

Abstract

Title of Thesis: “WAIT, ARE YOU JEWISH?”: JEWISH CULTURE
ON CAMPUS

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With a number of recent high-profile anti-Jewish hate incidents on college campuses and across the United States, a deeper understanding of Jewish student culture is necessary for practitioners and scholars to better understand Jewish students. The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of Jewish college students' perspectives on Jewish student culture during college. Two research questions were examined: 1) How does an undergraduate Jewish student's understanding of self, context, and their pathway to Judaism influence their cultural tool kit during college? and 2) In what ways do Jewish students use *basic knowledge* as part of their tool kits? Five Jewish college students engaged in semi-structured interviews. Through dialogical narrative analysis, four story types emerged: pre-college Jewish experiences, connection to other Jews, rituals and religious services, and basic knowledge.

“WAIT, ARE YOU JEWISH?”: JEWISH CULTURE ON CAMPUS

by

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Dedication

To Pa, without whom I would not be here, physically, academically, and spiritually. In Hebrew, we say *zichrono lebracha*, which translates to “may his memory be for a blessing.” I have been blessed with so much because of your memory, Pa.



A photograph of me and my grandfather, Pa, circa 2000.

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Chapter I: Introduction

On October 27, 2018, I was at a friend's wedding when a friend and fellow graduate student texted me, "Hey, just wanted to check in on u today since I know you're away from home with all the shit happening." While I was preparing flower crowns and working on table settings all morning, a man walked into the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and opened fire on those Jews attending morning Shabbat services that day, killing 11 Jews and wounding six other people (Mamula, Goldstein, Ward, Navratil, & Bradbury, 2018). When I saw the news, I was in shock and, because I was at a wedding, I did not have the space to process what was happening. Over the next few days, I made sense of how I was feeling, and I was devastated. Every time I had a moment unoccupied by another thought, I had three words on repeat in my head: 11 dead Jews, 11 dead Jews, 11 dead Jews.

Just four days later, I defended the proposal for this thesis, the weight of this anti-Jewish¹ hate crime on my heart. It became all the more clear to me how important this work is in the current climate. The Anti-Defamation League (2018a) found that anti-Jewish¹ hate crimes increased by 60 percent from 2016 to 2017, and the organization attributed this increase partially to a "significant increase in incidents in schools and on college campuses" (para. 2). This year, at my undergraduate alma mater, anti-Jewish posters were found in one of the libraries on campus (Ward, 2019). Some of the other anti-Jewish incidents that occurred on college campuses in the past year

¹ I use the phrase "anti-Jewish oppression" throughout this paper rather than "anti-semitism," although they are often used interchangeably. I have chosen to use "anti-Jewish oppression" because of the history of the term "anti-semitism." The term "anti-semitism" was created by people who advocated for discrimination against Jews. Additionally, "semites" has been used to refer not only to Jews, but also to Arabs (Rosenblum, 2007).

include: the office of a Jewish Holocaust scholar at Columbia University was vandalized with graffiti of a swastika and a slur (Jaschik, 2018), a Jewish fraternity's Hanukkah menorah was vandalized and stolen at Pennsylvania State University (Rafacz, 2018), and anti-Jewish vandalism was found at a residence hall at the University of Minnesota (TC Jewfolk, 2018). While Jewish students deserve to be understood for who they are independent from anti-Jewish oppression, it is more important than ever that practitioners have a deep understanding of the Jewish students they serve because of the campus climate that Jewish students are entering.

The years spent at a university are a time of growth and development for many students. As an undergraduate, I grew in many different ways, but one of the most important was the growth in my connection to the Jewish student community and my own cultural and religious identity as a Jewish person. My community had a great impact on me and it likely does for the many other Jewish students who attend universities. Through this work, I hope to better understand and give back to a community that has given so much to me.

What Is Jewish Identity?

In the United States, Jewish people comprise 1.9% of the general population, totaling approximately 6 million people (Pew Research Center, 2014). Identifying as Jewish can be complex, as Jewish identity can include practicing a religion or spirituality, identifying with an ethnicity and culture, or identifying with a people or civilization (Langman, 1999; McDonald-Dennis, 2006). Being Jewish is more than just being religiously observant; it is also a “feeling of belonging to a specific ethnic group that crosses national borders and is instead tied to history, tradition, and ancestry”

(Friedlander et al., 2010, p. 345). Judaism can represent a person's religious, cultural, and ethnic identity, some of those identities, or none of them. In 2013, nearly one-third of Jewish Americans born after 1980 identified as Jewish in a way other than by religion, but still engaged in practices traditionally seen as religious, such as fasting on Yom Kippur or attending services (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2013). Research found that a person does not have to engage in religious and behavioral aspects of Judaism to strongly identify as a Jew (Altman, Inman, Fine, Ritter, & Howard, 2010). The study of people with Jewish identities presents challenges because of the complexities in defining Jewish identity in academia.

What Is Jewish Culture?

In the literature, there has been little consensus on a definition of culture and about what binds Jews together culturally (Altman et al., 2010; Swidler, 1986). For the purposes of this paper, culture is defined as the symbolic forms that are publicly available and provide a means through which people experience and express meaning (Swidler, 1986). These forms can include beliefs, art, ceremonies and ritual practices, language, stories, and more (Swidler, 1986). Many consider Jews as part of mainstream White American culture, and thus less attention has been paid to Jewish culture (Altman et al., 2010; Langman, 1999). Historically, Jews descending from European ancestors - that is, Jews with light skin - were not always viewed as White in the United States. During the 1920s and 30s, they were largely considered either non-White or the lowest race of White (Brodin, 2012). By the end of World War II, Jews with light skin had come to be seen as White in the United States for many different

reasons (Brodin, 2012). Not all Jews have light skin - according to research by the Pew Research Center (2013), approximately 7 percent of U.S. Jews identify as Black, Hispanic, or other racial or ethnic backgrounds. Jews of different races or ethnicities may have ancestors who came from different geographic regions than light-skinned Jews, which may result in different cultural artifacts such as food, music, language, and traditions (“Sephardic, Ashkenazic, Mizrahi and Ethiopian Jews”, n.d.). However, for the most part, in the United States, Jews are now thought of as White. Because Jews are viewed as a group of people assimilated into White American culture, Jews are sometimes not thought of as having a culture of their own.

In addition to the lack of research on Jewish culture in general, there have been very few studies to increase understanding of Jewish students in particular (Yares, 1999). This is despite the fact that research on religious and spiritual development in college students has increased in recent years and traditional college age students are in a period of significant religious and spiritual development (Barry, Nelson, Datar, & Urry, 2010; Bowman, Felix, & Ortis, 2014). It is important to understand how to best support Jewish students while they are on campus during this time of their development.

When Jewish students arrive at college, they bring with them their cultural tool kit, or the symbolic forms associated with their culture that they can use in different ways (Nagel, 1994; Swidler, 1986). The cultural tool kit is shaped by the context they are in and the student’s other identities (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Included in their cultural tool kits is *basic knowledge*, or the student’s understanding of what all other Jews understand and know about Judaism. For the purposes of my study, I refer to *basic knowledge* in both English and Hebrew, *yeda b’sisi*. While *yeda b’sisi* is not a

researched theory or model, Jews have been writing about it and how it affects their lives in other ways. For both Adrienne Rich (1986) and Chanel Dubofsky (2018), *yeda b'sisi* was something they believed they lacked and that affected how other Jews interacted with them. Rich (1986), who grew up in a southern, Christian town, described meeting other Jews in college:

They took me on, some with amusement at my illiteracy, some arguing that I could never marry into a strict Jewish family, some convinced I didn't 'look Jewish,' others that I did. I learned the names of holidays and foods, which surnames are Jewish and which are 'changed names'; about girls who had their noses 'fixed,' their hair straightened. (p. 478)

Rich (1986) at the time believed the Jewish college students teaching her to be “‘real’ Jewish students” (p. 478) and that gaining this knowledge was “flirting with identity” (p. 479). Dubofsky (2018) wrote about her experience working on college campuses as an organizer for Jewish life:

It was clear that many of my students shared some common Jewish narratives: camp, Israel, and bar and bat mitzvahs. I didn't miss an experience I hadn't had, but I did feel left out of an experience (I also hadn't gone to camp and didn't go to Israel until I was in my early 20s) that seemed to lend legitimacy to Judaism. I operated with a certain degree of paranoia for awhile during my Jewish professional life. When was I going to be exposed for forgoing this thing that was supposed to have made me a Jewish adult? (para. 3)

Dubofsky (2018) also included the voice of a Jewish Woman of Color who

did not have a bat mitzvah, which made her feel like an outsider. She attributes this to not being a member of a Jewish community growing up and believes that may be related to being a Jew of Color (Dubofsky, 2018). In contrast, Sara Gibbs (2018) wrote about her experience becoming the leader of her campus's Jewish Society and believing that she "had the basics down" (para. 17). Across Rich's (1986), Dubofsky's (2018), and Gibbs' (2018) experiences, what is common is the idea that there is some basic information or experience that Jews have. For both Rich (1986) and Dubofsky (2018), this *basic knowledge* was inaccessible to them, but there was an expectation by others or themselves that they have that knowledge. My interpretation of the cultural tool kit and *yeda b'sisi* and their roles in my conceptual framework is in chapter two. Our campuses can affect cultural tool kits in both positive and negative ways, which is why it is important for Jewish students and those who work with them to have an understanding of Jewish culture.

Why Jewish Students?

Despite the lack of research, it is important for practitioners and scholars to have an understanding of Jewish students. Identification with Judaism is associated with positive outcomes for many students: increased academic and personal-emotional adjustment and achievement, decreased participation in risky behaviors such as binge drinking, increased college satisfaction, increased perceived growth, and increased graduation rates (Barry et al., 2010; Bowman, Felix, & Ortis, 2014; Luczak et al., 2002). Students with no religious affiliation had the lowest satisfaction with friendships, perceived growth in level of preparedness for post-college life, and perceived growth in interracial relationships (Bowman, Felix, & Ortis, 2014). Additionally, they had low

satisfaction with choice of institution and perceived growth towards being a better person (Bowman, Felix, & Ortis, 2014). This indicates that supporting Jewish students in their Jewish identity or faith may positively influence their college experiences. Jewish students also face many identity issues and could benefit from student affairs professionals' help thinking about and exploring their identity (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2006).

Despite the positive associations with Jewish student identity, Jewish students reported feeling faculty and staff misunderstand their identities and the challenges they faced (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2006). Jewish students also tend to have a difficult time maintaining their religious and cultural customs when they go to college (Bowman, Felix, & Ortis, 2014). There may be many reasons for this, such as college being a very different context from home or the inconvenience of Jewish activities and spaces (such as a kosher dining hall) (Kadushin & Tighe, 2008). Other factors that impacted how difficult it was to be Jewish on campus included "looking at one's whole life through the lens of Judaism, observing many *mitzvot*², studying torah, and trying to keep kosher while living on campus" (Kadushin & Tighe, 2008, pp. 16-17). These things may make it more difficult to be Jewish on campus because they involve significant time commitments that are outside of the time commitments of Jewish students' peers.

Campuses that provided resources to meet the needs of a Jewish lifestyle, such as a kosher dining facility, made it easier for Jewish students to be Jewish on campus (Kadushin & Tighe, 2008). Less actively Jewish students did not find it as difficult to be Jewish on campus as their more actively Jewish peers (Kadushin & Tighe, 2008).

² ² *Mitzvot* (sing. *mitvah*) is the Hebrew word for commandments ("Mitzvah: A commandment").

Jewish students reported that they are more easily able to be Jewish at colleges and universities with a higher percentage of Jews, indicating that a large campus community can facilitate better experiences for Jewish students (Kadushin & Tighe, 2008). The smaller the proportion of Jewish students on the campus, the more difficult it became for the students to be Jewish (Kadushin & Tighe, 2008). Jewish community centers, campus organizations such as Hillel, interfaith centers, and spiritual centers have an opportunity to impact Jewish students through the communities that they create.

With more than 350,000 Jewish students at colleges and universities in the United States (Steinhardt Social Research Institute, 2013), a deeper understanding of Jewish student culture is necessary for practitioners and scholars to better understand Jewish identity and, ultimately, support identity development. Through understanding the pieces of culture that are important to Jewish students, practitioners can better serve those students' interests and engage them in opportunities to further develop their identities. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of Jewish college students' perspectives on Jewish student culture during college. My first research question is, how does an undergraduate Jewish student's understanding of self, context, and their pathway to Judaism influence their cultural tool kit during college? Second, in what ways do Jewish students use *basic knowledge* as part of their tool kits? In chapter two, I first review my conceptual framework combining cultural tool kits (Nagel, 1994; Swidler, 1986) and the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Jones, & McEwen, 2000) to provide a structure for how to think about the literature that is reviewed. Additionally, I provide an overview of the relationship between my conceptual framework and *yeda b'sisi*. Then, I review the literature that

already exists on this topic. Due to minimal research specifically focusing on Jewish culture on college campuses, I focus on topics that arose that could be indicative of Jewish culture and the impact of other identities and context on Jewish cultural identity. In chapter three, I review narrative inquiry as my methodological focus and other details of the methods for this study. In chapter four, I analyze the stories that arose from the interviews with participants and provide a discussion on each. Lastly, in chapter five, I provide implications for practice and research.

Chapter II: Literature Review

In order to better understand the context for how I discussed the literature, it is important to first review my conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework

For this study, the conceptual framework consists of the theory of cultural tool kits (Swidler, 1986; Nagel, 1994) and the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Jones & McEwen, 2007). In chapter 1, culture was defined as the symbolic forms that are publicly available and provide a means through which people experience and express meaning (Swidler, 1986). These forms can include beliefs, art, ceremonies and ritual practices, language, stories, and more (Swidler, 1986). Swidler (1986) argued that these forms fill a people's "cultural tool kit" and that they are used in their everyday lives (p. 273). What is in a cultural tool kit "answers the question: what are we?" (Nagel, 1994, p. 162). Nagel (1994) added that individuals also determine the contents of their tool kits – they may get rid of some symbols, keep some, and add others. Cultural tool kits allow an individual to put into action pieces of their culture (Swidler, 1986).

Cognitive psychological research supported the idea that individuals have cultural tool kits and even suggests that each individual's tool kit is large (DiMaggio, 1997). Cognitively, individuals collect information, pass that information into memory, and organize it into the framework of their understanding of the topic of the information (DiMaggio, 1997). This means that information that is consistent with the individual's beliefs and representations of the world gets incorporated into that framework, while information that does not fit into the framework is either not stored or stored as false.

When information is recalled, the individual first recalls information that is consistent with their beliefs and representations (DiMaggio, 1997). Then, information is recalled based on “cues embedded in the physical and social environment” (DiMaggio, 1997, p. 267). This research was consistent with cultural tool kits because it suggested that individuals have a pool of information stored that makes up their framework of their culture. Information can be added or removed, and some information that is inconsistent with the framework may be kept as well. This aligned well with Swidler’s (1986) idea that “all people know more culture than they use” (p. 277) because it suggested that individuals are storing a great deal of information about their culture and then choosing what information to use and when to use it.

The Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity was used to examine the shape and size of the tool kit and the symbols inside for Jewish students on a college campus (Jones & McEwen, 2000). The model indicates that no one identity can be understood on its own – it can only be understood through its relationship to other identities and their salience, an individual’s personality and characteristics, and the external context (Jones & McEwen, 2000). The model depicts rings positioned around a core encircled by a larger ring (Jones & McEwen, 2000). The core is an individual’s personal identity, which includes their “valued personal attributes and characteristics” (Jones & McEwen, 2000, p. 383). The intersecting rings around the core are the individual’s socially constructed identities, such as race, class, gender, religion, and more (Jones & McEwen, 2007). Each ring represents one identity and a dot is placed on the ring to indicate how salient the identity is to the person (Jones & McEwen, 2000). An identity that is highly salient to the person will have a dot that is closer to the core while an

identity that is not as salient will be located farther away (Jones & McEwen, 2000). It is important to note that the placement of the dots, while static on the diagram, is not static in real life. Salience of an identity shifts as context shifts (Jones & McEwen, 2000).

