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Jewish Early Adolescent Perceptions of their Positive Youth Development, Identity Development, and Purpose

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Jewish Early Adolescent Perceptions of their Positive
Youth Development, Identity Development, and Purpose

by

Lauren B. Kurnov

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Program Development
with a concentration in Educational Innovation
Department of Teaching and Learning
College of Education
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DEDICATION

For my grandmother Jacqui, who shares my love of learning and thirst for knowledge.

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It is impossible to adequately capture the many ways in which Dr. Kiefer challenged, inspired, and motivated me every step of the way on this journey. Her ongoing feedback forced me to deeply reflect on my assumptions, and to support my ideas through a rigorous research process. Dr. Mariano was incredibly helpful to me during the process of writing and revising my interview questions. Dr. Johnston suggested several useful resources that supported the methodology section of my dissertation and encouraged me to develop more user-friendly versions of my findings to disseminate to a wider audience. I have Dr. Shaunessy-Dedrick to thank for the inspiration that led me to focus on Jewish early adolescents for my dissertation, as she hosted Rabbi Chuck Diamond from Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue as a guest speaker in her course.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored Jewish early adolescents' perceptions of their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose. Three theoretical frameworks informed the study, including Lerner's 5 C's of positive youth development, Marcia's identity development, and Damon's youth purpose. Specifically, the study explored how Jewish early adolescents perceive certain aspects of the local Jewish community as supportive of positive youth development, identity development, and youth purpose. I collected qualitative data through a series of three interviews with 4 Jewish early adolescents recruited using purposeful sampling. Data were analyzed through a hybrid approach to thematic analysis. The first finding was that Jewish early adolescent perceptions of their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose are shaped by self, family, and friends. The second finding was that within the Jewish community, identity development, positive youth development and purpose flourished while Jewish early adolescents often felt unsafe, left out, and misunderstood within the broader secular community context. These findings provide a deeper understanding of Jewish early adolescents' perceptions of their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose, and have implications as to how the Jewish community may best support and nurture early adolescent development.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), 1,879 anti-Semitic incidents occurred in the United States in 2018 (Greenblatt, 2018). This figure represents the third highest number of anti-Semitic incidents that have occurred over the last four decades since the ADL began to track this activity (Greenblatt, 2018). Notably, this 2018 total is also 99% higher than the number of incidents that were recorded just three years prior in 2015 (Greenblatt, 2018). These anti-Semitic incidents are divided into three categories: harassment, vandalism, and assault (Greenblatt, 2018). Harassment is defined as when a Jewish person or group feels harassed by the perceived anti-Semitic words or actions of others (Greenblatt, 2018). Vandalism occurs when property is damaged in a way that attacks Jews for their religious affiliation (Greenblatt, 2018). Assault occurs when someone's body is targeted with violence and coupled with anti-Semitic sentiments (Greenblatt, 2018). Many of these incidents occur somewhat under the radar, unacknowledged by most Americans (AJC, 2019). One 2018 anti-Semitic incident was impossible to ignore – the Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting in Pittsburgh which resulted in 13 congregant casualties (Brandeis University, 2019)). This shooting signified a new anti-Semitic assault record; it was the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in the history of the United States (Greenblatt, 2018).

This study explored American Jewish early adolescents' perceptions of their positive youth development, identity development, and youth purpose within one local Jewish community situated in this broader violent and tumultuous anti-Semitic context. As a starting

point, it is worth exploring a similar study that was conducted at the national level with a focus on understanding and engaging Jewish adolescents in educational programming (Bryfman, 2016). In 2016, the Jewish Education Project launched a qualitative study and conducted digital ethnographies as well as 16 in-person focus groups with 139 adolescents (Bryfman, 2016). The study's findings were summarized in a report entitled "Generation Now" which revealed several key insights regarding Jewish teen engagement (Bryfman, 2016). The report represented an important shift in Jewish teen program evaluation from a focus on the amount of Jewish experiences and knowledge to a focus on quality – whether Jewish programs enhance the lives of their participants in a meaningful and integrated way (Bryfman, 2016). In other words, the report emphasized that successful Jewish teen programs add significant benefits to the lives of participants (Bryfman, 2016). Although my study was not a program evaluation, I aimed to understand how Jewish early adolescents perceive aspects of their development within one local Jewish community to best support their growth and flourishing.

The study was informed by three theoretical frameworks, namely Lerner's 5 C's of positive youth development, Marcia's identity development, and Damon's youth purpose. The qualitative study addressed several gaps in the literature by focusing on early adolescents' perceptions, given that most of the literature tends to group adolescents (ages 12-18-years old) together as one group. Further, my study focused on a specific, understudied religious group, Jewish early adolescents, in order to inform the local Jewish community regarding strategies that may promote aspects of their development.

Context

Located on Florida's Gulf Coast, the Sarasota Manatee region is home to a robust Jewish Federation (2020) that offers a number of educational and cultural activities and programs for the

entire community. In 2019, The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee commissioned Brandeis University to conduct a comprehensive survey of the local Jewish population (Brandeis University, 2019). The main goal of the study was to provide data about the local Jewish community that community organizations could refer to when designing programs and policies to enhance local Jewish life (Brandeis University, 2019). The survey was based on a sampling of 34,572 households (Brandeis University, 2019). A primary sample consisting of 7,400 households were contacted by mail, email, and telephone in an effort to receive the maximum number of responses. In addition to this primary sample, a supplemental sample of 2,895 households were contacted by email only (Brandeis University, 2019). More than 1,000 respondents participated in the study (Brandeis University, 2019). Aside from collecting demographic data, the study measured participation in local Jewish events and institutions, as well as assessed local attitudes towards Israel and Judaism to better understand the multifaceted expressions of Jewish engagement (Brandeis University, 2019). For the purposes of the study, Jewish engagement included a range of activities under the broad categories of family holidays, ritual practices, communal activities, and personal activities (Brandeis University, 2019).

The study revealed that 41% of the Jewish population in the Sarasota-Manatee area reported being minimally involved in Jewish life, 37% were moderately engaged, 14% regularly participated in communal activities, and 8% were fully immersed at a high intensity level (Brandeis University, 2019). The local Jewish youth population increased from 1,500 local Jewish children in 2001 to 3,400 local Jewish children in 2019. However, only 16% of the Jewish population reported that they belonged to a local congregation. Further, more than one quarter (27%) of Sarasota Manatee Jews reported personally experiencing some form of anti-Semitism over the past three years. These personal experiences are mirrored by broader anti-

Semitic hate crimes that occurred in the community over the last few years. On April 2, 2020 the outer wall of Temple Emanu-El, a reform synagogue in Sarasota, was defaced by swastikas. A similar act of vandalism was repeated three months later on July 14, 2020 at Temple Emanu-El and Temple Sinai, another reform synagogue in Sarasota. This was preceded by a similar incident that occurred a few years prior at Temple Sinai. These acts of anti-Semitism leave physical and emotional scars on the local Jewish community. Adolescents, in particular, internalize these acts of violence during a period of their lives marked by identity development (Marcia, 1993).

My study is situated within the Sarasota/Manatee region, with a specific focus on Jewish early adolescents. I recruited participants using purposeful sampling. Due to the sensitive nature of some of my interview questions, I recruited Jewish early adolescents from families with which I already have well established relationships. Overall, my study is driven by a desire to better understand the perceptions of Jewish early adolescents and the contexts that support their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose development.

Problem of Practice

According to the 2019 Sarasota-Manatee Jewish Community Study, 3,700 children live in Jewish households in the Sarasota-Manatee area and 92% of those children are being raised within the Jewish faith (Brandeis University, 2019). It is my hope that my study illuminated the perceptions and experiences of these local Jewish youth. It is my belief that the current anti-Semitic landscape, both locally and globally, may threaten the healthy development of Jewish early adolescents in ways we may not fully understand or appreciate. My study aims to better understand the needs of this population.

Researcher Positionality

As a researcher, I bring to this work my own worldview as a Jewish woman in the community that I am studying. I care deeply about the wellbeing of all Jewish youth in our community, which includes my own two children. As a parent, I want to ensure that my children feel connected to their Jewish community in a meaningful way. This research endeavor was therefore highly personal and required careful navigation of my dual roles as researcher and community member. In Chapter 3, I outline strategies for monitoring these dual roles as well as expand on my Jewish background and how it influences my positionality.

Theoretical Framework

My research study is guided by three theoretical frameworks, including Lerner's (2009) five C's of positive youth development, Marcia's (1993) theory of identity development, and Damon's (2003) youth purpose. Situated within these frameworks, my review of the literature explores the role of various socio-cultural activities and developmental contexts within one Jewish community in shaping adolescent positive youth development, identity development, and youth purpose.

