jewish identity and may share this with other students with whom you interact.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely in a locked file cabinet in my home office. No reference will be made in oral or written reports, which could link you to the study.

COMPENSATION (if applicable)

For participating in this study you will receive $50 by check at the completion of your involvement. If you withdraw from the study prior to its completion, you forfeit the opportunity to receive compensation.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Cara Behneman, at 3800 Hillsborough St. Raleigh, NC 27607, cara.behneman@gmail.com, or 240.505.8944. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. David Kaber, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-3086) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148)

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed at your request.

CONSENT

"I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time."

Subject's signature _____ **Date** _____

Investigator's signature _____ **Date** _____

Appendix B
Demographic Information

Please fill out the following information to the best of your knowledge.

Participant Name: _____
Academic Year: _____   Anticipated Graduation Date: _____
Academic Major(s)/Minor(s): _____
Hometown: _____
Would you describe your hometown as located in a "Jewish" neighborhood/area?

Does your family have a membership with a synagogue?
     ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Do of your parents identify as Jewish?
     Father: ☐ Yes   ☐ No: _____
     Mother: ☐ Yes   ☐ No: _____
     Step Parent(s):
_____
What sect of Judaism would best describe your identity?

Appendix C

Interview 1 Questions:
1. What factors contributed to your decision to attend UNC?
2. How did you first become involved with Hillel?
3. Describe the activities in which you participate that you consider Jewish?
4. How do you define Judaism?
5. How do you perceive Judaism as a religion? As a culture? As an ethnicity?
6. What parts of your identity are most important in your life?
7. Do you find that you express multiple identities? If so, in what ways?
8. Are there books or movies that have influenced your understanding of Jewish identity? Which ones and in what ways?

Interview 2 Questions:
1. Tell me of an experience that developed your Jewish identity.
2. Tell me about when you first became aware of your Jewish identity?
3. How did you come to incorporate Judaism into your identity?
4. How do you express your Jewish Identity? Has this changed over time?
5. Tell me about a time when you doubted your faith? Your Jewish Identity?
6. Are there times when you have not felt comfortable expressing your Jewish identity and instead, focused on another aspect of your identity
7. Do your relationships with your Jewish friends, classmates and acquaintances differ from your relationships with your non-Jewish friends, classmates and acquaintances? How so?
8. In what ways do your peers influence your religious convictions?

Appendix D

Focus Group Questions:
1. How has your involvement in the Campus Entrepreneurs Initiative program contributed to your understanding of Jewish identity in general? In your own life?
2. How do you perceive your influence on the identity of your Jewish peers as a result of your participation in this program? How does this understanding differ from your previous understanding?
3. How have your peers influenced your own understanding of Jewish identity?
4. What changes could be made in the program to increase Jewish identity development?
5. What factors help you to feel comfortable expressing your Jewish identity on campus?
6. Do you feel university faculty, staff and/or administrators understand and appreciate your Jewish identity? What could be done to improve this understanding?

Appendix E

Lists of Codes:

- Meaning-making (Parks, 2000)
- Notions of Connectivity
- multiple identities (Jones & McEwen, 2000)
- General cultural identity
- Social activism
- Religious identity
- Ethnic identity
- Discussion of food
- Cultural identity theory (Moss & Faux, 2006)
- Identity hierarchy
- Public vs. private identity
- Multi-racial identity development (Renn, 2000)
- Religious observance
- Jewish activities
- Faith Development Theory (Fowler, 1981)
- Parks' (2000) theory of faith Development