Lastly, the ring encircling the rest of the figure is the context the person is in (Jones & McEwen, 2000). The context plays a role in how salient each of an individual's identities are depending on "contextual factors such as family background, sociocultural conditions, current life experiences, and career decisions and life planning" (Jones & McEwen, 2000, p. 410). All of these aspects of the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity have an impact on what a Jewish student carries in their tool kit and, ultimately, what it means to that student to be Jewish on a college campus. However, for the purposes of this study, I focus on the intersections between Jewish students' other identities and their Jewish identity and the context. In the next sections, I offer two examples through the literature that present the multiple dimensions of one's identity and the context and how they relate to Jewish identity.

Jewish cultural identity and other identities and their salience. Jewish cultural identity is impacted by a person's other identities and the salience of those identities. For example, a Jewish student who is also part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) community would likely have different symbolic forms in their cultural tool kit than a heterosexual Jewish student. One example is how queer Jewish students might understand and tell the story of the Jewish holiday of Purim. Purim is a holiday that celebrates Esther's work to save the Jewish people from destruction, risking her own life by revealing her Jewish identity to her husband and the king of Persia ("Purim 101," n.d.).

When celebrating Purim, Queer Jews sometimes focus on the idea of *coming out* as the protagonist of the story must do in order to save the Jewish people (Goodman, 2013). However, if the student's LGBTQ identity is not salient to them, they may focus on other aspects of the Purim story. Additionally, if the student's Jewish community is not accepting of those with LGBTQ identities, it will be more difficult for the student to fit that story in their tool kit. Whether the student incorporates LGBTQ symbolic forms in their Jewish cultural tool kit and the level of acceptance of those symbolic forms by the individual and the cultural group determine what it means for them to be Jewish. While this example focuses on the intersection of Jewish identity and LGBTQ identity, there are many other possible intersections that could potentially influence the cultural tool kit for a Jewish student.

Jewish cultural identity and the external context. External context has an impact on Jewish cultural identity, as well. For example, the Jewish communities of which a Jewish student is a member can affect what symbolic forms are part of their cultural tool kit. A Jewish student might have certain rituals in their tool kit because of the influence of their family, such as attending Shabbat services every Friday and participating in the different prayers. This student might decide to stop going to Shabbat services every week because the people in their residence hall play a sport on Friday nights, changing what Shabbat means to them in their cultural tool kit and altering what it means for them to be Jewish while they are at college. A different Jewish student might not have those rituals because their family did not incorporate them. This student might choose not to add a Shabbat practice to their cultural tool kit because they do not know the prayers that are sung at services.

Connecting the Tool Kit and Multiple Dimensions of Identity

Each Jewish student arrives at college with a different cultural tool kit dependent upon the other identities they hold and their salience and the external context. As a student moves through their college experience, new identities might emerge and the salience of identities might change. Additionally, the college environment presents a new external context as a student moves through many unique environments. These new experiences influence the symbolic forms that a student has in their cultural tool kit. Jewish students make decisions about what symbolic forms to keep, get rid of, and add to their cultural tool kit based on all of the above factors. These decisions affect what Jewish culture looks like to each Jewish student. Another factor that may play a role in how Jewish students understand Jewish culture on campus is *yeda b'sisi*.

Yeda b'sisi. *Yeda b'sisi*, or *basic knowledge*, is an individual's understanding of what all other Jews understand and know about Judaism. *Yeda b'sisi* is not included as part of the conceptual framework, but it is related to how Jewish students may understand their culture on a college campus. Gibbs (2018) called this “the basics,” knowledge and experiences such as observing major Jewish holidays and engaging in some cultural practices like eating apples and honey for Rosh Hashanah (para. 17). While *yeda b'sisi* does not change the size and shape of the tool kit, it can place expectations on what individuals know, understand, and have experienced, and thus what they have included in their tool kits. When someone does not meet the expectations of others for what they are supposed to have in their tool kit, they may experience negative reactions from others or have negative feelings themselves. For example, Rich (1986) described her Jewish college peers telling her that she would not

be able to marry into a strict Jewish family because of her Jewish background and experiences. Her peers also were amused by her lack of knowledge (Rich, 1986). Dubofsky (2018) described feeling paranoid that her Jewish colleagues or students would find out that she did not have the knowledge or experiences that it seemed they had and that she was lacking in legitimacy as a Jewish professional because she did not have those experiences. *Yeda b'sisi* can impact a student's cultural tool kit because it places expectations on what cultural symbols should already been in their tool kit. With an understanding of the conceptual framework and how *yeda b'sisi* relates to it, below I review the literature.

Literature Review

Before reviewing the literature, it is important to note the intent of the information I have included here. There are three main goals I hope to achieve with the literature: 1) provide a brief history of Jews in higher education in the United States to provide context for the climate and culture on campus today, 2) provide an overview of what the literature has to say about what Jewish culture looks like on a college campus, and 3) provide an overview of what the literature has to say about the connections between other identities and Judaism and context and Judaism.

The literature on Jewish culture is sparse, and the research that discussed Jewish culture did not focus on culture itself. Instead, the research focused on Jewish ethnic identity or engagement of Jewish college students. However, from the existing literature, I pulled out some pieces of what Jewish student culture might be on college campuses. Within the existing literature, several aspects of what might constitute Jewish culture at universities are discussed. However, before delving into what Jewish culture

potentially looks like on college campuses today, it's important to understand the history of Jews in higher education within the United States context.

Brief History of Jews in Higher Education

In order to understand the history of Jews in higher education, it is first important to understand how Jews have been racialized in the United States. Historically, Jews have experienced discrimination, called anti-Semitism or anti-Jewish oppression (MacDonald-Dennis, 2006). In the 1920s, scientific racism legitimized the view that “real Americans were white and that real whites came from northwest Europe” (Brodkin, 2012, p. 19). In the 1880s, there was a huge influx of European immigrants into U.S. cities, including Jews, which proved difficult for these cities to assimilate into their cultures (Brodkin, 2012). Of these European populations, Jews were considered the “worst of all” (Brodkin, 2012, p. 19). Because of the influx of immigrants, Jews and other southern and eastern European populations began to be more noticeable, and they were blamed for strikes (despite these being organized by native-born workers) and seeds of distrust were planted by calling the immigrants Soviets (Brodkin, 2012). All of these factors led to the development in a “belief in European races [that] took root most deeply among the wealthy, U.S.-born Protestant elite, who feared a hostile and seemingly [un]assimilable working class” (Brodkin, 2012, p. 18). At that time these were not extremist views, but “well within the mainstream of the early 20th-century scientific community” (Brodkin, 2012, p. 19).

With this context in mind, it is no surprise that Jews attempting to access higher education faced tremendous anti-Jewish oppression. In the early 20th century, college was still mainly an opportunity for elite and wealthy Protestants with few exceptions

(Brodkin, 2012). Access to college for Jews was largely based on class, particularly before the first World War where the education rates for the children of Jewish workers were similar to those of other immigrant workers (Brodkin, 2012). As the first of the European races to enter higher education in high numbers, Jews' Protestant peers called them "unwashed, uncouth, unrefined, loud, and pushy" (Brodkin, 2012, p. 20). Many presidents of universities, including the president of Harvard, were open about their anti-Jewish views (Brodkin, 2012). Despite this anti-Jewish oppression, some Jews were able to enter the academy because of their high academic achievement; however, they faced major challenges once they arrived because at this time college was not about how well students could perform academically (Brodkin, 2012). Instead, students were to rely on their ability to network and participate in social experiences, and Jews were ostracized from these activities (Brodkin, 2012).

Around the same time Jews were entering college, the focus on networking and social experiences in college was being challenged and replaced by practical training that prepared students for professional careers (Brodkin, 2012). Jews who were able to access higher education were able to get there because they had done well academically, and their Protestant peers saw this as taking "unfair advantage of a loophole to get where they were not wanted" (Brodkin, 2012, p. 20). In order to close these loopholes, elite colleges set admissions standards that were replicated by other colleges that then made exclusivity desirable for college-bound students and anti-Jewish oppression acceptable (Kadushin & Tighe, 2008; Brodkin, 2012). Colleges instituted a range of practices that were widely adopted to decrease the number of Jewish students accepted at colleges and to decrease the number of Jewish college students who

enrolled at colleges, including intelligence tests measuring “innate ability - and middle class home environment;” “applications that asked for religion, father’s name and birthplace, a photo, and personal interview;” and “fixed class size, a chapel requirement, and a preference for alumni” (Brodkin, 2012, p. 20). These practices did result in fewer Jews attending law, dental, medical, engineering, pharmacy, and veterinary schools (Brodkin, 2012). This resulted in Jews “confined to a small number of occupations,” “excluded from mainstream corporate management and corporately employed professions,” “almost totally excluded from university faculties,” “concentrated in small businesses,” and “serv[ing] a largely Jewish clientele” when compared to non-immigrant White people (Brodkin, 2012, p. 21).

Compared with other immigrants, however, Jews were relatively upwardly mobile. During this early history in higher education, Jewish communal organizations, such as the Anti-Defamation League, were involved on college campuses in order to try to combat anti-Jewish sentiment (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). This makes sense because in order for Jews to access and survive in higher education, combating and navigating anti-Jewish oppression would be of major importance to many Jews. But some Jews and non-Jewish faculty members in Illinois in the 1920s saw that both anti-Jewish oppression and lack of opportunities for meaningful engagement in Jewish life were hindering Jewish students from developing into their full Jewish potential (Hillel International).

Jewish life on campus. In 1923, the concept of Hillel began at the University of Illinois, Champaign, with a mission to “convey Jewish civilization to a new generation” (Hillel International, p. 2). Only 12 Hillels had opened by World War II

across the country (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). During this time, Hillel focused mainly on serving the religious needs of those students who were highly engaged (Koren, Saxe, and Fleisch, 2016). However, by the 1950s, Hillel had expanded to 200 campuses and to offer social, cultural, and religious programs (Hillel International). In the 1990s, Hillel took on a new mission statement: “maximizing the number of Jews doing Jewish with other Jews” (Hillel International, p. 12). In 1994, Hillel registered as a non-profit, Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life (Hillel International). Hillel has played many different roles historically, and sees itself as “helping the Jewish community thrive through periods of travail and triumph” (Hillel International, p. 2). It also sees itself as a “home away from home” for Jewish students (Hillel International, p. 2). Today, Hillel tries to engage with students wherever they are in their own Jewish journey, so that they may explore and celebrate their Jewishness at their own pace (Hillel International). Today, there are 550 Hillels at colleges in North America (Hillel International, 2018). There are a wide range of ways Hillels are managed on campus - some are operated from large buildings with full-time professional staff that provide a space and guidance for Jewish students on campus while others are small student groups with an advisor (Hillel International, “FAQs”).

Hillel is not the only organization for Jewish life on college campuses, although it may be one of the most well-known. Around the same time that Hillel was founded, several Jewish fraternities and sororities began to provide spaces for Jewish men and women facing discrimination on college campuses (Kadushin & Tighe, 2008). In the 1960s, another organization calling itself a “home away from home” for Jewish students began - Chabad (Chabad on Campus). Similarly to Hillel, Chabad opens itself to

Jewish students of all levels of religious observance (Chabad on Campus). Chabad started as rabbis at several universities and one house at UCLA in 1969 and has grown to serve over 150 campuses across the world (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Chabad programs are run by a married couple who “work with every student directly,” “but still within the framework of their traditional roles as rabbi and rebbetzin³” (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016, p. 60). One of Chabad’s signature programs, weekly Shabbat dinners, was found to appeal to many Jewish students regardless of their denomination (i.e. Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, etc.) and students who were otherwise uninvolved in Jewish life participated (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016, p. 60). As major providers of opportunities to participate in Jewish life on the campuses where they exist, Hillel, Chabad, and the professional staff that work there likely have an impact on the Jewish student culture at those campuses.

Jewish Culture

Religious practices and cultural traditions. Nearly two-thirds of Jewish adults born after 1980 do not attend services, but research suggests they may engage in other ways, such as thinking deeply about their own philosophies and beliefs (Pew Research Center, 2013; Arnett, 2004). While Jewish college students tend to become less religious in college, nearly ninety percent participate in a religious practice of some kind, such as Hanukkah candle lighting, participating in a Passover Seder, or attending Shabbat services at least once in the past year (Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2006; Hurwitz, 2018). Many students engage in informal cultural activities in their homes rather than through campus organizations, such as hosting Hanukkah parties

³ *Rebbetzin*, meaning wife of the rabbi in Yiddish.

or holiday brunches (Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2006). Altman et al. (2010) found that following a Jewish lifestyle, attending services, keeping kosher, celebrating holidays, and owning Jewish items were part of how the participants identified as Jewish. These formal or informal practices, traditions, or activities might be aspects of Jewish student culture on campus.

Language. Historically, Jews have spoken in distinct ways from the non-Jews with which they engaged (Benor, 2009). Altman et al. (2010) found that “speaking the language” was an aspect of how participants identified as Jewish (p. 170). While Altman et al. (2010) did not define what it means to speak the language, it might include language use anywhere from fluently speaking Hebrew or Yiddish to peppering speech with Hebrew or Yiddish words. College students are leading a revival of the Yiddish language on college campuses, with classes being offered at several universities in the United States (The Associated Press, 2011). Benor (2009) found many ways in which American Jews have distinguished their language from those around them, including avoiding the use of English religious words like parishioners and preach, borrowing words from Yiddish and Hebrew to refer to non-Jews, and recognizing their language as Jewish in a way that is distinctive from English. Because Jewish language can be unique from mainstream English, language may be an aspect of Jewish culture.

Learning. Jewish families have valued education and learning for several decades, with nearly all Jewish high schoolers attending college after graduating (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Nearly all of the Jewish campus organizations that serve Jewish college students include Jewish learning as a part of their programming, and

some even offer students stipends to engage in this learning (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Jewish Studies and Israel Studies programs have increased on a number of campuses and provide all students opportunities to learn about Judaism and Israel from both Jewish and non-Jewish faculty members (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Through these programs, Jewish students are able to learn about Jewish history, culture, and thought (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). In 2001, approximately 40% of Jewish students at universities took at least one course in Jewish Studies (Baskin, 2014). In the 2012-2013 academic year, over 15,000 students participated in an Israel Studies course in the United States, although it is not known how many of those students were Jewish (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Additionally, many opportunities exist through Hillel and other Jewish campus organizations to engage in Jewish leadership learning, social justice and advocacy learning, and more (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). The importance of learning appears to be a belief held by Jewish communities and it may be an aspect of culture for Jewish college students.

Connection to Israel. There are nearly 300 pro-Israel groups that exist on college campuses supporting students in experiencing Israel and connecting with Israelis (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). These organizations, mostly student groups, offer opportunities to engage in politics or advocacy, understand Israel's culture and history, and experience Israel through travel, work, and educational experiences (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). With over 300,000 participants from North America since its creation, Birthright Israel has undoubtedly had an impact on Jewish college students lives (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). The program was created to “counter the threat to Jewish continuity posed by assimilation,” meaning that it was designed to

prevent the loss of Jewish culture that can happen when assimilation to the mainstream culture occurs (Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2002, p. ix). Birthright Israel offers students an opportunity to travel to Israel for free and engage in intentional programming over a short period of time, typically 10 days. Assessments of the program have shown that Birthright Israel increases participants' connection to Israel and Jews worldwide compared to non-participants (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016; Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2002). In fact, "the strongest predictor of an emotional tie to Israel is having spent time there" (Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2006, p. 2). Other programs offer opportunities for students to engage in longer-term trips to Israel, such as study abroad, internships abroad, gap years, or volunteer programs (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). With so many opportunities to engage with Israel, it is likely that this has an impact on culture for Jewish students on college campuses.

Positive portrayals of Israel are not the only ways in which culture could be impacted. There are also politically active student organizations on campus that attempt to bring focus to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through support of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, bringing speakers who engage in a critical discussion of Israel, and other actions (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Many of these student organizations believe discussions of Israeli culture, technology, LGBT rights, and other topics that are not focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, are "normalization" and "colonization of the mind" (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016, p. 78). In a *The New York Review of Books* article, Beinart (2010) opined that these college students, critical of Israel, are acting in ways congruent with the "defining values of

American Jewish political culture: a belief in open debate, a skepticism about military force, a commitment to human rights” (para. 5). Koren, Saxe, and Fleisch (2016) argued that these groups were poorly studied and that Jewish student participation in them is potentially a result of the Jewish community’s philosophy of encouraging uncritical engagement with Israel, hiding the complexity of the state of Israel. However students are framing it, their connection to Israel may have an impact on the culture of the campus.