The five "C's" are a way of conceptualizing positive youth development and include competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Lerner, 2009). Research links these features to positive youth outcomes that serve as indicators of youth thriving (Lerner, 2009). The five C's model takes individual youth strengths as well as ecological factors into account (Lerner, 2009). Several dimensions of family, school, and neighborhood settings are linked to different developmental outcomes such as school and civic engagement, among others (Lerner, 2009). Benson (1997, 2003, 2007) and colleagues at the Search Institute created a "developmental assets" framework with forty developmental assets, including 20 internal and 20

external assets. These developmental assets informed my interview questions along with Lerner's five "C's". An interview question that probes for connection was included in my first interview, and the second and third interviews included questions that address participant confidence, competence, character, and caring. The five C's provide a framework for generating codes and themes for qualitative data analysis based on participant responses.

Identity development occurs during adolescence and is marked by individuals questioning their previously accepted beliefs, values, and goals (Marcia, 1993). Marcia (1993) discussed the process of identity formation as having two dimensions, namely exploration and commitment. Exploration is defined as a time of crisis when adolescents examine alternatives with the goal of making a commitment in the near future (Marcia, 1993). Commitment comes at a later stage, signaled by meaningful activities that reflect clear goals, values, and beliefs (Marcia, 1993). These concepts of exploration and commitment informed the design of my interview questions that focus on activities and the significance participants attribute to these activities.

Damon has argued that not all purpose is the same, and his work highlights the importance of noble purpose (Damon, 2003). Broadly defined, noble purpose focuses on one's purpose that benefits humanity as opposed to ignoble purpose which stems from destructive impulses (Damon, 2003). This noble sense of purpose is relevant to my study as purpose connected to religious identity has a moral dimension. The notion of noble purpose informed my interview questions that focus on long-term goals, community, and the meaning participants attribute to various experiences.

Research Questions

To address my problem of practice, my research questions include:

1. How do Jewish early adolescents from the Sarasota Manatee region perceive their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose?
2. How do Jewish early adolescents from the Sarasota Manatee region perceive aspects of their local Jewish community as shaping their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose?

To address these research questions, I conducted three sets of qualitative interviews with 4 Jewish early adolescents. The interview questions progressed with each session and explored how participants' experiences – including activities and challenges within the Jewish community – may support their positive youth development, identity development, and sense of purpose. The questions also explored participants' perceptions of local contexts (their school, synagogue, and the Federation), and how features of these contexts might support the developmental needs of participants.

Definitions and Terminology

The following are key terms used in the proposed study.

Anti-Semitism. The term anti-Semitism encompasses various expressions of hostility or prejudice against Jews (Greenblatt, 2018).

Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a Jewish rite of passage for 12-13-year-old boys and girls, respectively, in which youth lead a Torah service and are considered Jewish adults upon completion.

Congregation. A congregation is a place of worship. For Jews, the congregation can also be referred to as a temple or a synagogue.

Early Adolescence. For the purposes of this study, early adolescence is defined as 11-14 years of age (Kuperminc, Blatt, & Leadbeater, 1997).

Identity Development. During adolescence, individuals often question their previously accepted beliefs, values, and goals through a process of identity formation consisting of two dimensions, exploration and commitment (Marcia, 1993).

Jewish Community. Jewish community carries multiple meanings. It can be understood as a place (e.g., school, synagogue, city, nation, world) and/or as a people (e.g., Jewish peers, fellow congregants, family members, citizens of Israel, etc.; Fox, Scheffler, & Marom, 2003).

Jewish Identity. Jewish identity is conceptualized as a process that evolves over the course of one's lifetime, rather than a static given that remains forever unchanged (Charmé, Horowitz, Hyman, & Kress, 2008).

Positive Youth Development. Lerner's five C's is a guiding framework for conceptualizing positive youth development and includes competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Lerner, 2009). Research links these features to positive youth outcomes, and the five C's model takes both individual youth strengths as well as ecological factors into account (Lerner, 2009).

Purpose. Purpose is understood as an "enduring, personally meaningful commitment to what ones hopes to accomplish or work toward in life" (Bronk, 2011, p. 32).

Limitations

This qualitative study has a notable limitation. I interviewed a small number of purposefully selected participants (4) within one community. Although my insider status within this community was beneficial in terms of providing access and establishing rapport, my affinity for the community also presented a challenge to my stance as an objective researcher. In Chapter 3, I discuss various strategies that I employed to keep this potential bias under check.

Significance

This study comes at a critical point within the Sarasota-Manatee Jewish community. As the population of local Jewish families continues to increase, so too do expressions of anti-Semitism in the local community and beyond. This study aims to increase the community's understanding of the voices of Jewish early adolescents so that their developmental needs can be better understood. The findings from the study may inform youth programs in the local Jewish community – including schools, nonprofits, and synagogues – to better address these needs. It is important to illuminate the perspectives of Jewish early adolescents before this group enters high school. Many middle school students participate in Bar or Bat Mitzvah studies in sixth and seventh grade which provides them with a sense of Jewish community and connection. Very few of these Jewish youth, however, continue with their Jewish part-time supplementary education into high school. This fallout pattern can leave Jewish adolescents feeling disconnected from their Jewish identity as they progress to high school. It is my hope that this study may provide the local Jewish community with additional insight into how this population can be better served.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

My review of the literature focuses on three theoretical frameworks: positive youth development, identity exploration, and youth purpose. In this chapter, I review and evaluate theoretical and conceptual sources as well as seminal and recent research studies in order to better understand how my research study is situated within the literature.

Positive Youth Development

Positive youth development (PYD) focuses on youth strengths and attributes, as well as desired outcomes (Lerner, 2015). Central to a PYD perspective is an asset-based approach to adolescent identity development as opposed to the deficit-based approach utilized throughout the twentieth century (Lerner, 2009). Some scholars have explored the role of individual strengths on positive development, and the field of positive psychology has adopted this perspective (Lerner, 2013). Seligman's (2004) work has identified 24 character strengths such as courage and optimism, as moderating forces that can counter mental illness. Keyes (2005, 2006) has called into question the narrow way in which mental health has been defined with a focus on psychopathology and developed a dual-factor model as an alternative approach. This model differentiates between mental health and mental illness and calls for separate assessments of both to better determine an individual's overall well-being. Keyes (2005, 2006) utilizes a positive mental health approach to search for the presence of positive feelings and functioning and describes mental health as a state of flourishing and the absence of mental health as a state of

languishing. For Keyes (2005, 2006), positive mental health is understood as more than simply the absence of mental illness and is marked by specific features that signify well-being.

The following section discusses several key positive youth development areas. First, I provide an overview of Lerner's (2009) five C's of positive youth development. Second, I discuss the Search Institute's youth developmental assets. Third, I describe the relational-developmental-systems model that emerged from the positive youth development framework. Fourth, I discuss the role of adult and peer mentors as well as youth from diverse backgrounds. I conclude this section with a discussion of the key methodological approaches of positive youth development.

The Five C's. The five "C's" are a way of conceptualizing positive youth development and include competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Lerner, 2009). Research indicates the "C's" are linked to positive youth outcomes and are referenced by practitioners, adolescents, and parents as indicators of youth thriving (Lerner, 2009; 2013, 2015). Competence refers to having a positive view of one's actions in specific domains, including social, academic, cognitive, health, and vocational (Lerner, 2009). Confidence refers to an internal positive self-regard (Lerner, 2009). Connection is signified by positive bonds that are enacted between individuals and their peers, family, school, and community where the exchanges are mutually reciprocal (Lerner, 2009). Character is marked by a respect for cultural and societal norms, a moral sense, integrity, and living by standards for correct behavior (Lerner, 2009). Caring/compassion is expressed by a feeling of empathy or sympathy towards others (Lerner, 2009). When individuals exhibit these five C's, a 6th C of contribution emerges (Lerner, 2009). Contribution can be directed to the self as well as to family, community, and society and is marked by an individual's aim to contribute to the world around them (Lerner, 2009).

The five C's are linked to several key outcomes for youth (Lerner, 2009). Greater educational expectations (confidence) and school engagement (connection) have been shown to predict higher academic achievement (Lerner, 2009). Research also indicates that individuals who participate in youth development programs modeled on the five C's develop stronger civic identities (Lerner, 2009).

Youth Developmental Assets. Benson (1997, 2003, 2007) and colleagues at the Search Institute introduced the notion of youth “developmental assets” which highlight the strengths and talents of youth. There are forty developmental assets; 20 assets are external, whereas 20 are internal (Benson, 1997, 2003, 2007). External assets fall into four broad categories including support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time (Benson, 1997, 2003, 2007). Each of these external asset categories are further broken down into a handful of different developmental assets. This model also includes four categories of internal assets, namely commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity (Benson, 1997, 2003, 2007). Just as is the case with the external assets, each of the internal asset categories includes different specific assets. These assets depict youth living in environments that can be conceptualized as multiple supportive ecologies with factors that constantly reinforce one other (Sesma, Mannes, & Scales, 2005). Within this framework, both programmatic as well as social contextual features are understood as central to various long- and short-term developmental youth outcomes (Sesma et al., 2005).

Although developmental assets is a useful framework for conceptualizing the influences of internal and external factors on positive youth development, it fails to take cultural differences into account. The framework's culturally neutral stance is somewhat limited as a lens for understanding the positive youth development of my culturally specific population under study.

Nonetheless, the framework provides a valuable lens for analyzing the data and creating codes and themes that reflect the broad asset categories. These categories support my overall goal of illuminating how the Jewish community may promote positive youth development. My study focuses specifically on positive youth development for Jewish early adolescents, whereas the Search Institute's framework was designed with the general adolescent population in mind. This developmental asset model draws a predictive link between these assets and seven behavioral indicators of thriving, namely school success, leadership, helping others, physical health, delay of gratification, valuing diversity, and overcoming adversity (Benson, 1997, 2003, 2007). For example, a study conducted by Scales, Benson, Leffert, and Blyth (2000) showed that the two assets of achievement motivation and school engagement are linked to the school success thriving indicator. Similarly, a study by Reininger et al. (2005) explored the relationship between assets and certain youth risk behaviors. Among other findings, the results indicated that the assets of school environment and personnel are key factors in promoting healthy adolescent behavior (Reininger et al., 2005).

Eccles and Gootman (2002) outlined four domains that promote positive youth development, including physical development, intellectual development, psychological and emotional development, and social development. An individual does not need to possess all of the assets within each of these domains to attain positive youth development, however more assets are preferable to fewer (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003a, 2003b) focused on defining the term positive youth development in terms of the "big three" characteristics such programs should include. These three characteristics are specific program activities, atmosphere, and goals (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, 2003b). These programs take an

asset-based approach by focusing on promoting positive development rather than focusing solely on prevention (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, 2003b).

In Good's (2008) education handbook, Eccles and Templeton describe the common critical components of positive social contexts. They conducted a comprehensive review of developmental literature as well as experimental and quasi-experimental youth programs to determine these key components. These components include adequate provisions for safety; supportive relationships with adults and peers; opportunities to develop a sense of belonging, mastery, mattering, and the chance to learn essential skills for success; and strong positive social behavioral norms. Their research also revealed that youth programs work best when they are strongly linked to other programs in the community in which the youth also participate. This finding is particularly instructive to my study as I consider the ways in which the web of Sarasota Manatee Jewish organizations could collaborate to support the positive youth development of local Jewish early adolescents.

Relational-Developmental-Systems Model. Over time, Lerner and others refined the positive youth development framework into a relational-developmental-systems paradigm (Lerner, 2015). This paradigm eschews dichotomous thinking in favor of the study of different levels of organization to understand development (Lerner, 2015). Relationships between individuals and their contexts are emphasized and understood as mutually influential and ever changing (Lerner, 2015). When a relationship between the individual and their context is positive for both entities, it is viewed as adaptive (Lerner, 2015). This adaptiveness is not, however, fixed in time and can change any time the individual or their context changes (Lerner, 2015). This potential for variability across time is a key component of the relational-developmental-systems model, and this notion is based on an assumption of the nonergodicity of human

behavior (i.e., human behavior is neither homogenous nor stationary; Lerner, 2015). As a result of this assumption of nonergodicity, change-sensitive research methodologies are typically favored by developmental scientists (Lerner, 2015). These developmental scientists also tend to draw on research from multiple disciplines to illuminate the complex and mutually influential relationships within the model (Lerner, 2015). Central to the relational-developmental-systems model is also the notion that individuals are active producers of their own development rather than passive recipients of some externally determined set of circumstances (Lerner, 2015).

The Role of Adult and Peer Mentors. Larson's (2006) approach to positive youth development shifts the focus from individual assets and programmatic characteristics to an understanding that embraces PYD as a process wherein adolescents are actively engaged in a motivational system. For Larson (2006), youth need to be appropriately challenged to become motivated and to stay motivated throughout their development. Much of Larson's (2006) work explores out-of-school time (OST) activities, and the role of structured activities as environments for positive youth development to occur. Youth-adult mentorship interactions can support positive youth development when the relationships balance youth agency with adult input, and Larson suggests a number of working models that can achieve this delicate balance (Larson, 2006). Larson has also investigated how adolescent experiences prepare youth for the adult world (Larson, 2006). This focus on preparation is particularly relevant to my study. My study focuses on 11-14 year old adolescents, many of whom are preparing for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies and are actively engaged in their Jewish life. For most of these youth, however, their engagement in this community will significantly decrease starting in high school after their Bar/Bat Mitzvah studies conclude. It is therefore crucial that early adolescents begin to prepare

for high school (and beyond) during a period when they are supported and engaged in their Jewish community.

Fredricks and Simpkins have explored the effects of out-of-school activities on positive youth development and the role that peer relationships have in these settings (Focken, 2014). Their research analyzed various studies that focused on the development of teamwork, social skills, and positive relationships in organized activity settings as well as youths' perceptions (Focken, 2014). This research underscores the fact that in Western contexts, peer relationships are especially significant during adolescence as youth spend an increasing amount of time with peers and highly value their opinions (Focken, 2014). Out-of-school time activities are ideal contexts for peer relationships to develop, including youth development programs with social skills components (Focken, 2014). Further, organized activities provide more opportunities for peer interactions than typical classroom settings which tend to be more rigidly structured (Focken, 2014). This research focuses on youth between 10-18 years old, which more closely mirrors my study population than many other studies I encountered in the literature that focused exclusively either on middle or late adolescents. Additionally, the focus on out-of-school contexts is relevant to my study which aims to explore the perceptions of early adolescents who are engaged in various after school activities. Questions that investigate the role of friendships and afterschool activities in positive youth development, identity development, and youth purpose are included in my interview design to explore the role of peer relationships in these areas. One limitation of the peer relationship literature, however, is the need for more specific information about the features of organized activities that promote peer interactions (Focken, 2014).

Youth from Diverse Backgrounds. Leman et al. (2017) explored positive youth development in what has been an under researched population of study, namely youth from diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds. The field of positive youth development has utilized approaches that emphasize positive youth attributes over deficit-based approaches. This stance has been, however, blind to the issue of whether risk exists in the lives of young people (Leman et al., 2017). This narrow view fails to consider positive assets such as resilience that young people from backgrounds that include risk could bring to bear (Leman et. al, 2017).

Methodological Approaches. Positive youth development has also been somewhat limited in terms of its methodological approaches. Long term longitudinal, quantitative studies examine how positive development can occur across developmental periods such as adolescence (Leman et. al, 2017). For example, Agans et. al (2014) explored how youth participation in multiple activities can promote positive youth development. Their study utilized data from Waves 3-8 of the 4-H study of positive youth development, which included 7th to 12th grade students (Agans et. al, 2014). Although the study revealed that participation in multiple activities promotes positive youth development, it does not necessarily reduce certain risk behaviors. This finding is instructive to youth development professionals who would be wise to develop their programs such that they include initiatives that both promote positive youth development as well as those that address risk behaviors (Agans et. al, 2014). My study focuses on 6th to 9th grade students and as such it is not clear how applicable the 4-H findings, which examined 7th to 12th grade students, are to my younger, more specific population of Jewish early adolescents.

The most effective way to study positive youth development characteristics and supportive contexts is through a longitudinal study, as this allows for participants to be studied over time. An ideal positive youth development study would also allow participants to be studied

in their actual environment, as opposed to in a clinical setting. Through such a study, participants could make decisions about how to spend their time and results would be based on observations of the participants in their natural setting (Lerner, 2009). The 4H study is one of the better-known studies of positive youth development that was launched in 2002 and continued annually for eight years (Lerner, 2009). The purpose of the study was to determine whether positive youth development occurs as a result of aligning youth strengths with family, school, and community resources across the full spectrum of adolescence (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). The study's research methodology was a form of longitudinal sequential design that began with fifth grade students and ended when they were in twelfth grade. (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). The study collected data from over 7,000 participants from 42 states through a student questionnaire, parent questionnaire, and other sources such as the U.S. Census (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). The study led to several key findings including the importance of self-regulation skills to positive youth development, the critical role of school engagement in promoting academic achievement, and the influence of neighborhood assets on developmental outcomes (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). A strength of the 4-H study is its large number of participants and longitudinal design, which allows the study's findings to be generalizable to the larger adolescent population. A limitation is that the survey design with a large sample size prevents individual voices from being heard and exploring within group differences. Nonetheless, the 4H study informs my study by providing me with a conceptual framework to link my interview questions to the five C's.