Community service and social justice. *Tzedakah*, a Hebrew word meaning “righteous behavior” or “justice,” and *tikkun olam*, a Hebrew word meaning “world repair,” are also important aspects of Jewish life on campus (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016; “Tikkun olam: Repairing the world,” n.d.; “Tzedakah 101,” n.d.). Community service projects allow Jewish students to participate in meaningful service while also engaging with other Jewish students (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). One such program is Challah for Hunger, where volunteers bake challah bread -- a traditional Jewish bread -- and sell it to raise money for hunger-relief organizations (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Another service opportunity is alternative spring break trips, which often seek to support students in building their Jewish identities through service projects (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). These service trips increase participants’ feelings of connectedness to other Jews, increase engagement in religious practice, and increase commitment to creating a socially just world (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). However, these trips have started to decline or have become opportunities to engage in the local community, perhaps due to the high cost of them or the lack of impact on the communities the trips were attempting to serve (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016).

Many service and social justice programs do not necessarily have anything Jewish about them, other than that they are based in Jewish values and most of the participants, if not all, are other Jews (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). While it is not clear how many Jewish students are engaging in service or social justice projects, these opportunities are likely impacting Jewish student campus culture.

Connection to other Jews. Many Jewish programs on campus share a premise that “Jews doing something together has value” (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016, p. 67). Altman et al. (2010) found that feeling strongly connected to and having commonalities with other Jews was an aspect of Jewish identity. There are opportunities on campus for students to engage with other Jews, potentially strengthening that connection. For example, there are five historically Jewish fraternities and sororities, and two of them hold Jewish identity as a central aspect of their identities and missions (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi), a Jewish fraternity, states its premise is to offer Jewish men a Jewish organization to be a part of and that it works to mitigate the assimilation that occurs when American Jews go to college (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Feeling connected to other Jews may also be an aspect of Jewish culture.

While the current literature did not provide specific research on what Jewish student culture looks like on college campuses, it provides a good starting place for what culture may look like based on research around Jewish ethnic identity and how Jewish students are engaged on campus. Some aspects of Jewish student culture may include religious practices and cultural traditions, language, learning, a connection to Israel, community service and social justice, and a connection to other Jews. Culture is

certainly not limited to these things – there may be cultural symbols that exist outside of these categories. Additionally, these things are not meant to define what it means to be Jewish, meaning that if a Jewish person does not have one or more (or any) of these things, it does not necessary make them any less Jewish. In addition to the research on Jewish culture, there is some research on what connections exist between Judaism and other identities and Judaism and the context on college campuses.

Connections Among Judaism and Other Identities

While the literature did not focus on what constitutes Jewish culture, there is some literature that focuses on the connection between Jewish identity and other identities. It is important for practitioners and scholars to recognize that Jewish students may have other identities that are as important or more important than their Jewish cultural identity. Jewish students also need support in understanding how their identities connect with their Jewish identity. Jewish cultural identity is also not limited to one racial or ethnic identity. Approximately 7 percent of U.S. Jews identify as black, Hispanic, or other racial or ethnic backgrounds (Pew Research Center, 2013). While the majority of Jews in the United States think of themselves as White, Jews are a diasporic people who come from all over the world. In addition, intermarriage, conversion, and transracial adoption have increased the percentage of Jewish people identifying as people of color (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009). Jews of different races or ethnicities may have ancestors who come from geographic regions worldwide, which may result in different cultural artifacts such as food, music, language, and traditions (“Sephardic, Ashkenazic, Mizrahi and Ethiopian Jews”, n.d.). The racial and ethnic differences among Jews may result in different Jewish cultural artifacts, and may also

result in individuals understanding their Jewish culture differently based on aspects of their racial or ethnic identity. In addition to race, the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (2009) found that 75% of Jewish participants in the study valued many dimensions of their identity with Jewish identity being just one. A few studies also point to the importance other identities have in shaping Jewish identity and other identities.

Abes (2011) found that religion can help make sense of LGBTQ identity when these identities are integrated, but that students struggle to integrate their identities because of the heteronormative messaging of the Jewish community and the differing degrees of acceptance of LGBTQ identities among different sects of Judaism. Because there are often negative messages pushed by religious groups about LGBTQ identities, it can be difficult to reconcile religious and sexual orientation identities (Abes, 2011). For Jewish people, this process can be even more complex and individualized because Judaism is not only a religion, but an ethnicity and culture (Abes, 2011). When religious communities are not accepting of LGBTQ identities, Jewish students who also identify as LGBTQ risk losing not only their religious community, but potentially their cultural and ethnic communities. However, for some students, being Jewish made coming out easier because the students already had a sense of what it means to feel different from others (Abes, 2011). Abes (2011) focused exclusively on lesbian women, so it is certainly limited as it does not include the experiences of gay, bisexual, pansexual, or transgender Jewish college students whose experiences might be different from those of Jewish lesbians. It also focused on two White, upper- middle class women – the experiences of people of color or low income students are most likely different. Despite these limitations, Abes (2011) found that a student's multiple

dimensions of identity can impact Jewish identity and vice versa.

Language is also a way for multiple identities to interact - it “enables people to perform and perceive broad social dimensions like ethnicity, social class, age, and gender, as well as membership in more localized social networks and communities of practice” and it allows individuals to “align themselves with some people and distinguish themselves from others” (Benor, 2009, p. 234). Variation in the way people speak “is an important element in how individuals construct their multiple identities” (Benore, 2009, p. 232). This means that language can be individualized based on the identities that a person holds. While there is a unique way in which Jewish Americans speak, there may also be more variations based on each individual’s multiple dimensions of identity. For example, a college student named Lior Gross and others have worked to change Hebrew so that nonbinary Jews - Jews who do not identify with the gender binary of male and female - are able to refer to themselves in the first person in Hebrew (Sales, 2018). Gross’s non-binary gender identity influenced the use of language, so much so that Gross changed the language itself.

Another identity that can impact a Jewish person’s understanding of their culture is social class. Social class is “a relative social ranking based on income, wealth, education, status, and power” (Leondar-Wright & Yeskel, 2007, p. 314). There are many indicators of class, including material indicators, such as property, net worth, income from jobs, and other financial indicators, and non-material indicators, such as class culture, cultural capital, social capital, and political power (Adams, Hopkins, & Shlasko, 2018). Class culture are “the norms, values, and ways of life shared by people with a similar class position” and is shaped by membership in a class, as well as “a

more specific location defined by context and by other social identities” (Adams, Hopkins, & Shlasko, 2018, p. 168). Cultural capital is the “sets of culturally specific knowledge, skills, language, and self-presentation that act as markers of class, and that can allow someone to successfully navigate social institutions” (Adams, Hopkins, & Shlasko, 2018, p. 168). All classes have forms of cultural capital, with some forms of cultural capital valued more and some less (Adams, Hopkins, & Shlasko, 2018). Lastly, social capital is the social networks already available to someone (Adams, Hopkins, & Shlasko, 2018). Similarly to cultural capital, all classes have social capital that take different forms (Adams, Hopkins, & Shlasko, 2018). Kaufman (1999) found that the Jewish young adults she interviewed shared many forms of class, cultural, and social capital, in addition to material indicators of class. For example, nearly all participants received support from their families, both in actual resources (material) and emotional support (social capital) (Kaufman, 1999). Participants also tended to have grown up or gone to college in places where they lived near many other Jews, and all continued to interact with Jews in a variety of ways (social capital) (Kaufman, 1999). Many participants had also taken Jewish studies courses (material capital, which allowed them to take these classes, and cultural capital) (Kaufman, 1999).

These kinds of experiences and access to social networks likely have an influence on the Jewish culture that is brought to college and Jewish culture in college. However, coming from a different social class can possibly impact access to certain experiences and social networks. Kaufman’s (1999) study included only participants in the middle to upper-middle class. For example, living in neighborhoods or attending a university with many other Jews may require material or other capital that a Jew who is

not middle to upper-middle class may not have. A lower to lower-middle class Jewish student living in a state without a public university with a large Jewish population may not have the option to go to an out-of-state or private school to be able to be around many Jews. This limits that student's access to Jewish social capital and potentially cultural capital that comes from being a Jewish college student surrounded by other Jews.

There are some opportunities on campus for Jewish students to engage in connecting their Jewish identities to other identities. Some universities have social groups focused on Jewish identity and its connection to another identity, such as women's groups and LGBTQ groups (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). There is not much institutional support for these groups from well-established Jewish campus programming organizations such as Hillel, so these groups tend to fluctuate in structure and existence as students graduate and leave the university (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Some women's groups focus on how womanhood or feminism and Judaism connect in today's society, while others focus on education or community service (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Jewish LGBTQ groups offer Jewish students a place where they can be both Jewish and LGBT, which may be difficult for them in either the Jewish or LGBTQ community (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Several Jewish organizations focus on creating more inclusive spaces for LGBTQ Jews in Jewish communities. For example, Keshet is a national organization that provides resources to LGBTQ groups and Hillels to help "integrate the LGBT community" (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016, p. 69). Nehirim is a national organization that serves all Jewish people and hosts conferences for students that provide resources and support (Koren, Saxe, &

Fleisch, 2016). Individual Hillels have created programming for student to explore the connection between their sexuality, spirituality, and religion (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). It is important to note that these opportunities do not exist on every campus, which means students may vary widely in the opportunities they have had to explore the connections between their identities. It is important for student affairs professionals and other professionals that work with Jewish college students to recognize the importance of groups that support the connecting of Jewish students' multiple identities. Considering that a majority of Jews value the many dimensions of their identity (Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2009), practitioners should focus on how to integrate multiple dimensions of identity into their work with Jewish students and consider how students' multiple dimensions of identity may impact the culture of their campus.

Jewish Culture and Context

The parts of a person's ethnic identity change depending on the setting and context within which that person exists (Altman et al., 2010). The setting and context of Jewish life varies widely from campus to campus, impacting the climate for Jewish students (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). There are many variables that can have an impact on the context within which a Jewish student is experiencing Jewish life, but these contexts have not been a focus of research. However, there is some research that indicated in what kinds of environments Jewish students may be participating, which can be used to discuss how context and Jewish culture connect. One contextual variable is the size of the Jewish population and the amount of support and reinforcement available from other Jews. Altman et al. (2010) found that in environments with large

Jewish populations and support, Jews were more able to personally identify with their Jewish identity. Additionally, the level of importance placed on an American identity in a community impacted how easily Jews were able to personally identify with Judaism (Altman et al., 2010).

Another variable is the conversation about Israel taking place on campus. Depending on what organizations exist on an individual campus and how politically active the students are, the conversation and climate around Israel can vary widely. On campuses where the conversation about the conflict between Israel and Palestine is contentious, Jewish students may face harsh criticism or anti-Jewish oppression from either non-Jews or other Jewish students, or both (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). On other campuses, the conversation may focus primarily on Israeli culture and opportunities to engage with Israel. Other campuses may fall somewhere in the middle. Each of these contexts can impact to what extent and in what ways students feel connected to Israel - some may feel strongly connected to Israel culture while others may feel a connection to Israel that, to them, means they need to engage with Israel in a critical way. Other students may feel unable to connect with Israel or unwilling to because of the intense climate around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And still, other students may fall somewhere in the middle.

A Jewish student's pathway to Judaism is another contextual variable that might impact the Jewish culture they bring with them to college and, ultimately, their perspectives on Jewish student culture on college campuses. For example, a student who began to identify as Jewish while in college had a different pathway to Judaism than a student who identified as Jewish from a young age. A student whose family

raised them as Jewish also had a different pathway to Judaism than a student whose family identified with another religion or no religion and then the student converted to Judaism. These different pathways can impact what knowledge and experiences Jewish students have had, which can potentially impact their understanding of Jewish culture at college.

Lastly, another contextual variable that might impact Jewish culture on campus is the opportunity to engage in religious practices or learning opportunities. For example, at universities where there is only a Hillel, students may engage in religious practices more casually because of Hillel's policy of meeting students where they are rather than attempting to increase their religiosity or spirituality (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). At universities where there is also a Chabad, which tends to be led by Orthodox Jewish partners, students may engage more strictly in religious practices, such as keeping strictly kosher and participating in services multiple times per week. On the other hand, students may feel that Hillel is not religious enough for their needs or that Chabad is too strictly religious, and they may feel disengaged from the campus's Jewish culture. While Jewish and Israel Studies programs have increased, they still do not exist at every university. Therefore, the culture of learning will likely look different at each university depending on what opportunities the students have.

The history of Jews in higher education has had an impact on Jewish life on campus and potentially impacted Jewish student culture on college campus. While there is no specific literature on Jewish student culture on college campuses, there is some literature on the connections between Jewish identity and other identities and between Judaism and the context on college campuses. The purpose of the study is to gain an

understanding of Jewish college students' perspectives on Jewish student culture during college. My first research question is, how does an undergraduate Jewish student's understanding of self, context, and their pathway to Judaism influence their cultural tool kit during college? Second, in what ways do Jewish students use *basic knowledge* as part of their tool kits? In the following chapter, I review how the theory of cultural tool kits (Swilder, 1986) and the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000) are used to analyze Jewish college students' perspectives on Jewish student culture on college campuses

Chapter III: Methodology

Researcher Relationality Statement

Patel (2016) wrote about how the researcher is in relation to the topic being studied. Rather than position myself outside of the work of this study, I used *researcher relationality* because I see myself in relation to the topic of this work. It is important in research to be clear about your own assumptions and beliefs, as well as the challenges you face because being self-aware can help you to recognize your assumptions, beliefs, and challenges as you are conducting the research and analyzing the data. In this section, I review how and why I came to the questions I have about this topic, as well as my assumptions about the topic. I also review the epistemological perspective I used to guide my research, including what my beliefs are about how we come to know and understand.

Relationship to the research topic. This research topic is compelling and important to me for many reasons. The first is that it is related to my own identity. As a Jewish person, I have had my own journey to Judaism – the people, the religion, the culture, and other aspects. This identity fuels my connection to this topic. Growing up in a family that identified as Jewish, but engaged rarely in Jewish practices, rituals, and communities, being Jewish was not a particularly salient identity for me. The times this identity was salient was when I faced anti-Jewish oppression in my life, which eventually led me to dissociate with my Jewish identity publicly. For example, a common stereotype of Jews is that they are greedy and spendthrifts. On my sixteenth birthday, I had a friend bring me a penny in wrapping paper as a gift, making a joke of me based on this anti-Jewish stereotype. Another common experience for me was being

forced to be the spokesperson for all Jews, particularly when the Holocaust was brought up in class. One salient example occurred in my English class when my teacher began to explain that the book *Night* by Elie Wiesel (1972) was about the Holocaust, and nearly every student turned to look at me. Lacking a strong Jewish identity and without much cultural knowledge of what it meant to be Jewish, it was easier for me to distance myself from Judaism. For most of my high school experience, I identified as atheist. This seemingly protected me in two ways: 1) I could distance myself from Jewish stereotypes because I could say that I was not really Jewish, and 2) I could tell others I was not really Jewish when asked to be the spokesperson for all Jews. Despite how I identified myself, I was still seen as Jewish and, thus, still faced anti-Jewish oppression from my peers.

It was not until college that I first felt able to engage with Judaism and a Jewish community, and I had a very positive experience doing so. I engaged with Judaism culturally through my campus Hillel. I was particularly drawn to an organization called Challah for Hunger, which organizes challah bakes to raise money for hunger relief organizations. From my sophomore year to my junior year, I engaged in the Jewish community culturally, increasing my knowledge and experiences in a wide variety of ways. During this time, I had my first experiences of the assumptions my Jewish peers had about the knowledge and experiences I was supposed to have as a Jewish person. When my Jewish friends referred to stories in the Torah I had never heard or said a Yiddish or Hebrew word I did not know, I felt a sense of shame and inadequacy. I felt like I did not belong in the community I was in, like I was not really Jewish, and that eventually the other Jewish people I was interacting with would realize I did not belong.

However, as I gained more knowledge and self-confidence in my Jewish identity, those feelings diminished over time.

Near the beginning of my senior year, I began thinking about religious identity as a Jew. My religious identity felt tied to my grandfather Steven (or Pa, as I called him) in a very different way than my cultural Jewish identity was tied to him. My grandfather passed away when I was eleven, but I remember him most clearly with a kippah atop his head, lighting candles. I remember him as a religious man, singing and praying in Hebrew. I think of him and I think of the synagogue across the street from his home. Pa was a child living in Germany when Adolf Hitler rose to power, and he was able to escape the Holocaust to arrive in the United States. Not all of his siblings were so lucky. As I began to explore my religious identity, I felt an immense amount of guilt and pain over dissociating myself with my Jewish identity and identifying as an atheist in high school because of my grandfather's story. I felt like I had dishonored Pa and because of that I did not deserve this part of Judaism or that I should not access it. I was not able to move past those feelings without the support of a rabbi at Hillel, who talked with me about *teshuva*. *Teshuva* is the Hebrew word for repentance; however, its literal meaning is "return." The rabbi told me that returning to Judaism was in and of itself repentance.

Through my experiences engaging in programming at Hillel at my undergraduate institution, I saw the ways in which my other identities could be integrated with my Jewish identity. I participated in women's seders and seders for members of the LGBTQ community, and I joined a Rosh Chodesh group for women-identified Jews. These experiences, in addition to my personal experiences related to

yeda b'sisi and my pathway to Judaism, inform my connection to this topic.

As a Jewish person, I had an insider perspective in conducting this study. Because I had an insider perspective, I had some knowledge about Judaism – its symbols, values, meanings, experiences, among others – that someone with an outsider perspective would not necessarily have. I believe that through my own connection to Judaism, the participants I interacted with felt more comfortable sharing their stories. However, because of my insider perspective, I also had my own ideas on what it means to be Jewish, which may have led to some assumptions.

Assumptions. My own Jewish narrative is important to recognize because it is the lens through which I view the Jewish world. Because of the path I have taken to my identity, I have some assumptions about what it means to be Jewish. Growing up, my knowledge about Judaism, interactions with Jewish people, and participation in Judaism religiously or culturally were very limited. I had surface-level assumptions about what it meant to be Jewish because of my limited experience with Judaism. These surface-level assumptions meant that when I started to learn more about Judaism and meet more Jewish people, I learned about the wide variety of ways that people are Jewish. This did not seem contradictory to my assumptions because I was aware of how little I knew about Judaism. Because of this, I believe I have been able to keep an open mind about what Judaism looks like and the myriad variations that exist among Jews. The assumptions that exist for me now are based on my initial knowledge of what it meant to be Jewish. To some extent, this aligns with what I see as what is my own understanding of *yeda b'sisi* of Judaism. When someone identifies themselves as Jewish to me, there are three main assumptions I have: we will have a common

understanding of several aspects of Judaism, they are aware of or have experienced anti-Jewish oppression, and they see community as essential to being Jewish.

My first assumption is based on the premise that there are certain traditions, items, iconography, language, and other cultural symbols that are universally understood by Jews. For me, the items in the list of traditions, items, iconography, language and cultural symbols that I consider to be universally understood is fairly limited because of my own initial lack of knowledge and experience in Judaism. Some examples of cultural symbols that my initial reaction is that they are universally understood by all Jews are the Star of David, celebrating Hanukkah, and a *yarmulke*. As I have grown and learned more about the Jewish people, I have learned that these cultural symbols may be more or less important to some Jews. I have also learned through my own experiences of not knowing about other cultural symbols that not all Jews have the same cultural knowledge. I try to be very aware of the ways in which I am using my culture so that I am not marginalizing Jews who either do not share the same cultural symbols or who have not had experience with the same cultural symbols.

My second assumption is that all Jews are aware of or have experienced anti-Jewish oppression. Because of my own experiences of facing anti-Jewish oppression growing up and the anti-Jewish oppression I still face today, anti-Jewish oppression is an oppression that I think often about as a universal experience for Jews. It is important for me to recognize that because of my own experiences, I may see anti-Jewish oppression in my participants' stories where they do not. I do not want to put a narrative on their story that they do not claim as their own. While unlikely, it is possible that a participant may be unaware of or may not have experienced anti-Jewish in their

life or they may be unwilling to talk about it in their interview. Being aware of my own assumptions aided me in understanding my participants' stories.

Lastly, I also assume that community is an essential aspect of being Jewish. Community can take many different forms, including family, friends, synagogue, among other forms. For me, being attached to some kind of community has always been essential to being connected to Judaism. In my own Jewish journey, it was when I moved away from my extended family that I became disconnected from Judaism. It was also when I found a community at college that I was able to reconnect to Judaism. I want to distinguish my assumption from one that the community can do no wrong. Communities can do immeasurable harm to their members. While I believe communities are essential to Judaism, those communities need to be loving, supportive communities that allow individuals to grow and express their whole selves. I also want to note that I am not saying that if you are unable to be a part of a Jewish community that you are not Jewish. I was unable to be a part of a Jewish community for a long time, and I am currently not part of a formal Jewish community.⁴ My experience has been that when I have been part of Jewish communities, that is when Judaism was happening for me. I was still Jewish and living Jewishly when I was not a part of a Jewish community, but I *felt* the most Jewish when I was a part of a Jewish community. However, it is important to recognize that each individual has had their own Jewish journey and may not feel that community is as important to being Jewish. By recognizing my assumption that community is essential, I hope to be able to recognize if I am ever ignoring participant stories that indicate that community is unimportant.

⁴ As I have finished my graduate program, I have joined a local synagogue.

Through examining my assumptions before engaging in the research, I aim to make myself aware of where my own views of Judaism may be affecting how I am viewing my participants' stories. It is important for me as the researcher to remember that although I will share a Jewish identity with my participants, we have all come to Judaism through different pathways and we may have other different identities. While I may be an insider in some respects because of our shared identity, in many other respects I will be an outsider.

For example, it is important for me to recognize the salience my Jewish identity has to me. Because of my undergraduate experience, my Jewish identity is one of my most salient. However, the participants I interviewed may not have such a salient Jewish identity and may have other identities that are more important to them. I also grew up in a community with no other Jews, whereas some of my participants may have grown up in communities with many Jews. Additionally, while I will share a cultural identity with the participants, it is likely that we will not share all of the other same identities. These other identities will impact the participants' Jewish identity in ways that I will not have an insider perspective to. For example, I identify as White, but may interview a Jewish student of color. While we will likely share some experiences because of our Jewish identities, there may be parts of their Jewish culture that I have never thought of or experienced. Through spending time evaluating my assumptions, my hope is that I will be able to be open to the stories of the participants.

Epistemological perspective. The epistemological perspective through which I approached the research is constructionism. In constructionism, meaning is subjective and each person has their own understanding of what is true (Creswell, 2013).

Individuals construct meaning through interactions with one another and through historical or cultural norms (Creswell, 2013). Reality can be understood as an “outgrowth of human interaction” (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014). Research that examines human interaction and the co-construction of meaning that occurs between researcher and participant are ways through which reality can be understood. According to Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2014), constructionism focuses on people assigning “meaning to their world” (p. 17).

In this epistemological perspective, researchers recognize that their understanding of the participants’ truth is an interpretation filtered through their own experiences (Creswell, 2013). Participants and researchers co-construct meaning with each bringing their experiences and understanding to the study. However, the goal of the researcher is to focus on the views of the participants to gain an understanding of the meaning the participants are making out of the topic of the study (Creswell, 2013). In constructionism, the researcher is not necessarily trying to pare down the data into categories, but to embrace the range of understandings participants may have about a topic (Creswell, 2013).

Constructionism worked well for my research for several reasons. First, my research questions were focused on each person’s understanding of self, context, and their pathway to Judaism. This way of framing my research questions aligned with constructionism because it focused on how each participant was making meaning of self, context, and their pathway. Additionally, this epistemological perspective worked well with my conceptual framework because my conceptual framework was partially about human interaction. Human interaction is a component of how the cultural tool kit

is used and how a participant may understand their context.

Research Design

As previously mentioned, my research questions were: how does an undergraduate Jewish student's understanding of self, context, and their pathway to Judaism influence their cultural tool kit during college, and, in what ways do Jewish students use *basic knowledge* as part of their tool kits? In order to explore these questions, I employed the narrative inquiry methodology. A *narrative* can be a short story about specific event, a longer story about significant event in a person's life, or the story of a person's an entire life until the present (Chase, 2012). This methodology focuses on stories, specifically stories being told to the researcher or co-constructed between the participant and the researcher (Creswell, 2013). The participant tells stories that "tell of individual experiences, and they may shed light on the identities of individuals and how they see themselves" (Creswell, 2013, p. 71). Additionally, the "narrative communicates the narrator's point of view, including why the narrative is worth telling in the first place" and expresses "emotions, thoughts, and interpretations" (Chase, 2012, p. 65). The researcher is able to collect detailed stories from a small number of participants to understand how they are making meaning of aspects of their lives (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014). The context within which the story being told is an important aspect of narrative inquiry (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, this methodology can be analyzed in several ways: "about what was said (thematically), the nature of the telling of the story (structural), or who the story is directed towards (dialogic/performance)" (Creswell, 2013, p. 72).

Through narrative inquiry, the researcher treats the narrator's action of telling a

story as the narrator “[shaping], [constructing], and [performing] the self, experience, and reality” (Chase, 2012, p. 65). This draws the researcher’s focus to the narrator’s voice, and to what and how the narrator communicates, as well as to the narrator’s positionality (Chase, 2012). The researcher also recognizes that the narrator’s story is constrained by “a range of social resources and circumstances” including “the possibilities for self and reality construction that are intelligible within the narrator’s community, local setting, organizational and social memberships, and cultural and historical location” (Chase, 2012, p. 65). The narrator’s story may also change depending on the context within which it is being told and who it is being told to (Chase, 2012). For example, the same narrator may tell a different version of a story of the same event to the researcher in a quiet, reserved classroom than that narrator would to their friend at a lively birthday party on a weekend. The researcher recognizes that the “narrator’s story is flexible, variable,” and “a joint production of narrator and listener” (Chase, 2012, p. 65). This means that the researcher has a role in co-constructing the story.

The narrative inquiry approach worked well for the purpose of this study for several reasons. First, Judaism is closely tied to storytelling. Throughout history, Jews have been referred to as the People of the Book, and Schram (2009) calls Jews “a storytelling people” (p. 33). From telling the story of what happens in the weekly Torah portion - the *parsha* - to recounting the Israelites’ escape from Egypt on Passover to retelling the story of Haman and Esther on Purim, and countless stories in between, storytelling can be an integral aspect of Judaism. For that reason, narrative inquiry is an approach that fits well with Judaism. Second, this methodology aligned

well with my epistemological perspective because it allowed the participants to tell their individual stories and experiences. Because constructionism focuses on truth being subjective and narrative inquiry focuses on the narrator telling stories of their individual experiences from their own perspectives, they are in alignment. Additionally, this methodology aligned well with my research questions. Through storytelling, the participants were able to show how they see themselves (their understanding of self), how they experience the world (their understanding of context), and how they have come to Judaism (their pathway to Judaism). Additionally, this methodology recognizes that a participant's storytelling and understanding is limited by the constraints of their community (Chase, 2012). This aligned well with how the context may influence the student's cultural tool kit. The focus on voice fit well with my research questions because of the attention paid to communication and positionality. The what and how of the participant's communication helped me as the researcher understand what cultural symbols were in their tool kit and how they were using them. Combining this with an understanding of the participant's positionality aided me in answering both research questions. Lastly, this method allowed for the interaction between me, the researcher, and the participant to be analyzed. The analysis included what aspects of the participant's cultural tool kit were used during our conversation.

Data Collection

Sampling. The participants included five students from colleges and universities in the DMV (District/Maryland/Virginia) area who self-identified as Jewish. Most qualitative research methodologies typically involve a small number of participants, which is why I initially chose six (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014). However, this

number was somewhat flexible based on when I reached saturation, which occurred at five participants. Saturation is “when the researcher begins to hear (or observe, or read) the same or similar kinds of information” (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014, p. 114). I chose the DMV area because it was easily accessible for in-person interviews. I intentionally asked students to self-identify as Jewish because of the complexity of Jewish identity and because I was seeking variation in participants identifying as Jewish religiously, culturally, ethnically, or otherwise. Additionally, participants must have been at their current university for at least four semesters. In order for students to have an understanding of the context at their university, it was important that they had spent some time in the community.

Participant recruitment. To recruit participants I used both gatekeepers and snowball sampling. Participants were recruited through offices or student organizations on campus where Jewish students might be involved, such as Campus Ministry or Hillel. I worked with gatekeepers, such as student leaders or professional staff, in these offices or organizations to provide the names and contact information of students who were eligible and might be interested in participating in the research. Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2014) defined a gatekeeper as someone who knows potential participants who meet the researcher’s criteria for eligibility. I recruited from the one large, public research institution and one medium-sized, private institution. My contacts at the public institution were a staff member in a Hillel and student leaders in several student organizations. My contact at the private university was a staff member working with Jewish students in religious life on campus. Once I had the name and contact information of a potential participant, I sent them a recruitment letter via email asking

them to participate (Appendix C). In some cases, the gatekeeper sent the student my contact information and the student reached out to me. In those cases, I replied to the student's email with a slightly modified version of the recruitment letter that thanked them for their interest in participating and removed the language about the recruitment method.

Once I recruited a few participants with the help of the gatekeepers, I implemented snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is when the participants that have already been recruited in a study refer to the researcher "people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest" (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, p. 141). Snowball sampling was intended to help connect me with students who may not be connected to the gatekeepers at the offices and student organizations with whom I may not otherwise connect. Additionally, since I was not be able to reach out to every university and college in the DMV area, the snowball sampling method was intended to help me reach students at additional universities and colleges. My initial recruitment through the gatekeepers at the public institution provided 4 participants, so I decided not to implement snowball sampling with the participants from the public institution in order to recruit participants from the private institution. I recruited one student through the gatekeeper at the private institution and implemented snowball sampling, but the participant provided no additional students for me to contact with for an interview.

Procedure. For the study, I interviewed five participants for 60-minute audio-recorded interviews. Before participating in the interview, participants were provided a copy of the IRB consent form to review and sign if they agreed to

participate. They had an opportunity to ask any questions about the consent form before the study began. All participants signed the consent form. Participants were also provided with a copy of the consent form to keep. Once the participant signed the consent form, I asked them to select a pseudonym and then fill out a diagram of the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity in order to gain a basic understanding of how the participant understood their identities (Jones & McEwen, 2000; see Appendix A for an example and the instructions of what participants were asked to do). This diagram helped me to directly understand how the participants saw the salience of their identities, which might have been more difficult to get from an interview. They filled out the diagram before the interview to help prime them to think about their other social identities, as well. I asked the participant to talk about the diagram they filled out, and this conversation was included on the recording and was analyzed with the interview. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the participants of the study. All identities were included as the participants wrote them on their diagrams, except for age, which I asked participants to share in a follow-up email.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Culture</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Race</u>	<u>Sexual Orientation</u>	<u>Age</u>
Aliza	Jewish	Jewish	Middle	Female	Jewish	Straight	21
Eliana	Somewhere between Conservative and Modern Orthodox Jew	American Jew	Middle Class	Female	White	Heterosexual	20
Jane	Humanistic Jew	Humanist, Atheist, Feminist	Upper Middle Class	Female	White	Queer/Bisexual	21
Rebecca	Modern Orthodox Jew	Unsure?	Middle Class	Female	White	Bisexual	21
Shoshana	Jewish	American Jew/Catholic Side	Middle Class	Woman	White	Straight	22

Then, the interviews followed a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix B). Finally, the participants completed a reflection journal activity following the interview when they received a copy of their transcript to review (Appendix D). The participants were sent a copy of their transcript and the follow-up journal prompt approximately 1 to 2 weeks following their interview. None of the participants provided any feedback on their transcriptions, but each participant did provide additional information in the follow-up journal prompt that was not included in their initial interview. I employed multiple methods because narrative inquiry works well with

varied sources of data (Creswell, 2013). The interview questions and journal prompt questions were related to the participants' understanding of self and their Jewish culture. Participants were able to stop participation in the interviews or journals at any point during the study.