These studies are representative of many adolescent development studies that are longitudinal and quantitative in nature. These studies are helpful in painting a broad picture of the activities and features that promote positive youth development for adolescents at large. What is missing, however, from many of these studies is the voices of the adolescents

themselves. My qualitative study seeks to illuminate some of these voices from a specific early adolescent religious group.

Identity Development

Identity development is a second construct that informs my dissertation. I begin this section with an overview of Marcia's identity development theoretical framework. Next, I discuss two specific concepts from Marcia's framework (emotional crises and religious beliefs) and detail how these concepts relate to my line of inquiry. Finally, I discuss Jewish identity models, as well as Jewish education and its influence on adolescent identity development.

Marcia's Identity Exploration and Commitment. Adolescence is a stage that is marked by individuals questioning their previously accepted beliefs, values, and goals (Marcia, 1993). Marcia (1993) conceptualized this phenomenon as a process of identity formation with two dimensions, namely exploration and commitment. Exploration can be conceived as a period of crisis during which an adolescent examines various alternatives while seeking to make a firm commitment in the near future (Marcia, 1993). The five criteria for exploration are knowledgeability, activity directed toward gathering information, considering alternative potential identity elements, emotional tone, and the desire to make an early decision (Marcia, 1993). An individual must receive a certain score in each of these criteria to be classified as being in the identity exploration phase (Marcia, 1993). Knowledgeability refers to information gathering and processing alternatives (Marcia, 1993). Activity directed toward gathering information refers to activity that will provide adolescents with information to help them decide between alternative choices (Marcia, 1993). Considering alternative potential identity elements refers to considering multiple options, which is common during early adolescence (Marcia, 1993). Emotional tone differs during the early, middle, or late adolescent stages and refers to

emotional expressions such as anxiety, excitement, or calm (Marcia, 1993). For early adolescents, emotional tone is often marked by an excitable and inquisitive tone of voice (Marcia, 1993). Finally, the desire to make an early decision reflects the fact that most individuals desire to make decisions as quickly as possible to avoid discomfort (Marcia, 1993). This feature is not always true for early adolescents, as they may not necessarily be able to enact choices in a meaningful way (Maria, 1993). There are several critiques in the literature regarding exploration; the most salient to my research topic is the critique that there is no empirical proof for the assumption that identity exploration precedes identity commitment in the identity formation process (Meeus, 2011). In order to take this into consideration, I structured my interview questions to include a combination of questions that reflect identity exploration and commitment phases in a way that does not indicate a specific sequence in the study.

Commitment signifies a firm resolution in the adolescent's goals, values, and beliefs as demonstrated through meaningful activities (Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia, 2010). The six criteria used to evaluate adolescent commitment are knowledgeability, activity directed toward implementing the chosen identity element, emotional tone, identification with significant others, projection into one's personal future, and resistance to being swayed (Kroger et al., 2010). Knowledgeability concerns how much information the adolescent has gained and processed about their commitment (Kroger et al., 2010). Typical information sources for adolescents include family members, peers, teachers, the media, as well as their own experiences (Kroger et al., 2010). For adolescents, their personal lens is often not the most reliable or sophisticated way of gaining knowledge and can lead to misconceptions (Kroger et al., 2010). Adolescents have limited experience and knowledge which can lead them to make somewhat simplistic decisions (Marcia, 1993). Activity directed toward implementing a chosen identity element refers to

supportive activities that deepen one's commitment (Kroger et al., 2010). Activities include befriending people of similar orientations, reading about the identity element, and pursuing relevant part-time employment opportunities, among others (Kroger et al., 2010). Emotional tone for the committed phase is calmer and more stable than the emotional tone of the exploration phase, which can be characterized by anxiety (Kroger et al., 2010). Identification with significant others refers to the models that serve as information sources for adolescents, and can include parents, teachers, media figures, peers, religious leaders, and siblings (Kroger et al., 2010). Projection into one's personal future involves envisioning plans as part of how one envisions their future life overall (Kroger et al., 2010). Middle and late adolescents tend to be more adept at thinking in these terms than early adolescents who typically envision a future only as far as high school or college (Kroger et al., 2010). Finally, resistance to being swayed in the commitment domain refers to one's unwillingness to select an alternative that could be any better in their eyes than that to which they are committed (Kroger et al., 2010). Although adolescents may talk through other possible avenues while remaining in this commitment domain, they often conclude that their chosen path still represents their likeliest future (Kroger et al., 2010). There are a number of critiques in the literature on commitment. The most applicable critique to my study is the potentially significant role of emotional experiences on identity commitment, and the lack of empirical research investigating this possible connection (Van Der Gaag, Albers, & Kunnen, 2017).

Marcia's framework can be categorized as an extension of Erickson's ego identity approach (Lannegrand-Willems & Bosma, 2006). While Erikson framed the identity crisis during adolescence in terms of identity versus identity confusion, Marcia's theory includes four identity statuses based on the domains of exploration and commitment (Lannegrand-Willems &

Bosna, 2006). These four statuses include identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and identity diffusion (Lannegrand-Willems & Bosna, 2006). Identity achievement refers to commitments that can be reached after exploration, while moratorium refers to exploration that is still underway with some general commitments taking shape (Lannegrand-Willems & Bosna, 2006). Foreclosure refers to the presence of strong commitments without any exploration, and identity diffusion refers to a lack of commitments that may or may not include exploration (Lannegrand-Willems & Bosna, 2006).

Several studies have been conducted using Marcia's exploration and commitment framework as a model. One study conducted with Swedish high school students resulted in a statistically significant difference between males and females regarding identity status (Bergh & Erling, 2005). The study found that females were more likely to be categorized in the moratorium stage than males, and males were more likely to be categorized in the diffusion stage compared to females (Bergh & Erling, 2005). The study had some weaknesses, however, including the double-barreled survey design which resulted in every question measuring two variables – exploration and commitment– which could lead to misleading single item results, as well as the fact that a large number of respondents scored below the cutoff level for the moratorium classification (Bergh & Erling, 2005). Another study conducted with adolescents from New York City public schools explored the relationship between ethnic identity development and significance in diverse adolescents (Yip, 2013). Adolescents who had higher exploration and commitment levels also reported having higher ethnic awareness across situations (Yip, 2013). One limitation of the study is that females and U.S.-born adolescents were overrepresented in the sample (Yip, 2013). A longitudinal study that was conducted with adolescents in the Netherlands measured their identity development as part of a 5-wave research

study that spanned X years (Meeus, 2010). The study revealed that identity does mature over time (Meeus, 2010).

Marcia's Emotional Crises and Religious Beliefs. Two additional concepts from Marcia's work are relevant to my line of inquiry. These include the distinction between identity crises and emotional crises as well as religious beliefs during adolescence. Adolescence is a period marked by various emotional crises, including the struggle for independence from one's parents, romantic breakups, sexual pressures, and more (Marcia, 1993). These emotional crises can sometimes lead to identity crises, however, these crises can also stand alone, independent of one another (Marcia, 1993). In terms of religious beliefs, early, middle, and late adolescents vary in terms of their understanding of religion as part of their overall identity (Marcia, 1993). Early adolescents tend to view religion as a thing that they either have or don't have in their life based on family practices (Marcia, 1993). Middle adolescents often engage in a questioning posture towards religion, and sometimes withdraw or increase their participation (Marcia, 1993). Late adolescents start to view their religion as part of a larger belief system guiding various life choices (Marcia, 1993).

A number of empirical studies have explored the distinction between identity crises and emotional crises, as well as the development of religious identity during adolescence. A study with 20 participants ranging in age from 15 to 25 was conducted to test the relationship between emotions and identity (Haviland et al., 1994). The study organized participants' self-reported emotional traits into three structural categories: connected, contracted, and expanded (Haviland et al., 1994). The study revealed that the connected structure, which links emotional traits together in a hierarchical manner, is more common among the youngest participants (Haviland et al., 1994). This finding indicates that emotional traits of middle adolescents are typically

interconnected in a hierarchical structure such that most of the roles (family, school, and play) are connected in a sub or superordinate way to each other with multiple groupings of roles operating (Haviland et al, 1994). The study reveals that middle adolescents have more complex, interconnected emotional experiences operating than previous research had suggested (Haviland et al., 1994).