Protecting data. Participants went through the informed consent process and were told that their data would be kept confidential and anonymous. Participants had an opportunity to ask any questions about the protection of their data. In order to protect participant data, participants were referred to by a pseudonym of their choosing in all data except within a key that was stored separately from the rest of the data. Participants' real names were not used in data collection, analysis, or reporting. The data were stored on an external hard drive, and data were uploaded to the drive in a timely manner in order to protect participant data. I, as the primary researcher, was the only person with access to the data.

Data Analysis

Once the interview and diagram were completed, the audio recording was transcribed. After transcription, the data were analyzed using dialogical narrative analysis. Through the lens of dialogical narrative analysis, or DNA, stories help people reconsider who they are and what their place is within their communities (Frank, 2012). DNA asks

what is the storyteller's art, through which she or he represents life in the form of a story? And what form of life is reflected in such a representation, including the resources to tell particular kinds of stories, affinities with those who will listen to and understand such stories, vulnerabilities including not being able to tell an

adequate story, and contests, including which version of a story trumps which other versions? (Frank, 2012, p. 34)

Dialogical narrative analysis has five foundational methodological commitments (Frank, 2012).

The first methodological commitment is “to recognize that any individual voice is actually a dialogue between voices” (Frank, 2012, p. 34). In addition to both the researcher and the participant impacting the narrative, in DNA the participant’s story is created from multiple voices the participant has heard and pieces of previous stories, an amalgamation of their own and others’ stories (Frank, 2012). Ultimately, “to practice DNA is to sustain a tension between dialogue and analysis” and the “concern is how to speak *with* a research participant rather than about him or her” (Frank, 2012, p. 34; original emphasis).

The second methodological commitment is to remain focused on the collective stories of many who have had similar experiences rather than a singular experience (Frank, 2012). This allows “diffuse voices into contact with each other, enabling each voice to be heard alongside other voices that expressed similar experiences, thus giving shape to what could become a dialogue” (Frank, 2012, p. 36). In DNA, the researcher acts as a witness who gathers voices “to give them more evocative force so that these storytellers could hear each other, and so that they could be heard collectively” (Frank, 2012, p. 36).

The third methodological commitment is to recognize that stories take on a life of their own (Frank, 2012). People not only constantly tell stories, but people are innately attuned to stories as well (Frank, 2012). A story does not exist without a

human to tell it, but humans also need stories to represent their experiences (Frank, 2012). Frank (2012) argued that human expression is only possible because there are already so many stories ready to be adapted into our own stories and that these stories shape our sense of self. The stories available to us are limited (and thus our sense of self) by “the resources we have available to tell our own story, as well as by the stories we are told about people like us” (Frank, 2012, p. 36).

The fourth methodological commitment is the recognition that each person is an “unfinalized” version of themselves and respecting their “capacity for continuing change” (Frank, 2012, p. 36, 37). While individual participants will continually change, what stays the same are narrative resources - “character types, plot lines, and genres” - which allows for conclusions to be drawn (Frank, 2012, p. 37).

The last methodological commitment is to not summarize findings, but “to open continuing possibilities of listening and of responding to what is heard” (Frank, 2012, p. 37). The goal is that there is an increased possibility for people “hearing themselves and others” and an expanded “sense of responsibility” in people to how they will respond (Frank, 2012, p. 37). Instead of telling people how to respond, DNA aims to “show what is at stake in a story as a form of response” (Frank, 2012, p. 37). With an understanding of what DNA is, next I share how I used DNA to analyze my data. There are several broad steps that I took: deciding what was a story, selecting stories for analysis, and building a typology.

What’s a story? Not all data collected was a story, and not every narrative was a story (Frank, 2012). It was important to set some parameters around what was considered a story, so as to set some limitations to what in the data was analyzed. There

are many characteristics that can define a story, but Frank (2012) argued that what defines it “should remain fuzzy at the boundaries” (p. 42). It should involve some sort of communication with “a complicating event and a resolution” and “characters, suspense, and imagination” (Frank, 2012, p. 42). Lastly, a story needs to be able to be “recognizable across multiple retellings” (Frank, 2012, p. 43). It may include different language depending on the context or audience, but it should be able to be recognized as the same story (Frank, 2012). With a broad definition of a story, I turn to how to analyze the stories in the data.

How do you select a story for analysis? In DNA, stories are chosen based on phronesis, or “the practical wisdom gained through analytic experience” (Frank, 2012, p. 43). It is “the analyst’s cultivated capacity to hear, from the total collection of stories, those that call out as needing to be written about” (Frank, 2012, p. 43). This capacity is cultivated through learning done in the field (Frank, 2012). Frank (2012) noted that fieldwork need not be in the context of research; instead, it could be conscripted fieldwork, such as when you go through an experience yourself outside of the context of research that gives you insight into the experience of the research participants of future studies. Frank (2012) gave the example of getting sick and then helping a family member with a terminal illness:

I participated as a member of support groups, and worked with physicians on committees to improve healthcare, all of which had many of the effects of fieldwork. I went places, associated with people whom I would not otherwise have known, learned their ways of thinking and speaking, gained a provisional competence in others’ work, and assimilated others’ values to the point that

action based on those values became plausible to me. (p. 39)

There are both advantages and disadvantages to conscripted fieldwork. When you have been conscripted into the field, you end up with much at stake and that can lead to “reacting quickly to what happens and feeling invested in those initial reactions” (Frank, 2012, p. 39). It takes time to see the experience or story from another perspective (Frank, 2012). However, the advantage to conscripted fieldwork “is that being a conscript provides an *embodied* experience of the compelled engagement that moves those for whom ‘the field’ is where and how they had survived” (Frank, 2012, p. 39). While my experience of being conscripted is somewhat different than Frank’s (2012) experience, I believe the experiences to be similar enough to constitute a conscripted experience. It is also true that I am somewhat removed from the specific context of my participants because I did not attend the same universities as they did. However, as someone who has lived with a Jewish identity her entire life and who has experienced Jewish culture as an undergraduate student, I have been in the field.

In addition to phronesis being based on the analyst’s judgement built from learning through fieldwork, phronesis is also about making choices basic in ethical commitments, specifically the five listed above (Frank, 2012). Lastly, phronesis is an “iterative process of hearing stories speak to the original research interest, then representing those stories in writing, revising story selections as the writing develops in arguments, and revising the writing as those stories require” (Frank, 2012, p. 43). Analysis happens “in attempts to write” (Frank, 2012, p. 43). It is not always easy to start the writing process. In order to open up analysis, Frank (2012) suggests beginning with several open-ended questions, broken into five categories: resources

questions, circulation questions, affiliation questions, identity questions, and “questions about what is at stake” (p. 46; for examples of questions, see Appendix E). These questions provided some direction as I worked through the writing and analysis process.

How and why do you build a typology? A typology of stories is a means of arranging a research report where a few common types of stories are drawn together from the data (Frank, 2012). The main advantage to this approach is that individuals can be “left unfinalized” while narrative resources are fixed (Frank, 2012, p. 46). Typologies can bring order to individual stories and show how people are impacted “by their available narrative resources” (Frank, 2012, p. 46). It is important to recognize that typologies can become dangerous if used to prescribe stories to people (Frank, 2012). Rather than the typology actually limiting people, “a good typology explains how the available range of narrative resources limits people” (Frank, 2012, p. 49).

Why dialogical narrative analysis? I chose dialogical narrative analysis as the analytic methodology for my research for several reasons. First, DNA aligned well with my methodology of narrative inquiry in that they were both focused on stories, a necessary alignment. Secondly, DNA and my epistemological perspective fit well together. In constructionism, individuals construct meaning through interactions with one another and through historical or cultural norms (Creswell, 2013). They then bring this meaning with them into the stories they tell, through the multiple voices and pieces of previous stories they have collected (Frank, 2012). Through the lens of constructionism and dialogical narrative analysis, stories could be analyzed to understand how Jewish students are making meaning of who they are and their place in

their communities. Additionally, both constructionism and DNA are concerned with not speaking about the participant, but with them - whether that be through co-construction of knowledge or through dialogue (Creswell, 2013; Frank, 2012).

Lastly, DNA worked very well with my conceptual framework. The cultural tool kit contained cultural symbols that students utilize in many ways, including in dialogue with others. Students used those cultural symbols as narrative resources to tell stories. Their multiple dimensions of identities impacted the narrative resources they have access to and who understands what kinds of stories. To use an example from chapter two, a student with an LGBTQ identity may have access to narrative resources that enable them to reframe the story of Purim as a coming out story, while a heterosexual student may not have those resources. Overall, dialogical narrative analysis was a good fit for my research study.

Trustworthiness

There are several aspects of the study that ensure trustworthiness. First, I used multiple data collection methods - interviews and journaling. This helped with triangulation, which deepens interpretations and understanding of the stories the participants are telling (Glesne, 2016). Another way of ensuring trustworthiness is member checking, or sharing transcripts with the participant. This helped to ensure that I have accurately reflected what the participant said and meant when they were being interviewed, as well as give them the opportunity to clarify anything. This is particularly important because narrative inquiry is focused on the individual's experiences and their understanding. All five participants reviewed their transcripts and did not provide any feedback on the transcription, indicating to me that they found the transcript to

accurately reflect what they said and meant. Lastly, I included member checking from peers when working through my writing iterations to ensure that I did not miss anything. Peer reviewers can provide helpful feedback that enriches the researchers' understanding of the data (Glesne, 2013). My thesis committee chair served as a peer reviewer for my writing. Triangulation and member checking can help ensure that my research is trustworthy.

Boundaries

There were several boundaries to this study that are reviewed here. First, my research was bounded by the small sample size. While narrative inquiry is intended to be done with a small sample, it was not possible to generalize the report of my research to all Jewish students. However, that was not my intention. The goal was to share the stories of Jewish students so that they may hear themselves and others, and so that practitioners, administrators, and others will feel a responsibility to respond (Frank, 2012). Nevertheless, the research was bounded in its generalizability. Second, the research might also have been bounded by my closeness to the topic. As stated above, growing up Jewish is different than being conscripted into fieldwork. However, through spending time examining my positionality and assumptions, I prepared myself to be aware of where my bias and initial reactions might show up in the research. Lastly, my research was bounded by my participant recruitment strategy. Because I recruited primarily through gatekeepers, it was more likely that I would have participants who are highly engaged in Jewish life on campus. My perception was that those who are highly engaged are more likely to have identities and pathways to Judaism that are reflected in the culture of the community that already exists. Therefore, there may be

sub-communities or identity groups of Jews that were not included because they are not highly engaged in Jewish life on campus. With an understanding of the methods for my study, I now review the findings.

Chapter IV: Findings

The focus of the research study was to address the following research questions: 1) How does an undergraduate Jewish student's understanding of self, context, and their pathway to Judaism influence their cultural tool kit during college? and 2) In what ways do Jewish students use *basic knowledge* as part of their tool kits? One way of organizing the findings in dialogical narrative analysis is to present the analysis as typologies, or types of stories (Frank, 2012). In the following section, I organize the typologies as responses to the research questions. In response to the first research question, there are three typologies: pre-college Jewish experiences, connecting with other Jews, and rituals and religious services. In response to the second research question, there is one typology: *yeda b'sisi*. For each of the typologies, I report the findings and then include a discussion of each typology individually. I organized chapter four as such to allow each typology to be analyzed as an individual story. Frank (2012) notes that typologies can bring order to individual stories and show how people are impacted "by their available narrative resources" (pp. 46). By separating the discussion of each typology, I believe the stories feel more ordered and the impact of each is felt more individually.

The Cultural Tool Kit During College

How does an undergraduate Jewish student's understanding of self, context, and their pathway to Judaism influence their cultural tool kit during college? Cultural tool kits allow an individual to put into action pieces of their culture (Swidler, 1986). The way the participants put their culture into action during college was influenced in different ways by their understanding of self, the context, and their pathway to Judaism.

There are three typologies that show these connections: the first focuses on the connection between pre-college Jewish experiences and class, the second focuses on the connection between connecting with other Jews and the context the participants were in, and the last focuses on the connection between rituals and religious services and the participants' pathways to Judaism.

Pre-college Jewish experiences. For several of the Jewish students, their pre-college Jewish experiences - or lack thereof - played a role in how they put their culture into action in college. Pre-college Jewish experiences ranged from attending private Jewish day schools as part of their K-12 experience to attending Jewish camp. One Jewish student, Eliana, talked about attending several different Jewish day schools from kindergarten through 8th grade before going to high school at a public school. While she did not enjoy many of her experiences at Jewish day school, there were several things she did enjoy, such as being “taught Hebrew in Hebrew - *ivrit b'ivrit*” and participating in an Israeli dance group. Participating in an Israeli dance group became a passion she continues to enjoy in college. After not having access to an Israeli dance group after elementary school, Eliana rediscovered “how much [she] loved it.” For Eliana, Israeli dance is one the more significant ways she finds meaning in Judaism and makes sense of her Jewish community:

For me personally, your traditional prayer in a synagogue or whatever, I don't really connect to God that way and to Judaism that way. I don't know what it is, I just don't. I guess it's not for everyone. But for me dancing is [joyful sigh] - there's nothing in the world like it. It opens up a Jewish community. Jewish communities across the world. 'Cause you have people all across the world

doing the same dances to the same music and it just opens up a community unlike any other... For me, it's dancing with a group of people, that's the best way ever that I could make sense of my Jewish community... Just by bringing people together. Doing the same thing. It's honestly, now that I think about it, it's the same thing as praying. When people come together to pray they come together to say the same words, to sing the same song. I mean I love singing. I mean not in the context of praying per se, but to sing the same song, to do the same service, to say the same things. And for me, you bring a community together to dance the same movements to the same songs at the same time.

This pre-college experience developed into a passion for Eliana in college that helps connect her to her Jewish religion and community.

However, not all of the Jewish students had access to these kinds of pre-college Jewish experiences. Shoshana talked about not sharing certain experiences with her Jewish peers because of her class background of middle class. She felt as though other Jewish students have connections to one another that she does not share because of some of their pre-college experiences, particularly attending Jewish camp:

But there are a lot of Jews that will know each other because of camp, going to Jewish camp. That was just something my parents could never afford to send me to. That has definitely been a big thing where people have all of these connections and have grown up with one another because of going to Jewish camp. I feel like that can be a huge part of someone's Jewish identity growing up that I just have never had any exposure to because of economic status... I guess it sometimes makes it harder for me to engage in conversations with people because they'll

either know extra songs during Shabbat or they'll have all of these inside jokes and things that they learned in camp that I never was exposed to or just even going to Hillel on a Friday night, someone might know 10 people just because they were camp friends, and I won't have those extra connections, I guess... There's a girl that I know that lives with three other Jewish students. They're all Jewish. They all have known each other for over 10 years because of Jewish camp. They're still very welcoming, but I don't understand the, I guess, how they've grown up together and how they spent their summers together. I just don't understand that aspect of their relationships because I didn't experience that.

Access to pre-college Jewish experiences such as Jewish day schools and Jewish camp provided some of the Jewish students with knowledge and connections that those without the financial means could not access in the same way. This leaves the students without those experiences feeling like they are missing something that their peers have and unable to engage in the same ways. However, gaining access to those resources can help Jewish students feel more connected to their communities, even if they do not gain them through the same experiences. When asked to share about a time she's used knowledge or an experience to help make sense of her Jewish community, Shoshana replied,

As I've learned more Hebrew, there are certain things that I can just say with friends. The group of four girls in the apartment that I was talking about before, I know that I can go over there and just say little Hebrew words and sentences and know that they'll understand it and that they have that similar background.

Discussion of pre-college Jewish experiences. One of the ways in which a

Jewish undergraduate student's understanding of self influences their cultural tool kit during college is how they understand their class identity. Each of the participants identified their class as middle class, but it was also clear from their stories and experiences that they had different access to financial and social capital within the Jewish community as undergraduate students. Kaufman (1999) found that one of the ways that class played a role in Jews understanding their identity was that "most seemed to draw their sense of Jewish identity from the fact that they lived in neighborhoods with many other Jews [and] maintained close ties with other Jewish friends and family" (p. 80). When these ties are created in spaces that not all Jewish students have access to in pre-college settings because of disparities in class identities, the ways Jewish students put their cultural tool kits into action in college look different.