A seminal study by Elkind (1961) explored Jewish children's perceptions of their religion. Participants were 210 Jewish children from a day camp, and they were asked a series of interview questions (Elkind, 1961). Responses revealed three stages in the development of children's conception of their Jewishness. The first stage was a conception of a Jew as a kind of person with certain physical characteristics or as a person that comes from Israel (Elkind, 1961). The second stage was a more concrete conception of a Jew as a person who behaved in certain ways, and the third stage was a more abstract conception of a Jew as a person who believed in God or worshipped in a particular way (Elkind, 1961). These results were significant due to the fact that they confirmed Piaget's hypothesis that conceptions develop in regular stages by age (Elkin, 1961).

A study by Hoge and Petrillo (1978) aimed to assess the determinants of religious thinking, as well as the relationship between overall level of thinking and religious thinking, among 10th grade children belonging to suburban Catholic, Baptist, and Methodist churches. The study was conducted using a combination of questionnaires and interviews and included 691 participants. (Hoge & Petrillo, 1978). The study found that the smaller the gap between religious thinking and overall cognitive capacity, the greater the level of rejection of religious doctrine in the church (Hoge & Petrillo, 1978). This finding marks Hoge and Petrillo's study as a seminal

critique of Ronald Goldman's widely accepted theory regarding the factors that impede or facilitate the development of religious thinking.

Jewish Identity. There are differing conceptualizations of Jewish identity as well as approaches to how it is studied (Charme et. al, 2008). There is a historical shift occurring across American Jewry, with increased attention given to how an individual's Jewish identity evolves over the lifespan (Charme et. al, 2008). Jewish identity is seen less and less as static but rather is viewed as a self-understanding that unfolds and is dynamic over time (Charme et. al, 2008). This definition is similar to Marcia's definition of identity in the sense that Marcia's conception begins with an exploration phase that, over time, leads to a commitment phase.

Although many scholars characterize identity as a process, conceptions of Jewish identity differ in significant ways. For instance, Charme's framework, the spiral of Jewish identity, takes into account the synchronic and diachronic diversities in the experience of Jewish identity (Charme, 1983). Synchronic diversity refers to the multiple forms of Jewish identities that constitute Jewish communities at any given time, whereas diachronic diversity refers to the notion of Jewish identity as a journey over time (Charme, 1983). Identity development using a lens of diachronic diversity is understood less as an achievement that remains fixed once it is reached, but rather as a dynamic process that is fluid and ever changing (Charme, 1983). This notion of identity development as a process that unfolds over time has been investigated in a number of fields. For example, Miscenko, Guenter, and Day (2017) explored the development of leadership identity over time. Participants in the study were postgraduate students in a Dutch business school leadership course (Miscenko, Guenter, & Day, 2017). The study found that participant leadership identity changed in a curvilinear fashion (Miscenko et al., 2017). This

finding suggests that leader identity development is a process of gains and losses over time, much like the diachronic diversity model of identity development.

A second approach to understanding Jewish identity is a contextually based multiple identity approach (Kress, 1998). This is based on the idea that one sees oneself in multiple ways, and each of these ways is either supported or undermined by different affordances, or contexts (Kress, 1998). This approach has multiple implications for Jewish identity research, as it allows for the expression of multiple selves connected to multiple different contexts. This multiple identity approach could be enacted as a Jewish woman that sees herself as a professional in a work context, a mother in a home setting, and a volunteer at her synagogue. This approach also acknowledges that Jewish identity research creates a specific context with certain norms and expectations. For example, participants in a study on Jewish identity research may feel (consciously or unconsciously) that they are expected to engage in identity exploration at a deeper level than they would otherwise be inclined to pursue. In other words, Jewish identity research may create an environment that is supportive of identity exploration. Kress (1998) cautions that identity research tends to favor verbal representations over other forms of expression. In doing this work, researchers are less equipped to acknowledge nonverbal cues that could be just as (or in some cases more) identity affirming as verbal expressions (Kress, 1998). It is important to note that this source on a contextually based multiple identity approach is a dissertation, and as such it lacks the rigor of a peer-reviewed source. Nonetheless, in my own study, I paid special attention to nonverbal cues during each interview. I adjusted my questions during the interviews if nonverbal cues called for a change of course. I also relied on my reflexive journal to process nonverbal participant cues immediately following each interview session.

Horowitz's work focuses on investigating Jewish identity today and builds on an understanding of how Jewish identity has developed in recent decades (Horowitz, 2002). Her work is based on an evolved understanding of four main assumptions that have guided much of the social research on American Jews over the past 40 years (Horowitz, 2002). The first assumption concerns the dichotomy between Jewish behavior/activity and feelings of connectedness to Judaism. Many Jewish individuals may participate in Jewish rituals or events without feeling particularly connected to the Jewish religion. Horowitz urges fellow researchers to take both sets of individuals and their feelings into consideration. Second, a distinction is drawn between the idea that Jewishness must conform to a particular way of being Jewish and the notion that one can learn about the aspects of Judaism that are most meaningful to them (Horowitz, 2002). This understanding can be conceptualized as an exercise where Jews can choose to identify with certain tenets of the religion without adopting every aspect of the doctrine. Third, Horowitz's research examines Jewishness over the life course as opposed to the way it has previously been examined through cross-sectional studies at a single moment in time (Horowitz, 2002). Fourth, her work has broadened the ways we think about factors that affect Jewish identity formation (Horowitz, 2002). Her work suggests that influences aside from schooling may play a role in shaping an individual's connectedness to their Jewishness (Horowitz, 2002).

Jewish Education. Understanding various conceptualizations for contemporary Jewish education is critical for understanding how early adolescent identity develops within these settings. A common theme among contemporary Jewish educational frameworks is the role of the community in identity development. Meyer's (2014) notion of drawing into the circle conceptualizes Jewish education as a forum for modeling what it is like to be part of a Jewish

community. For Meyer, liberal Jewish religious education aims to draw children into a circle of community and commitment as a starting point. Education is often conceptualized as a forum for drawing out of certain ways of knowing; the notion of drawing into a circle emphasizes an inward turn towards the religious values of the Jewish community. The educational aspect can occur only after this sense of community and drawing into the circle has been established. This notion of drawing into a circle informs my study through interview questions that probe for sense of community.

Glaser (2014) highlights the importance of transparent processes in Jewish educational contexts so that community members can understand how boundary judgements are determined in these settings. Boundary issues may arise in relation to a host of issues in these settings such as the legitimacy of female ordination, the value of accepting non-Jewish children into a Jewish Day School, among others (Glaser, 2014). When these issues arise, Glaser (2014) argues that the leadership within these educational contexts should clearly and openly communicate their beliefs and judgement calls. Her work underscores the educational value of these transparent processes for students who are members of these religious communities while simultaneously learning how to negotiate living in a diverse world. This notion of boundary judgements is instructive to my study as I explore the multiple worlds Jewish early adolescents may inhabit and seek to understand how their identity takes shape in diverse settings.

Horenczyk and Wolf (2011) explore the relationship between Jewish education and Jewish identity and offer a framework, the Jewish identity space, that identifies key identity components and levels. Their work identifies three components of Jewish identity as affective, cognitive, and behavioral (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011). The affective dimension concerns how one feels about their Jewishness, the cognitive dimension concerns how one views themselves as a

member of the Jewish people, and the behavioral dimension concerns how one expresses oneself both publicly and privately in relationship to other Jews (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011). In addition to these components, the Jewish identity space model includes five levels, namely personal, family, community, local, and global (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011). Horenczyk and Wolf (2011) argue that their framework allows for a richer and more multidimensional approach to understanding the complexity and possible discrepancies within one's Jewish identity.

In a somewhat similar vein, Charme and Zelkowicz (2011) call for new approaches to Jewish education that explore the value of the inherent tensions and contradictions within one's Jewish identity. Their work highlights three realms for Jewish educators to adopt to foster new understandings of Jewish identity formation (Charme & Zelkowicz, 2011). These realms include pedagogical methods, educational culture, and an enhanced capacity for trust (Charme & Zelkowicz, 2011). Pedagogical methods that focus on process over outcomes are favored, along with an educational culture that encourages critical analysis of the subject matter (Charme & Zelkowicz, 2011). An enhanced capacity for trust comes into play when educators relinquish the urge to control their students' Jewish outcomes and instead focus on supporting their students in grappling with Jewish content (Charme & Zelkowicz, 2011). Central to these new approaches is a belief in the importance of educators allowing for conflicts and contradictions to surface and remaining present as important elements of the educational process (Charme & Zelkowicz, 2011).

Finally, Cohen and Veinstein (2011) explore the impact of Jewish networks in childhood on adult Jewish identity status. Their work notes that previous research has focused on the relationship between school and Jewish identity development without acknowledging the role that friendships may play (Cohen & Veinstein, 2011). Their work analyzed aspects of the 2000-

2001 National Jewish Population Study and examined four categories of childhood Jewish social networks in relation to seven measures of Jewish identity outcomes in adulthood (Cohen & Veinstein, 2011). Their analysis revealed that individuals who were both raised by two Jewish parents and who had mostly Jewish friends in high school received the highest score on every measure of adult Jewish identity (Cohen & Veinstein, 2011). Participants with both two Jewish parents and half of their friends in high school being Jewish scored higher than participants with two Jewish parents and no Jewish high school friends (Cohen & Veinstein, 2011). Their analysis reveals that childhood friendships play a significant role in adult Jewish identity development.

The Role of Purpose

Bronk defines purpose as an “enduring, personally meaningful commitment to what one hopes to accomplish or work toward in life” (Bronk, 2011, p. 32). Damon and others have argued, however, that not all purpose is the same (Damon et. al, 2003). Noble purposes are described as those that serve humanity, whereas ignoble purposes are understood as those with destructive aims (Damon et. al, 2003). By utilizing a framework of noble purpose, my study explores the positive, humanistic developing hopes and aims of my participants. Damon and others (2003) also claim that cultural and ethnic differences in purpose development are difficult to determine. My research explores the purpose development attributes of one particular religious group – Jewish early adolescents.

Bronk (2008) describes exemplars of purposeful adolescents as those students who lobby for social causes, experiment with art or technology, or raise money for charitable causes, among other aims. These purposeful adolescents are engaged and motivated not only to pursue these passions, but also to develop the skills and tools necessary to fulfill their goals (Bronk, 2008). However, only about 20% of adolescents develop purpose (Bronk, 2008). The reasons for this

are varied, including the current educational emphasis on short-term goals and instant gratification rather than on reflection and contemplation (Bronk, 2008). Similarly, an overemphasis on academic achievement may serve to motivate students only to perform well in school (Bronk, 2008). Bronk (2008) encourages educators and families to create a culture of purpose by engaging adolescents in ongoing, open conversations about issues that matter to them, imparting wisdom on practical matters, and connecting adolescents to mentors that share their interests.

Malin, Reilly, Quinn, and Moran (2013) explored adolescent purpose development by conducting a qualitative, cross sectional study. The aim of their study was to explore the forms of purpose and their role in developing a potential model for purpose development (Malin, Reilly, Quinn, & Moran, 2013). Their study built on earlier research that pointed to precursor forms of purpose: dreaming, dabbling, and self-oriented goals (Malin et al., 2013). Dreamers are understood as individuals with strong intentions which they do not act on (Malin et al., 2013). Dabblers are engaged in beyond the self (BTS) activities; however, they do not hold any future goals related to these activities (Malin et al., 2013). Those with self-oriented goals (doers) have significant life goals which they are actively pursuing, however they do not display any beyond the self reasons for pursuing their goals (Malin et al., 2013). Malin et al.'s study revealed that these three precursor forms of purpose do not coalesce into a purpose development model (Malin et al., 2013). Rather, their study revealed that purpose develops through multidirectional movement and is marked by four phases from early adolescence to early adulthood (Malin et al., 2013). Of particular relevance to my study, the early adolescence phase is oriented towards empathy and can be further supported by family members that model empathy (Malin et al.,

2013). This notion of empathy informed my interviews as I probed my participants to determine their levels of empathy.

A number of scholars have explored purpose and its relations to positive youth development and identity formation. Purpose is understood as involving internal meaning as well as external aims (Damon et. al, 2003). In this way, purpose is differentiated from meaning as a separate construct with different, further reaching goals (Burrow & Hill, 2011). Purpose and identity, however, are understood as separate but overlapping constructs (Bronk, 2011). Bronk's (2011) research revealed that individuals generally felt that who they were (identity) was equivalent to what they hoped to accomplish (purpose). Although purpose and identity formation may reinforce each other, there is not necessarily a causal relationship (Bronk 2011). Damon (2003, 2004, 2005) also explored the relationships between spirituality, purpose, and youth development and examined three different models or pathways that represent how these three aspects can influence one another.

A sense of purpose is a critical developmental asset for youth (Burrow & Hill, 2011). Damon et. al (2003) drew a predictive link between purpose during youth and various desired outcomes such as prosocial behavior, moral commitment, and high self-esteem (Damon et al., 2003). Alternatively, purposelessness can lead to self-absorption, depression, addictions, and a lack of productivity, among other negative outcomes (Damon et al., 2003).

Gaps in the Literature

This review of the literature on positive youth development, identity exploration, and purpose development has revealed several significant gaps in the literature that my study aims to address. First, the literature primarily focuses on adolescents between 12-18 years old, whereas my study focuses on early adolescents between 11-14 years old. Understanding the perceptions

and experiences of early adolescents is critical to ensure that their development progresses on a positive trajectory. Second, the literature primarily focuses on the positive youth development and identity development of adolescents regardless of their sociocultural backgrounds. My study focuses on early adolescents from a specific religious group within a specific context – Jewish early adolescents in the Sarasota Manatee region. This focus is especially important in an area like Sarasota Manatee that continues to see its Jewish population grow while also experiencing an increasing number of anti-Semitic acts of violence. Third, as a qualitative study, my research aims to address a methodological gap in the literature. The majority of positive youth development, identity development, and youth purpose studies have used surveys and focus groups. My study sought to understand the voices of Jewish early adolescents through a series of multiple qualitative interviews, which may yield richer data compared to quantitative research methods. My study aimed to explore the perceptions and experiences of Jewish early adolescents in the Sarasota Manatee area regarding their positive youth development, identity development, and youth purpose and the impact of the local Jewish community on these processes.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODS

In this chapter, I outline in detail my research methodology. For my study, I consider myself an insider within the Sarasota-Manatee Jewish community (please refer to Appendix A for more information on my background). As a result, I personally know many Jewish families to draw upon and recruit for my study. I am not, however, an early adolescent, and my age may have created a power dynamic that I needed to be mindful of throughout the research process.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the research design and a description of the context for my study. Next, I discuss the use of reflexive journaling as a strategy for managing my subjectivity in the research process. Following this, I discuss the participant recruitment and selection process, as well as the ethical considerations I have taken into account for my study. The chapter concludes with a description of the data collection and analysis plan, and a discussion of the study's limitations. The study addresses two research questions:

1. How do Jewish early adolescents from the Sarasota Manatee region perceive their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose?
2. How do Jewish early adolescents from the Sarasota Manatee region perceive aspects of their local Jewish community as shaping their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose?

Research Design

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the experiences and perceptions of Jewish early adolescents in the Sarasota Manatee region. Qualitative approaches to research focus on participant meanings as opposed to the meaning that a researcher might attribute to the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research also tends to have an emergent design, meaning that the initial research plan can change as the research process unfolds (Creswell, 2014). The aim of qualitative research is to understand the problem from the perspective of the participant, and this evolving understanding can lead to new insights or questions during the research process that need to be addressed (Creswell, 2014). For example, for the study I developed three sets of interview protocols with specific questions and probes. Although these protocols were developed prior to conducting the interviews, participants could raise important issues that I may not have considered.

Within the qualitative research tradition, there are a number of research approaches. For this study, I employed a phenomenological research approach due to its emphasis on the lived experiences of individuals regarding a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). This study explored the perceptions of Jewish early adolescents about their Jewish identity, positive youth development, and youth purpose as well as their perceptions regarding how various local contexts impact these developmental processes. The phenomenological research approach typically involves conducting interviews which seek to reveal the essence of the experiences of individuals who have lived the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Interview questions are designed to generate detailed information about the participants' feelings, perceptions, and understandings (Roulston, 2010). The phenomenological approach typically utilizes open-ended interview questions to encourage participants to respond in their own words (Roulston, 2010).

For my study, interview questions are open-ended with the option of providing additional wording as needed to ensure that participants fully understand what they are being asked and can respond in meaningful ways.