It is also important to recognize how class impacts access to resources, which in turn impacts how this story is told differently depending on identity. For Eliana, the access she had to Jewish schools sparked an interest in Israeli dance, which has become a passion she followed in college when it was available to her again. Pre-college experiences can help students enact their culture in a way that is deeply meaningful to them. For Shoshana, the inaccessibility of the resources that Jewish camp provides felt like a limit to her:

It sometimes makes it harder for me to engage in conversations with people because they'll either know extra songs during Shabbat or they'll have all of these inside jokes and things that they learned in camp that I never was exposed to or just even going to Hillel on a Friday night, someone might know 10 people just because they were camp friends, and I won't have those extra connections.

In this way, pre-college experiences can be constraining in that it can make students feel disconnected from their peers and left out of the loop. However, as students gain other resources, they may find different ways to connect with their peers.

Connecting with other Jews. For many of the Jewish students, the ways in which they were able to connect with other Jewish students was influenced by the context. For both Eliana and Rebecca, connecting with a Jewish community was difficult because of the context of the Modern Orthodox and Conservative communities on their campus. The Modern Orthodox community on campus was described as being what both students were used to growing up in terms of religious practices. However, the Conservative community was described as more warm, welcoming, and accepting. For these students, this resulted in an internal conflict between how they were raised and the religious or ritual practices they felt most comfortable with and the community of people within which they felt most comfortable. While at college, Eliana said,

I feel I'm kind of a - I don't want to say double agent, 'cause that sounds kind of, has a negative connotation - but my foot's kind of in the door in both communities - Orthodox and Conservative. I have friends in both. But I feel more comfortable, as a group, in the Conservative group. It's actually kind of funny. 'Cause I grew up Orthodox, I feel more comfortable religious practice wise with the Orthodox group, but as a family and as people I feel so much more comfortable with the Conservative group. It's kind of tugging. It's an interesting balance.

Eliana said that when she attends Conservative services, there are always people

standing near the entrance to welcome people “if you’re their friend or if you’re just a stranger.” For Eliana, in the Modern Orthodox services, there is an expectation that “you’re a part of our community, so you know what to do.”

While Eliana is currently working to balance the Modern Orthodox community and the Conservative community, she noted in her follow-up journal prompt that she will not always be able to maintain a balance between them:

In July 2017, I went to the wedding of one of my NCSY (a Jewish youth group) advisors. When I visited her at her big, fancy chair during *Kabbalat Panim*⁵, she had given me a blessing that I should have a life filled with “clarity.” At the time, I did not understand, but now, I know exactly what she had meant. Even before our conversation, I had known and accepted the fact that I am in an internal dilemma as far as my practicing Jewish identity is concerned. Though I have one year left of college, I know that graduation inches closer every day. Once I graduate and enter the “adult world,” I will need to figure out where I lean religiously in order to situate myself in the proper community and find a significant other whose practices match my own. Every day, I hope that I achieve this clarity soon.

For Eliana, choosing between two communities, both of which she does not feel fully comfortable in, is something that must be done as she enters the adult world after she graduates from college.

For Rebecca, the religious aspects of the Modern Orthodox community feel

⁵ *Kabbalat Panim* refers to time set aside before the wedding ceremony of a couple where the guests will greet the bride and groom. Wedding customs and traditions can vary among couples, so not all Jewish weddings will include *Kabbalat Panim* (Lerner).

more comfortable to her, but she also feels more included in the Conservative community on campus. The Conservative community views “everyone as equal, which is not necessarily how I was brought up, and it kind of conflicts in my mind because I still very much believe the Modern Orthodox values.” Rebecca sees her bisexual and Modern Orthodox identities as a paradox, and sometimes does not want her bisexual identity to be as salient. She is unsure of how receptive the Modern Orthodox community would be to her identity. Being in her community

the past three years it was just this constant struggle of "Do I tell people in Hillel about it or do I talk about this in front of people who are in the community," just because I sometimes felt like people might not be so accepting or also because the Jewish community is so small and I am out to my parents, but I'm not out to my grandparents or anyone, I thought it was better to contain it. That has been something that has very much been a conflict for me... It's hard. It still is hard. But I think it's just in a way encouraged me to build these friendships and relationships with people in the community because then once you establish trust with someone that's a lot easier to talk about or anything like that.

Because not all of her extended family members know that she is bisexual, Rebecca is concerned about the “Jewish geography⁶,” or the idea that someone from her campus community may be connected to her family community back home and would mention her sexuality to someone in her extended family without her knowledge. Rebecca is out

⁶ Jewish geography refers to “the kinship ties and social structures that bind one Jew to another” or “the Jewish equivalent of ‘six degrees of separation.’” (The Forward, 2013, para. 1). While beyond the scope of this study, it’s also important to consider the way other identities and pathways to Judaism play a role in Jewish geography, particularly for Jews of Color (see Ruth, 2018).

to all of her friends, but said she would not let someone new know right away that she had a girlfriend.

Discussion of connecting with other Jews. Feeling a connection to other Jews and how you put that connection into practice can be considered an aspect of Jewish culture, as outlined in chapter two. In the present research, I found that the context of the communities within which the Jewish student is in influences the ways in which they feel connected to the community and put that connection into practice. When a community is not welcoming or accepting, whether that be based on one of your identities or for another reason, it can be difficult to become integrated into that community. Feeling a strong connection to the religious practices of one community may not matter as much as feeling connected to the people in that community. Altman et al. (2010) found that feeling strongly connected to and having commonalities with other Jews was an aspect of Jewish identity. If the strong connection to the Jewish community is not there, then a strong connection to religious practices may not matter. Jewish students may choose put their culture into action through connection with another Jewish community rather than participating in a community that does not feel welcoming or accepting to them.

Additionally, Eliana's use of the phrase *double agent* in reference to her experience in both communities is particularly noteworthy. Historically and in modern times, Jews have been persecuted and marginalized for what others have deemed as dual loyalties (Anti-Defamation League, 2018b). This anti-Jewish stereotype or trope "alleges that Jews should be suspected of being disloyal neighbors or citizens because their true allegiance is to their coreligionists around the world or to a secret and immoral

Jewish agenda” and that “non-Jews should not trust the motives or actions of their Jewish neighbors, who may be engaged in deceitful behavior to accomplish their own goals at the expense of others” (Anti-Defamation League, 2018b, para. 1). Eliana is drawing on a common narrative resource associated with anti-Jewish oppression and using it to describe her own experience in her Jewish community. Frank (2012) noted that the stories available to us are limited (and thus our sense of self) by “the resources we have available to tell our own story, as well as by the stories we are told about people like us” (pp. 36). When Jews have been marginalized for perceived dual loyalties, this may influence the stories Jewish students tell about themselves and, thus, about what they believe about their place in their community. Jewish students may bring anti-Jewish stereotypes with them in their tool kit or they may add them when they arrive on campus. In either case, these stereotypes can influence how Jewish students are making meaning of their Jewish experiences in college.

Rituals and religious services. Lastly, how the Jewish students understood and implemented rituals and religious services was influenced by their pathway to Judaism. Many of the students that grew up in families that were secular or practiced in less observant denominations than Orthodox, such as Conservative or Reform, had questions or concerns about the ways rituals or religious services were being implemented. Shoshana talked about attending a Shabbat service in an Orthodox synagogue in Jerusalem while on a Birthright trip in college:

It was insane to be a Jewish woman where usually I'm in my own synagogue, I feel very equal, and I don't really think about being a woman. Whereas then going to an Orthodox synagogue in Jerusalem, I was sitting on the second floor

with the partition, then the men were down below in the first floor with the rabbi. That was interesting to see how, depending on where you lie in the spectrum of Judaism, for me that was a sexist experience. But for some people, that's just what they're raised with and they feel that it's just a part of their religion. So that was really interesting... I hated it, to be honest. I couldn't wait for the service to end. It was Kabbalat Shabbat⁷ and I just wanted it to end because, for me, I had my bat mitzvah. I was able to read from the Torah. I can engage in the more religious aspects of Judaism in my own space at home if I want to. But then being thrown into an Orthodox environment where women aren't welcome to engage in this, was really just shocking for me. I mean I knew that it existed, but I'd never been exposed to it. And to just be with all of these women and see how they want to engage in the religion and the more ... how do I say it, the more intense aspects like reading the Torah and things like that, but then not be welcomed into it, it was just that's not what I consider my Judaism. I see Judaism, especially being raised Reform, as a space for someone no matter their gender or if they don't identify things like that, because my synagogue is very liberal I guess I should say.

Because of the way her synagogue integrates women into services and rituals, Shoshana struggled when attending a synagogue that treated women differently.

When Jane first got to college, she struggled to connect with the services offered on her campus. Having grown up in a Humanistic⁸ Jewish household, many of the more

⁷ Kabbalat Shabbat, literally meaning welcoming the Sabbath, is part of the Friday night prayer service including different “hymns, Psalms, and blessings” (Robinson, para. 1).

⁸ Humanistic Judaism is a denomination of Judaism, such as Conservative, Reform, or Modern Orthodox Judaism, that “offers cultural and secular Jews a nontheistic alternative in contemporary

religious aspects of the service were uncomfortable for her at first and she also felt she was lacking the knowledge to fully participate:

So I didn't grow up saying traditional prayers. I learned some conversational Hebrew but not really enough... I didn't really understand anything of what was going on, like when to stand up, when to sing. I didn't know the songs because I had grown up with different songs. And I felt a little bit uncomfortable at first kind of like standing up and facing Jerusalem and like saying "My God." And praying because it wasn't something I was used to and it was still Judaism but it wasn't. And it was still celebrating Shabbat the way I had celebrated Shabbat my entire life but it wasn't something that I felt like I was qualified to be Jewish enough to do this. Because I just hadn't grown up with it.

Over time, Jane was able to integrate her own Judaism into the practices that existed on her campus - "and you kind of just do the motions and you don't have to have a belief in God to want to kind of just celebrate Shabbat... And welcoming Shabbat in doesn't have to be like a worship it's just kind of carving that space out and you can make the service however you want to make it." As a student leader in her community, Jane tells new Jewish students that most people do not know what they are doing when they first start out in the community and that they can make the experience what they want. Jane noted that what helped her reach this understanding was "having a rabbi who is just incredibly understanding and really wants to be open and connect with all the Jewish

Jewish life. It defines Judaism as the cultural and historical experience of the Jewish people... Humanistic Jews celebrate Jewish holidays and life cycle events (such as weddings and bar and bat mitzvah) with inspirational ceremonies that draw upon but go beyond traditional symbols and liturgy" (Society for Humanistic Judaism).

students.”

Discussion of rituals and religious services. While Jewish college students tend to become less religious in college, nearly ninety percent participate in a religious practice of some kind, such as Hanukkah candle lighting, participating in a Passover Seder, or attending Shabbat services at least once in the past year (Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2006). The participants in this study engaged in or experienced religious practice or ritual and their pathway to Judaism influenced what that experience was like for them. Because of the way they grew up Jewishly, their understanding of what religious practice and ritual meant was brought with them to college in their cultural tool kit. Through different experiences, that understanding was challenged and the tool kit was either updated (i.e. when Jane said, “you kind of just do the motions and you don't have to have a belief in God to want to kind of just celebrate Shabbat”) or reinforced (i.e. when Shoshana said, “that's not what I consider my Judaism”). As Nagel (1994) noted, individuals, in part, determine the contents of their tool kits – they may get rid of some symbols, keep some, and add others. For these participants, what may make a difference in the way the tool kit is influenced is the kind of support that is offered to process experiences that raise cognitive dissonance between one’s own understanding of how something is and another way it can be experienced. Jane specifically mentioned being supported through her rabbi at her college as helpful in better understanding this part of her Jewish experience; Shoshana did not mention processing the experience with the support of a Jewish or non-Jewish student affairs professional. Having support in processing experiences that raise cognitive dissonance may influence how Jewish students make sense of them. This is in line with Sanford’s

(1962) theory, in which growth occurs when students are appropriately challenged and supported through the challenge.

However, it is also important to note that Jane and Shoshana told stories about two very different experiences and experienced cognitive dissonance in different ways. Jane experienced cognitive dissonance between the way she was raised to understand the concept of God and how prayer is done and the way it was being done at her college. Shoshana experienced cognitive dissonance based on her identity as a woman and how people with that identity are treated differently on her pathway to Judaism and the experience she had visiting an Orthodox synagogue. Processing these experiences would likely be different because of the content of the experiences. Across experiences, it may be helpful for Jewish students to have the support of a professional staff member to process their backgrounds and how that relates to their current experiences.

Discussion of the cultural tool kit during college. In answering the first research question--how does an undergraduate Jewish student's understanding of self, context, and their pathway to Judaism influence their cultural tool kit during college-- a Jewish student's understanding of self, context, and their pathway to Judaism all influence how they enact their culture while they are in college. In each of the previous three typologies, I analyzed one aspect of self, context, and pathway to Judaism individually. However, that there were clear examples of each of these interacting to influence the cultural tool kit. For example, when Rebecca talked about her Modern Orthodox community as being less accepting than the conservative community, this is tied to her identity as bisexual and her concerns about what it means for her to be out in

an unaccepting community. Her understanding of the context of her community and her identity influence how she is able to connect with her Jewish community. While the interactions between self, context, and pathway to Judaism are important, they are beyond the scope of this paper.

Yeda B'sisi

The second research question asked, in what ways do Jewish students use *basic knowledge* as part of their tool kits? *Yeda b'sisi*, or *basic knowledge*, is the student's understanding of what all other Jews understand and know about Judaism. Some of the common things that came up when the participants were asked about what they consider basic knowledge were understanding main Jewish holidays, such as Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Hanukkah, and Purim; an understanding of Jewish history; and some knowledge of the content of the Torah (although each of the Jewish students mentioned different aspects of the Torah). The way that many of the Jewish students talked about using *yeda b'sisi* was in communicating with non-Jews about what it means to be Jewish on a basic level. For example, Aliza told a story of explaining that Jews have fast days to a professor in a class on the history of Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Spain when the professor said they did not know if Jews had fast days. Jane talked about having to explain to non-Jewish people, such as professors and her roommates, about the Jewish holidays and why she needed to miss class. Rebecca said she also has had to explain to professors about having to miss class, and that she "had to explain extending the deadline by one day for me doesn't help because I have three days where I can't do any of this." Shoshana talked about having to explain to others about Jewish holidays and the privileges Christians have in terms of

having their main holidays off:

I've had multiple students around me not understand why Jewish students miss class for certain holidays and trying to just get people to understand how important Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are. I don't think people really understand it. People who aren't Jewish just think of Hanukkah and that's it because it's what they think is our equivalent to Christmas. Yeah, I've definitely had multiple people not understand why people have to take off and why it's so stressful for Jewish students and just trying to put it in the perspective of because of your privilege as a Christian individual and the way our country works, you get your main holidays off. Our winter break revolves around Christmas.

In all of these stories, the participants are using basic knowledge of Judaism to help non-Jews better understand some aspect of Judaism.

While many of the participants talked about using basic knowledge to communicate with non-Jews, when a participant thought they did not have basic knowledge, it was always in relation to another Jewish person on campus. Jane described growing up in a Jewish community where having a lot of knowledge that other Jews may have was not expected and that they did not use traditional prayers. When she came to her college, she “sometimes [felt] that [her] Jewish knowledge [was] lacking.” Jane talked about times when the rabbi would talk about a part of the Torah or a Jewish scholar she did not know about, and how she did not feel “necessarily ashamed, but maybe a little bit embarrassed or inadequate.”

Shoshana also experienced not having the same level of knowledge as

others in her Jewish community:

I think there are a lot of times where something just spits off someone's tongue when it comes to Judaism, but I might not know about it just because I grew up in Reform Judaism rather than Orthodox or Conservative Judaism... I guess I just started to realize how much about Judaism that I don't know, which is not a problem because I practice it in my own way.

She talked about her Jewish peers who have a shared experience of going to Jewish camp and how they “know extra songs during Shabbat or they’ll have all of these inside jokes and things that they learned in camp that I was never exposed to.” Her approach is to try to learn more rather “than just feel oblivious.”

Additionally, throughout the interview, each participant used knowledge that they did not explain, making an assumption that their audience (the interviewer) would understand what they were talking about. The most explicit example of this is when Aliza asked me during the interview if I was Jewish:

Aliza: So... wait, are you Jewish... do I need to-

Maddie: I’m Jewish.