My phenomenological research approach is informed by my philosophical worldview. I hold a constructivist worldview based on my belief that different individuals hold multiple views of their experiences (Creswell, 2014). These perspectives are not given to individuals in a static way, but rather they are shaped by individuals over time as a result of multiple interactions and social norms that operate in their lives (Creswell, 2014). The constructivist worldview informs the design of my interview questions to be as broad as possible while taking into account the age of my participants and informs the interpretation of my findings. Using a constructivist worldview, I seek to honor the multiple meanings and complexity of participant responses, rather than distill the findings into one simple, perhaps more easily digestible conclusion.

Reflexive Journaling

Within the realm of qualitative research, reflexivity refers to the researcher's ability to turn inward and contemplate their role in relation to the production of knowledge about the research topic (Roulston, 2010). Reflection can simply involve the act of thinking about something, whereas reflexivity must also involve some "other" that the researcher can influence through their actions (Roulston, 2010). These "actions" can encompass a broad range of research activities from research question formulation to interpretation of the data.

Reflexive journaling is a strategy that allowed me to maintain an internal dialogue and an ongoing critical self-evaluation of my positionality, and how my position can affect the research process as well as the outcome (Berger, 2013). My position can affect my research in three significant ways: access, the nature of the relationship, and the construction of meaning (Berger,

2013). First, my position as an insider positively impacts my access to research participants in the Jewish community. Second, my position as a Jewish mother impacts my relationship with the early adolescent participants. My hope was that participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences with someone like me who may somewhat resemble their family members. Third, my position as a Jew means that I have a specific worldview about the research topic. This perspective shapes how I pose research questions, interpret and make meaning out of participant responses, and arrive at conclusions.

Reflexive journaling is an approach that supports my ability to process my assumptions, beliefs, and biases throughout the study (Karagiozis, 2018). In her article on reflexive bracketing, Ahern (1999) suggests that researchers start a reflexive journal before they begin refining their research questions. This journal can address a variety of issues including interests the researcher might take for granted, clarifying personal values and belief systems, identifying gatekeeper interests, and recognizing feelings that indicate a lack of neutrality (Ahern, 1999).

I started my reflexive journal after completing my literature review. My literature review raised new questions for me about the research and compelled me to revise my initial research questions. I maintained a reflexive journal during this process to note my thoughts and feelings about the new research questions and where I felt the new questions would lead me. I continued to engage in reflexive journaling throughout the research process.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

My participants – Jewish early adolescents between the ages of 11 and 14 – were recruited from my personal network in Sarasota’s Jewish community. Participants were recruited from families that I have known personally for several years. Early in my study design process, I considered partnering with a local synagogue to recruit research participants. I decided instead to

recruit participants from a range of Jewish families – those who are members of one of the two reform local synagogues, as well as those who were unaffiliated – in order to capture a broad variety of participant experiences and perspectives.

I purposefully selected participants who I would be able to establish a positive rapport with in order to best address my research questions (Creswell, 2014). All participants identified as Jewish and were 11-14 years old to be included in the study. I recruited an equal number of male and female participants. My sample also included a mix of students being raised in Reform families (least observant) and interfaith families. By including students from this broad spectrum of Jewishness, my study aimed to reflect the diversity and richness of the Jewish early adolescent experience.

Phenomenological studies typically include 3 to 10 participants (Creswell, 2014). In keeping with this tradition, my study included 4 participants. I reached out individually to each family to describe my study. Following these individual introductory conversations, I sent each interested family a parent consent letter (Appendix B). Following the receipt of parental consent, I sent each family a child assent letter (Appendix C) that further outlined the purpose of my study.

Ethical Considerations

Four principles of research ethics guided my study. These principles include beneficence, autonomy, justice, and non-maleficence (Costley & Fulton, 2019). Beneficence signifies that the primary reason for the research is to benefit other people (Costley & Fulton, 2019). This principle was upheld by my study which sought to support the positive youth development of Jewish early adolescents by illuminating their experiences and perspectives.

The principles of autonomy, justice, and non-maleficence refer to the critical elements of voluntary participation in research studies, protection of vulnerable groups, and minimizing the risk of harm to participants (Costley & Fulton, 2019). Participants in my study can be considered vulnerable because of their age as well as the sensitive nature of some of the interview questions. The three sets of interviews progressed in intensity, beginning with lighter, relationship building questions and progressing to questions that involve issues of shame and anti-Semitism during the third interview. Students were given the option to skip any questions they chose not to answer, and they were informed of their right to opt out of the study at any time.

Participants remained anonymous with identifying information removed from the written analysis of the data. Pseudonyms were used to refer to interview participants to further safeguard their anonymity, and data was kept confidential. Electronic recordings of interview sessions were downloaded to a secure cloud-based server, and written records will be destroyed within two years after collection.

Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to data collection and analysis, I conducted a pilot study with one Jewish early adolescent. The purpose of the pilot study was to refine interview questions in order to maximize clarity and to identify any issues related to bias. Any data collected and analyzed through this pilot study was excluded from the study. Interview questions were revised and finalized following the pilot study.

Data Collection

I began participant recruitment with an email to the prospective participants' parents which included a brief description of the study. In this email, I explained the purpose of the study and outlined the interview process. This email also included a photo as well as a brief bio that

explained my personal interest in the topic as a Jewish mother, as well as my professional background. I then scheduled a phone call with the early adolescents whose parents expressed interest in the project. The calls with the early adolescents focused on building rapport and explaining the interview process. Following these phone calls, I emailed the interested families the parent consent and adolescent assent forms. Interested early adolescents and their parents were encouraged to ask any clarifying questions before consenting to participate in the study. I recruited until I had consent and assent forms from 4 adolescents who met the inclusion criteria. I sent each participant a second email to schedule three sets of video interviews that lasted approximately 30-45 minutes each and occurred once per week over a three week period. The protocol for each of these interviews is detailed in Appendix D.

Data Analysis

I interpreted the data using a hybrid approach to thematic analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). A hybrid approach was selected because it allows for a combination of inductive and deductive analyses (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The inductive component allows for themes to emerge from the interviews, and the deductive component utilizes the theoretical frameworks of the study (i.e. positive youth development, identity development, and youth purpose) to generate an a priori list of codes that reflect the major themes.

The aim of my study was to illuminate Jewish early adolescent perspectives and experiences. The phenomenological approach seeks to reveal the lived experiences of individuals who have experienced a specific phenomenon, and in this case the phenomenon under study is Jewish early adolescents' perceptions of their youth development, identity development, and youth purpose within the context of the Sarasota Manatee region (Creswell, 2014). There is an abundance of research related to positive youth development, identity

development, and youth purpose, however, the bulk of the research investigates each of these constructs separately and focuses on the adolescent population as a whole. My study, however, focuses specifically on the positive youth development, identity development, and youth purpose of early adolescents that are Jewish. The hybrid approach to thematic analysis enabled me to make use of this abundant research to develop a list of potential themes prior to conducting interviews, while also allowing for new themes to emerge during the interview process that may better reflect the perspectives of the specific adolescent population under study. Naturally, this process of developing themes was highly subjective, linked to my personal biases, beliefs, and worldview. I practiced reflexive journaling prior to developing codes, during the code development process, and throughout the interview process to raise and maintain awareness regarding my subjectivity (Roulston, 2014).

My study followed six stages of hybrid data analysis, as outlined by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). These stages include developing the code manual, testing the reliability of the codes, summarizing the data and identifying initial themes, applying template of codes and additional coding, connecting the codes and identifying themes, and corroborating and legitimizing coded themes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). I used a crystallization approach to reliability by using in vivo utterances to determine themes and subthemes (Richardson, 2000). I discuss the six stages of hybrid data analysis below (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

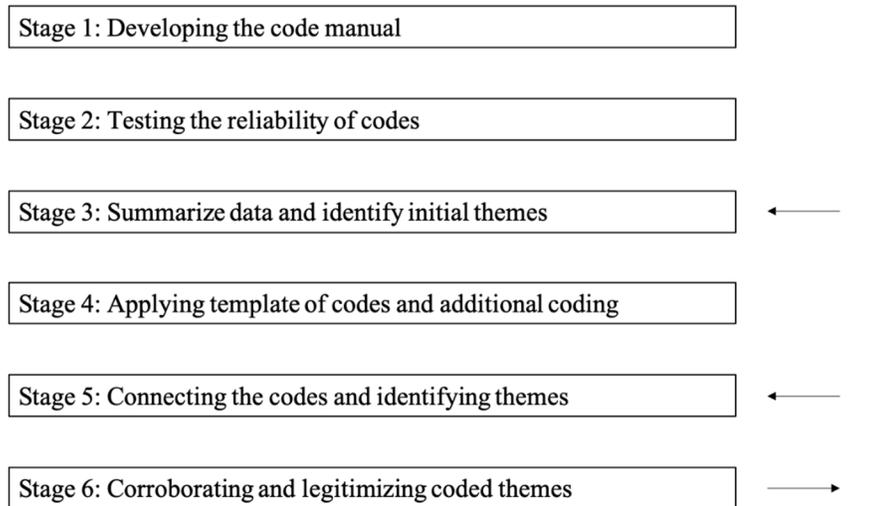


Figure 1

Process of Hybrid Thematic Analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006)

Note: From the article “Demonstrating Rigor Using Thematic Analysis: A Hybrid Approach of Inductive and Deductive Coding and Theme Development” by J. Fereday and E. Muir-Cochrane, 2006, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), pg. 84. Creative Commons license: CC-BY. Reprinted with permission

For the first stage of data coding, I developed a list of codes based on my study’s three key theoretical frameworks as well as my two research questions.