Aliza: So, I don’t need to explain things to you.

After asking this, Aliza told a story that made reference to several things that were not immediately understood by me, such as *gabbai*⁹ and a reference to the way the Torah scrolls are handled during religious services. This knowledge was not explicitly identified by Aliza (or any other participant) as basic knowledge when they were

⁹ A *gabbai* is a person who assists during services when the Torah is read. They typically stand to the side of the person who reading the Torah to ensure the “Torah is being read and treated respectfully and accurately” (“What is a gabbai?”, para. 1).

asked to identify basic knowledge.

Rebecca also talked about an experience of being surprised when another Jewish student did not understand something she saw as basic:

Just to me basic things that I thought anyone who even knows that they're Jewish might know, and I realized that that's definitely not true. Even currently I just transitioned out of being President of my group. Our new President, she is Jewish but she didn't grow up religious at all. She basically I think kinda knew she was Jewish and that was it. Just having to explain to her things that I didn't think I needed to say what they were... When we would have Shabbat gig [for the a cappella group] and I'd be like, "Okay everyone. Services are at this time," and whatever, and I used the word *davening* and I realized that not everyone knows what that means. She didn't know what that meant. That's one that I can think of. But different things like that that you don't realize until they come up and people don't know that you're talking about.

Davening, which is a Yiddish word referring to praying, was not noted by Rebecca as basic knowledge. When directly asked what is basic knowledge of Judaism, participants consistently indicated fewer pieces of knowledge and experiences than they treated as basic knowledge in their stories and during the dialogue with me. This story is an example where Rebecca is saying she is expecting a Jewish person to know this word and is surprised when that person does not know it, and, at the same time, did not identify this as something she considered basic knowledge. This story highlights a disconnect between what the participants are saying is basic knowledge and how they are using basic knowledge and how they talk about some of their experiences of

basic knowledge.

Discussion of yeda b'sisi. In answering the research question, in what ways do Jewish students use *basic knowledge* as part of their tool kits, the simple answer is that Jewish students use basic knowledge to explain to non-Jews the basics of what it means to be Jewish. However, because there are varying levels of knowledge in each Jewish student's cultural tool kit, a student may believe they are lacking in their knowledge of Jewish culture when another makes assumptions about what they should know. The situations in which Jewish students felt inadequate, ashamed, or oblivious were situations in which there was not enough explanation about the piece of culture or knowledge being referenced (i.e. "something just spits off someone's tongue").

Moreover, the participants expressed what they consider *yeda b'sisi* and how they used that knowledge; yet, they also used and told stories about basic knowledge in ways that seemed unconscious. As an analysis method, dialogical narrative analysis recognizes that a story is being told to an audience and that the story may change depending on who the audience is (Frank, 2012). In dialogue with me, the Jewish students used much more knowledge than they identified as basic without explaining what that knowledge was or meant. This could be because I am researching Jewish college students and the participants may have assumed I was an expert on Jewish culture or knew more than the average Jewish person. Thus, maybe they consciously chose not to explain things to me. However, it is still clear from the examples of Jewish students believing they were lacking in knowledge and from the example of a time when a student realized they had used more knowledge than another Jewish student understood.

In response to the research questions for this study, four typologies emerged. The first typology focused on how class identity influenced how Jewish undergraduate students used their cultural tool kits, particularly in regards to pre-college Jewish experiences. Pre-college Jewish experiences can help students enact their culture in a way that is deeply meaningful to them; however, these experiences can also be constraining for students who have not had them in that it can make students feel disconnected from their peers and left out of the loop. The second typology focused on the influence the context had on Jewish undergraduate students' use of their tool kits, particularly in connecting to other Jews. Jewish students may choose to put their culture into action through connection with another Jewish community rather than participating in a community that does not feel welcoming or accepting to them. The third typology focused on how a Jewish undergraduate student's pathway to Judaism influences how they understand and implement rituals and religious services. Because of their pathways, the students' understanding of what religious practice and ritual meant was brought with them to college in their cultural tool kit. Through different experiences, that understanding was challenged and the tool kit was either updated or reinforced. The support - or lack thereof - in processing the experiences that challenged their understanding in college may have had an influence on the cultural tool kit. Lastly, the fourth typology focused on how Jewish undergraduate students used *yeda b'sisi*, or basic knowledge. Primarily, students talked about using *yeda b'sisi* to communicate with non-Jews about the basics of what it means to be Jewish. However, participants also used and told stories about basic knowledge in ways that seemed unconscious. With an understanding of the findings from the study, chapter five focuses on the

implications of these findings.

Chapter V: Conclusion

To be Jewish is to ask questions. (Bronfman, 2013, para. 1)

Dialogical narrative analysis aims to “show what is at stake in a story as a form of response” (Frank, 2012, p. 37). Understanding Jewish college students’ perspectives on Jewish student culture during college is a crucial first step to better understanding what is at stake for the Jewish student communities on college campuses. Without a better understanding of Jewish students, how can we feel an expanded “sense of responsibility” to respond or know how to respond (Frank, 2012, p. 37)? This study looked at Jewish students’ stories of how identity, context, and background influence how students use their culture, as well as the concept of *yeda b’sisi*, or *basic knowledge*. The first story explored pre- college Jewish experiences and how class identity influenced how students used, or did not use, those experiences as part of their cultural tool kits. The second story was about how Jewish students were able to feel connected to particular Jewish communities depending on the context. The third story focused on the influence that a Jewish student’s pathway to Judaism had on their understanding of and participation in religious services and rituals. The last story explored *yeda b’sisi*, how Jewish college students understand and use basic knowledge with other Jewish students and with people who do not identify as Jewish. Both implications for practice and research are drawn from this study.

During the Passover Seder, we generally ask questions about how this night is different from all other nights and we discuss how to respond to the questions asked of us by the four children about Passover. Rabbi Lawrence Hajioff (2015) wrote about how these four questions at a Passover Seder can be an “introduction into familial

Jewish life” (para. 4). Marnie Winston-MaCauley (2011) referred to the custom of questioning by noting that answering a question with a question is a Jewish practice that began, for her, as a child. In this spirit, I respond to the research questions I have explored for this study with four questions as implications for both practice and research.

Implications for Practice

In the United States, there are more than 350,000 Jewish students that attend colleges and universities (Steinhardt Social Research Institute, 2013), which means that it is necessary for student affairs practitioners - both those who work specifically with Jewish students and those who do not - to have a deeper understanding of Jewish student culture. There are four questions that practitioners should engage with to begin responding: 1) what do we (as practitioners) think of as *yeda b'sisi* and how may we be unconsciously communicating our assumptions to students? 2) What do our highly engaged students, the ones who become the faces of our organizations or offices, think of as *yeda b'sisi* and how can we train those students to become more aware of how they are communicating those assumptions? 3) how do we listen to what knowledge our students want to gain and provide the opportunities and resources for them to manage their cultural toolkits? and 4) how do we create spaces for students to explore how their pathway to Judaism and background impact how they see the world and Judaism? Questions one and two are questions in response to the research question: In what ways do Jewish students use *basic knowledge* as part of their tool kits? Questions three and four are questions in response to the research question: How does an undergraduate Jewish student's understanding of self, context, and their pathway to

Judaism influence their cultural tool kit during college?

How do we think about *yeda b'sisi*? As Jewish practitioners, it is important for us to reflect on what we think of as basic knowledge of Judaism. It is clear that the expectations around *yeda b'sisi* can have an impact on Jewish students while they are in college. What expectations are we placing on the Jewish students with which we interact? What knowledge are we expecting our Jewish students to already have? What experiences are we expecting them to have gone through? How do those things relate to our own identities and pathways to Judaism and to the identities and pathways of our students?

When I hosted a Passover Seder this year with friends, I was rushing to finish preparing and I asked one of my Jewish friends as I handed him the parsley to “put the *karpas*¹⁰ on the Seder plate.” When he said he did not know what *karpas* was, I was surprised and realized that I had unconsciously expected him to have this knowledge as a Jewish person. When I think about what I consider *yeda b'sisi*, I do not think of *karpas* as one of those things; and yet, in that moment, I expected this Jewish person to know that word. I mention this story to note how important it is for practitioners, particularly Jewish practitioners, to reflect on how we are using our own cultural tool kits, which we also carry with us in our roles. I was lucky that my friend felt comfortable enough to tell me that he did not understand what I was asking of him, but our students may not always do that with us as practitioners. It is our responsibility to make the effort to not place those expectations and to correct ourselves when we do.

The first step for Jewish practitioners is to think about what they consider to be

¹⁰ *Karpas* is the bitter herb used in the Passover Seder. Parsley is one of the herbs that can be *karpas*.

yeda b'sisi. It may be helpful to spend time writing down their thoughts or talking with another practitioner. Next, I encourage Jewish practitioners to start to reflect in the moment on how they are using Jewish knowledge and how that compares to how they define basic knowledge. Are there hidden expectations that they had not considered earlier? Jewish practitioners can also begin to incorporate explanation into their work. For example, when I was talking to my friend at Passover, I could have said “put the *karpas*, which in English is bitter herb, on the Seder plate. Our bitter herb is going to be parsley.” Lastly, Jewish practitioners should consider their programming and the ways in which explanation could increase the accessibility of their programming to Jews of all knowledge levels. For example, are the Hebrew prayers alongside the English transliterations at religious service programming? When just the Hebrew is provided, the ability to read Hebrew becomes an expectation for the Jewish students participating.

While I specifically mentioned Jewish practitioners above, it is also important for practitioners who do not identify as Jewish to reflect on how what expectations they have around basic knowledge as well. According to Nagel (1994), “ethnic boundaries determine who is a member and who is not” (p. 154) and those boundaries are partially determined by an individual’s view of themselves and the perceptions of others. This means that the larger community outside of the Jewish community on a campus can have an impact on an individual’s understanding of what it means to be Jewish on that campus. For practitioners who do not identify as Jewish, it is important to gain an understanding of what the Jewish community looks like on their campus. The setting and context of Jewish life varies widely from campus to campus, impacting the

climate for Jewish students (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Practitioners should engage with the office that works with Jewish students to learn what resources already exist and how they may best coordinate to better support Jewish students. While Hillel, Chabad, and Jewish Life Centers or staff members exist on many campuses, some campuses do not have any official support for Jewish students. Reaching out to local or state synagogues or Jewish organizations may also be helpful in better understanding how to support the Jewish students on an individual campus.

As Jewish practitioners, it is also important for us to impart upon highly engaged Jewish students how they are thinking about *yeda b'sisi* and employing their knowledge in their indirect and direct leadership. Student leaders often times become the faces of our organizations and offices in that they communicate with students who engage with the organization to a high degree. In the same way that practitioners can have an impact when they place expectations on Jewish students, student leaders may also have an impact on their Jewish student community. It is important to begin to think about how to engage these students in conversations about their understanding of basic knowledge to make them more aware of how they may be using it, as well as to continually reflect on it throughout their time as leaders in their organizations or offices. These students may also be able to engage with in conversations with the members of their organizations about the expectations or assumptions they have about Judaism and Jewish students. However, it is up to practitioners to begin these conversations to make student leaders aware of the importance of these conversations.

How do we listen? One of the linkages across many of the stories is that

gaining knowledge, understanding, experiences, or skills benefitted the students in some way in their communities (i.e. they felt more comfortable participating in Jewish life on campus or they were able to engage with their Jewish peers). How do we listen to students to figure out what knowledge, experiences, and skills they want to gain? One way is through asking students about how they want to grow Jewishly. This is important because the answer is going to be different for each Jewish student depending on their identities and their pathway to Judaism. The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (2009) found that 75% of Jewish participants in the study valued many dimensions of their identity with Jewish identity being just one. It is important for practitioners to consider the whole student because a Jewish student's multiple dimensions of identity and their pathway to Judaism may inform the ways in which they want to or are interested in growing. Some Jewish students may be content in their Jewish specific knowledge, experiences, and skills. What other ways can we encourage Jewish students to grow in connection to their multiple dimensions of identity? Another way for practitioners to listen is to stay up to date on the available research on Jewish students in college. This research can provide insight into the challenges Jewish students are facing and what is important to Jewish students.

Once we have listened, how do we provide the opportunities and resources so that Jewish students can manage their cultural toolkits during college? Combining the insight gained from the literature and from talking with the students on campus, practitioners may create some programs to provide nuanced opportunities and resources. For example, practitioners could create a pre-orientation or alternative break program based on the Jewish camp experience for Jewish students who did not

attend a Jewish camp prior to attending college. Models for this type of program already exist; for example, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) has a program called Carolina Kickoff. Founded in 1946 and run by the UNC Campus Y, Carolina Kickoff “empowers students to break down barriers, explore new concepts, and make an impact on campus” (“What’s Carolina Kickoff?”). During the three-day “camp” experience, first-year students sleep in cabins and are led by student “counselors” (“FAQs”). Practitioners could also look to Jewish camp experiences designed for Jewish adults in their 20s and 30s, such as Camp Nai Nai Nai. Camp Nai Nai Nai describes itself as “the ultimate Jewish summer camp experience” (“Jewish summer camp for adults”). Campers sleep in cabins or tents and participate in activities such as zip-lining, text study, arts and crafts, and Israeli dance (“East coast camp”). Practitioners could take elements from several camp-type programs to create a nuanced program that introduces Jewish undergraduate students who have never had a Jewish camp experience to one. Practitioners may also do some research and/or benchmarking about programs or offices that are available elsewhere on and off campus for their students. For example, practitioners may collaborate with a Jewish Studies Department and an LGBTQ Center to host a program on sexuality and the Torah.

How do we create spaces for students to explore? For some of the students in this study, their pathway to Judaism influenced how they understood the Jewish experiences they were having while in college. How do we create spaces for students to explore how their pathway to Judaism and background impact how they see the world and Judaism? I offer that by providing opportunities for Jewish students to process how their previous experiences are impacting them in the present is an

important way student affairs practitioners can support growth and learning. For example, practitioners may consider creating discussion groups after the first religious services that are offered at the beginning of the academic year to create spaces for students to process the experience they had. The questions could be tailored to encourage Jewish students to reflect on how their previous experiences are currently impacting them, and students could be provided the opportunity to break into small groups based on some of the previous experiences they have had in the Jewish community to discuss with other students who have had similar experiences.

Implications for Research

As important as it is for student affairs practitioners to have a deeper understanding of Jewish student culture on college campuses, it is equally as important for scholars to engage in research to support the work of practitioners and provide more knowledge on this topic. As examined in the literature review, there is not much research specifically about Jewish college students and even less research specifically exploring Jewish student culture on college campuses. There are four questions scholars should engage with to further explore this topic: 1) in what other ways do identity, context, and pathway to Judaism influence Jewish student culture on a college campus? 2) how do we make spaces welcoming for all Jewish students so that they may build a connection to their community? 3) in what ways does *yeda b'sisi* influence the experiences of Jewish students with marginalized identities who experience non-traditional pathways to Judaism? and 4) in what ways do both students and practitioners use *yeda b'sisi* unconsciously? Questions one and two are questions in response to the research question: How does an undergraduate Jewish student's understanding of self, context,

and their pathway to Judaism influence their cultural tool kit during college? Questions three and four are questions in response to the research question: In what ways do Jewish students use *basic knowledge* as part of their tool kits?

How do identity, context, and pathway to Judaism influence Jewish student culture? This study found ways in which identity, context, and pathway to Judaism individually influenced Jewish student culture. In what other ways do identity, context, and pathway to Judaism influence Jewish student culture on a college campus? In this study, I asked participants broad questions that did not focus on a specific identity, context, or pathway to Judaism. In future research, scholars could focus on specific identities, contexts, or pathways to Judaism to explore more about how those individually influence a student's cultural toolkit or to explore more broadly what Jewish culture looks like in a community. Additionally, future research could explore the intersection of two or more identities in specific contexts or the intersection of an identity and a specific pathway. There are many different possibilities to explore when it comes to how Jewish students understand their culture and how their identity and pathway to Judaism, as well as the context, influences their understanding of their culture.

Additionally, it is important to note that there were important identity groups who were not represented in the participants for this study. For example, there were no Jews of color, Jewish men, or transgender Jews interviewed. In order to better understand how identity influences culture, it is important that representation from other identity groups is included in future studies. One change I would make in order to diversify my participants would be to rely less on gatekeepers from only Jewish

organizations and to recruit from other types of groups, such as LGBTQ centers, Multi-Ethnic centers, and community service organizations. Through these organizations, I may have been able to recruit Jewish students who were not as present in the Jewish organizations, but who identified as Jewish and may have been interested in participating.

How do we make spaces welcoming? Feeling connected to the Jewish community is an aspect of Jewish identity (Altman et al., 2010). If students are unable to feel that connection because the space is not welcoming or accepting, the student may be deeply impacted, as was the case with several of the participants in this study. How do we make spaces welcoming for all Jewish students so that they may build a connection to their community? The first step is to figure out what Jewish students need in a Jewish community to feel welcome and accepted. This is a great opportunity for future research to explore specifically the needs of Jewish college students in Jewish communities.

How does *yeda b'sisi* influence the experiences of marginalized Jewish students? In this study, we saw how class identity impacted the pre-college Jewish experiences that students had access to, which ultimately impacted what knowledge and experiences were in their cultural tool kits. It was also clear that Jewish students who believed they lacked (or were made to feel they lacked) *yeda b'sisi* experienced negative emotions because of it, such as embarrassment or feeling inadequate or oblivious. One of the questions that this sparked for me is: in what ways does *yeda b'sisi* influence the experiences of Jewish students with marginalized identities who experience non-traditional pathways to Judaism while they are in college?

How do practitioners and students use *yeda b'sisi* unconsciously?

Lastly, this study also showed that students treat more knowledge as *yeda b'sisi* than what they expressed to be basic knowledge. An important future research topic is in what ways do both students and practitioners use *yeda b'sisi* unconsciously? How does the use of basic knowledge influence the practice of Jewish practitioners? A better understanding of how *yeda b'sisi* is used by both students and practitioners can lead to better understanding the role that basic knowledge plays in Jewish communities on college campuses.

Final Thoughts

Through the previously mentioned research questions, this study intended to highlight the narratives of Jewish students as a means for understanding their experiences as well as advancing the practices and interventions delivered by student affairs professionals. While my research provides some answers and I have some thoughts about how we should respond, I have more questions now than I did when I began the study. Overall, both practitioners and scholars need to explore the connections between identity, context, and pathway to Judaism and Jewish student culture on college campuses. Additionally, *yeda b'sisi* is a concept that deserves reflection by practitioners and further research by scholars.

This work has also made me think about who I want to be as a Jewish student affairs practitioner. As someone who aspires to work with Jewish students, I know how important it is to consider the whole person, as our Jewish students come to us with more than just their Jewish identities. This study has helped me think even more deeply about how I use *yeda b'sisi*, and how I might work to make the Jewish communities I

am a part of more welcoming and open for those of varying levels of knowledge.

While engaging in this work has certainly been an academic experience, it has also been a profoundly spiritual and cultural experience as well. When I traveled to Israel in December of 2014, I climbed the historical site of Masada¹¹ to watch the sunrise at dawn. In a letter, my mom asked me to think about Pa escaping the Holocaust and told me that I was making history - my own personal history, my family history, and history for the Jewish people. As I watched the sun rise over the horizon, I could feel all of my Jewish ancestors and my family with me in that moment. The only other time I have felt that way was the day I defended the proposal for this study. This work is one of the ways in which I live Jewishly. It has helped me to continue on my own Jewish journey.

¹¹ Masada is an archaeological site in Israel where Jews stood against the Romans in the 1st century AD (Mink, 1981).

Appendix A

Opening Journal Activity

Before we begin the interview, I would like you to fill out this diagram. This diagram is called the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Before you fill it out, let's go over an example to help you understand the model. This is Sarah's diagram. In the center, called the core, are the personal characteristics Sarah identifies with. She has down funny, introverted, good friend, and good student. Around the core are Sarah's social identities, such as sexual orientation, gender, religion, and race. These identities are impacted by the context, which Sarah has labeled in the outer circle. Sarah has labeled the context as her Jewish community on campus. In this context, Sarah said her sexual orientation - bisexual - is not very important or salient to her, so she placed it farther away from her core. In contrast, Sarah felt her race - black - was very important to her or very salient in this context. Do you have any questions about this example? Now that you've seen an example, I would like you to complete your own diagram. For this, please use the context of a Jewish community on your campus that you are a part of. If you are not part of a Jewish community, feel free to use another community or place on your campus. Please fill out both your social identities and personal characteristics. Keep in mind that your social identities should be labeled on a ring relative to how salient or important they are to you in the context you've chosen. Please label them with the identity you identify with, such as how Sarah labeled her sexual identity as bisexual. However, if you do not feel comfortable disclosing one of your identities, you can just label it with the more general category, such as sexual identity. Do you have any questions about the diagram or the instructions? After you complete the diagram, I will ask you to tell me about it.

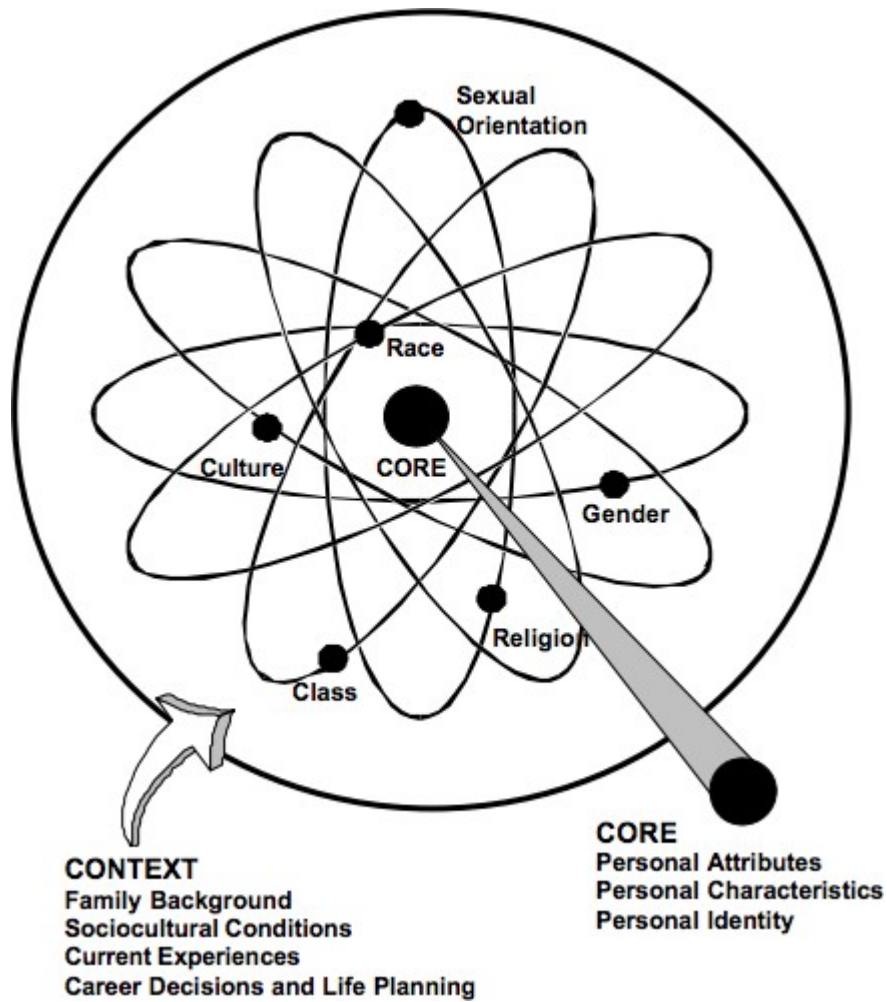


Figure 1. The Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000).

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

RQ#1: How does an undergraduate Jewish student's understanding of self, context, and their pathway to Judaism influence their cultural tool kit during college?

RQ#2: In what ways do Jewish students use *basic knowledge* as part of their tool kits?

Tell me about your Jewish journey. RQ1

Since you've started college, what has it been like to be Jewish on your campus? What have been some of your experiences on campus? RQ1

Think about your experiences with other Jews in college. Share with me a story related to some of those experiences that stick out to you? RQ1, RQ2

Think about the social identities other than Judaism that you included on the diagram we did earlier. Share with me a time when one or more of your other social identities impacted your Jewish experiences while you were in college? RQ1, RQ2

When I say *basic knowledge* of Judaism, what comes to mind for you? RQ2

- a. Please share with me a story about a time when you used your *basic knowledge* in college. RQ2
- b. Based on your understanding of *basic knowledge*, can you tell me a story about a time when you felt you didn't have *basic knowledge* in college? RQ2

Over your life you've acquired tangible things and in some cases experiences or knowledge that have contributed to your Jewish identity, please share with me one of your most memorable moments. RQ1, RQ2

There are a lot of things that can be considered part of the Jewish experience including things like songs, clothing, food, items, holidays, traditions, language, stories, experiences, or other things. It may also include negative things too, such as experiences of discrimination, either historical or personal. Share with me a time during college when you used one of these things to help you make sense of your Jewish community. RQ1

There may also be things you see as part of your Jewish identity that are connected with one of your other identities. For example, I identify as a woman, and this impacts the things I connect to my Jewish identity. There's a Jewish women's website I read articles on called Alma and there is also the concept of Rosh Chodesh, which are Jewish women's groups that meet based on the lunar cycle. So, what identities come to mind for you and what tangible things, experiences, or knowledge do you use that intersects your Jewish and other identity? RQ1

Depending on what they share--You ask them to share a story with you related to a time when they found themselves using the _____ (things, experiences, and/or knowledge) during college. How did the story influence their understanding of their _____ (identities)? RQ1

Appendix C

Recruitment Letter

Dear [insert student's name],

I hope you're doing well. My name is Maddie Reich, and I'm a graduate student at the University of Maryland, College Park in the Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education (CHSE). I'm emailing you let you know about an opportunity to participate in my research study about Jewish college student's perspectives on Jewish student culture on college campuses. *(if recruited from gatekeeper) [insert gatekeeper's name] provided me with your name and contact info as someone who may be eligible and interested in participating. OR (if recruited from snowball sampling) I was given your name and contact information by a previous participant in the study who thought you may be eligible and interested in participating.* You're eligible to participate in the study if you're a junior or senior and you self-identify as Jewish.

If you choose to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete an hour and a half in-person, audio-recorded interview facilitated by me, during which time you will also complete two journal exercises. I would like to audio record the interview so that the interview can be transcribed for data analysis. You will be compensated with a \$20 Amazon gift card.

Participation in this study is voluntary, you can withdraw at any time, and your interview and journal exercises will be kept confidential. If you would like to participate or you have questions about participating, feel free to contact me at mreich11@umd.edu. This research is under the direction of my chair, Dr. Candace M. Moore. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact The Institutional Review Board, University of Maryland, 1204 Marie Mount Hall, 7814 Regents Drive, College Park, Maryland 20742; telephone 301-405-4212; email address irb@umd.edu.

Sincerely, Maddie Reich

Appendix D

Journal Activity

After the Interview & Review of the Transcript:

Following our discussion regarding your experiences with Jewish student culture and your identities and your review of the transcript of our discussion, was there anything that you felt you wanted to talk more about? This could be something that intrigued you or resonated with you, or something that you haven't had a chance to talk about before but would like to reflect on more now.

Appendix E

“Opening Up Analysis” Question Examples (Frank, 2012)

1. Resource Questions
 - a. “What resources shape how the story is being told?” (Frank, 2012, p. 44)
 - b. “What resources shape how listeners comprehend the story?” (Frank, 2012, p. 44)
 - c. “How are narrative resources distributed between different groups; who has access to which resources; and who is under what form of constraint in the resources they utilize?” (Frank, 2012, p. 44)
 - d. “What other narrative resources, if available, might lead to different stories and change people’s sense of possibility in such settings?” (Frank, 2012, p. 44-45)
 - e. “What might be preventing those alternative narrative resources from being mobilized?” (Frank, 2012, p. 45).
2. Circulation Questions
 - a. “Who tells which stories to whom?” (Frank, 2012, p. 45)
 - b. “Who would immediately understand that story and who wouldn’t?” (Frank, 2012, p. 45)
 - c. “Are there some people whom you wouldn’t tell that story to, and why not?” (Frank, 2012, p. 45)
3. Affiliation Questions
 - a. “Who will be affiliated into a group of those who share a common understanding of a particular story?” (Frank, 2012, p. 45)
 - b. “Whom does the story render external or other do that group?” (Frank, 2012, p. 45)
 - c. “Who is excluded from the ‘we’ who share the story?” (Frank, 2012, p. 45)
4. Identity Questions
 - a. “How does the story teach people who they are, and how do people tell stories to explore whom they might become?” (Frank, 2012, p. 45)
5. Questions About What Is At Stake
 - a. “How is the storyteller holding his or her own in the act of telling that particular story, in that way?” (Frank, 2012, p. 46)
 - b. “How do the stories that some people have available convince them of what they have to do and to be in order to hold their own?” (Frank, 2012, p. 46)

Appendix F

IRB Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Project Title	<i>Jewish Student Culture on College Campuses</i>
Purpose of the Study	<i>This research is being conducted by Madeline Reich at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you have self- identified as a Jewish student in your junior or senior year. The purpose of this research project is to gain an understanding of Jewish college students' perspectives on Jewish student culture during college. A particular focus will be placed on your experiences in college, your other identities, and your pathway to Judaism.</i>
Procedures	<i>Each participant will engage in a one and a half hour interview. During this time, all participants will be asked to complete a diagram exploring their identities. All interviews will be conducted by a member of the research team (Madeline Reich). Interviews will take place in person on your campus and will be audio recorded. After the interview has been transcribed, you will be asked to review your transcription and complete a follow-up journal prompt, which should take approximately a half hour. The total duration of participation is approximately two hours.</i> <i>Example Interview Questions:</i> <i>1. Can you tell me a story about a time one or more of your other social identities impacted your Jewish identity while you were in college?</i> <i>2. Tell me about your experiences with Jewish student culture here on campus.</i>

**Potential Risks
and
Discomforts**

The study has some associated risks. You may feel some emotional stress/discomfort answering the interview questions. You are free to skip any questions at any point. You may withdraw your participation in the study at any time prior, during, or after the interview and any information you provide will be destroyed. There is also a potential for loss of confidentiality. Interview recordings and transcripts will be stored electronically on the primary investigator's external hard drive.

During the interview process investigators will have brief access to private information about participants such as their name and institution. All of this information will be de-identified by assigning a random identifier to data from each participant. The primary investigator will maintain a key linking identifiers with identifying information in a password protected file on a password protected computer. Audio data will be destroyed (permanently deleted) upon the completion of the project.

There is also a small chance that someone not on our research team could find out that you participated in the study or somehow connect you with the information we collect about you, however the following steps are being taken to reduce this risk:

- Your real name will not be used in the data collection, data analysis, final report, or presentation. You will select a fictitious name that the researchers will use to identify your responses from others.*
- Your interview will not be shared with your institution, your faculty, or any other student participating as researchers in the study.*
- The records of this study will be kept private. We will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject in any published articles or presentations.*

Potential Benefits	<i>There are no direct benefits from participating in this research. However, possible benefits include the researcher providing space for Jewish students to share their experiences and for those experiences to be heard. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of the complexities surrounding Jewish students.</i>
Confidentiality	<i>Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing the data on a password protected external hard-drive. All of this information will be de-identified by assigning a random identifier to data from each participant. The primary investigator will maintain a key linking identifiers with identifying information in a password protected file on a password protected computer.</i> <i>If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</i>
Compensation	<i>You will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card upon completion of the study. You will be responsible for any taxes assessed on the compensation. Your name and address will be collected to receive compensation. If you are an employee or student, your employment status or academic standing at UMD will not be positively or negatively affected by your participation or non- participation in this study.</i>

Right to Withdraw and Questions	<i>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.</i> <i>If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator:</i> Madeline Reich mreich11@umd.edu
Participant Rights	<i>If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</i> University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, Maryland, 20742 E- mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405- 0678 <i>For more information regarding participant rights, please visit:</i> https://research.umd.edu/irb-research-participants <i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i>

Statement of Consent	<i>Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</i> <i>If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.</i>
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Signature and Date	NAME OF PARTICIPANT [Please Print]	
	SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT	
	DATE	

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