Table 1*A Priori Codebook*

Framework	Codes
Positive Youth Development	<p>Lerner’s 6 “C”’s: competence, confidence, connection, caring, character, and contribution</p> <p>Search Institute’s developmental assets: Internal assets: Positive identity category: personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, positive view of personal future</p> <p>Eccles and Templeton’s components of positive social contexts: adequate provisions for safety; supportive relationships with adults and peers; opportunities to develop a sense of belonging, mastery, mattering, and the chance to learn essential skills for success; and strong positive social behavioral norms</p>
Identity Development	Horenczyk and Wolf’s Jewish Identity space-affective, cognitive, behavioral dimensions and personal, family, community, local, and global levels
Purpose	Malin’s precursor forms of purpose development

Second, I validated the codebook using transcripts from my pilot study. Third, following the completion of my first set of interviews, I identified initial themes by reading each transcript and outlining the key points made by each participant. This process began with highlighting repeated words from the first set of interviews. I placed these keywords onto a new document and clustered similar words together in an effort to identify major themes. Fourth, I applied the a priori codes developed in the first phase to the initial themes. In the fifth stage, I connected the codes to broader themes. My research questions were used to generate these themes, with codes that related to each other and clustered under the appropriate theme headings. The final stage involved an additional clustering of themes to ensure that the themes captured the perspectives of

the research participants. This final second order organization of broad themes was intended to corroborate the findings of the study (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS

The aim of this qualitative study was twofold. First, I aimed to understand how Jewish early adolescents in the Sarasota Manatee region perceived their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose. Second, I aimed to understand how these Jewish early adolescents perceived aspects of their local Jewish community as shaping their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose. Four Jewish early adolescents (two males and two females) participated. Participants were recruited through my Jewish community network.

In this chapter, I discuss the findings from my interviews with Jewish early adolescent participants. I conducted three interviews with each of the four participants. I arrived at my findings by applying a hybrid approach of inductive and deductive analysis. My findings are organized according to two major themes, each linked to one of my research questions, and supported by sub thematic categories. The first theme is Jewish early adolescent perceptions of their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose are shaped by self, family, and friends. The second theme is within the Jewish community, Jewish early adolescent identity, positive youth development and purpose flourished while Jewish early adolescents often felt unsafe, left out, and misunderstood within the broader secular community context. Summaries of each theme are supported by direct quotations from my interview participants. Pseudonyms are used to protect participant confidentiality. Table 2 (using pseudonyms) summarizes participant ages and genders. Table 3 provides an overview and description of the themes that emerged from my hybrid analysis.

Table 2*Participant Demographics*

Pseudonym	Gender	Age
Eleanor	Female	13
Emily	Female	12
Josh	Male	13
Jackson	Male	12

Table 3*Themes as a result of iterative inductive and deductive coding*

Theme 1: Jewish early adolescent perceptions of their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose are shaped by self, family, and friends.	
How the Self Shapes Perceptions	Two of the four participants identified first and foremost as Jewish. Two of the participants also perceived that their Jewish identity was special due to the relatively small size of the Jewish community.
How the Family Shapes Perceptions	Family shaped perceptions in two main areas: mandating participation in religious school and services and raising children to value helping others.
How Friends Shape Perceptions	Friends shaped perceptions by fostering feelings of connection and trustworthiness.
Theme 2: Within the Jewish community, Jewish early adolescent identity, positive youth development and purpose flourished while Jewish early adolescents often felt unsafe, left out, and misunderstood within the broader secular community context.	
Significance of the Temple	Participants described their perceptions of four aspects of the Temple context, including Religious School Staff, Services, Holiday Celebrations, and the Rabbis. Each of these aspects left participants with enhanced positive youth development and identity development.

Table 3 (Continued)

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Experience	The Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience positively influenced participant identity development and positive youth development. Participants described the ritual in terms of joining their family’s Jewish lineage, as well as improving their confidence.
Sleepaway Camp	For two of the participants, Jewish sleepaway camp was a positive experience that shaped their positive youth development (connection and caring) and identity development (enhanced affective identity at the community level). For one participant, however, Jewish sleepaway camp was a negative experience.
Opportunities to Help Others	Three participants described the importance of helping others. The descriptions indicated the presence of Lerner’s (2009) contribution, caring, and competence, as well as Malin’s (Malin et. al., 2013) beyond-the-self purpose development dabbling phase.
Missing School	Participants described threatened feelings of connection and competence (Lerner, 2009), as well as compromised affective identity at the personal level, due to missing school for the High Holy Days. Missing school created academic challenges as well as feelings of disconnection as participants’ Jewish identity became known to their classmates due to their school absences on the High Holy Days.
Navigating Relationships During Christmas	Participants struggled with trying to stay true to their Jewish identity while also trying to fit in and feel connected to non-Jewish friends and mentors during the Christmas season.
Encounters with anti-Semitism	Two participants felt minimally affected by vandalism that occurred on their Temple property, while one participant experienced both threatened affective identity and compromised connection. One participant also described experiences being stereotyped which suggested impacted confidence.
Local Business Practices	Two participants shared that local business practices sometimes make them feel left out, and suggested practices that could create a more inclusive environment.

Jewish early adolescent perceptions of their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose are shaped by self, family, and friends

How the Self Shapes Perceptions. Self-perceptions in this study referred primarily to notions about one's identity as a Jewish person. Two of the four participants indicated that they thought of themselves first and foremost as Jewish people, rather than just people. Horenczyk and Wolf's (2011) Jewish identity space served as a useful framework for unpacking these perspectives. In this instance, the identity level was both personal as well as community oriented as it concerned how the participants viewed their personal identity as members of the Jewish community (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011). One of the participants, Eleanor, explained:

I would say that I am more Jewish now because I've read from the Torah in front of my loved ones and in a public place people heard me read it. I had read it before the ceremony because I had to read, you know I had to practice reading, in the Torah. But the first time I read in front of everyone and it was really exciting and I hope that I can do it again for another service even though I don't really like having to learn it. But I will do it again if I am invited to. So I feel like I'm not, I'm not a regular person. I would say more of a Jewish person because I just feel more connected.

Two of the participants also perceived that their Jewish identity was special due to the relatively small size of the Jewish community. Emily stated, "I feel proud to be Jewish because it's a very small religion, more than a lot of other religions." Josh agreed:

It's kind of special because like most of the people I know are Christian, like there are a handful of Jewish people, but I mean not too many. So I don't know. It's kind of special. I like being Jewish.

Using the Jewish identity space (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011) as a framework, these sentiments were at the personal level and reflected the affective component (i.e., how one feels about their Jewishness).

How the Family Shapes Perceptions. Data analysis indicated that the family also played a formative role in shaping participants' perceptions of their identity development and positive youth development. The family influenced two main areas. First, parents mandated that their children participated in religious school and Temple services beginning at an early age. At first, participants resented having to participate in these activities. Over time, however, a shift occurred, and they started to enjoy participating in these activities. Participants explained that they used to feel that they were missing out on outside social events by attending religious school and services. However, after making friends through the Temple, they began to enjoy engaging with their Jewish community. Using the Jewish identity space framework (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011), these perspectives would be categorized as belonging to the affective component at both the personal and family levels. Emily explained how her perspective has shifted. She shared, "Yes, I think when I was younger...I never wanted to go to Sunday School." She continued, "But now that I've made some friends there and stuff. I've met nice people. I think I'm happier to be there." Eleanor agreed:

I think it's cool. I mean, I feel like I've made a lot of friends at Temple...I really didn't like it when I was younger and then I got used to it...when I was younger, I would miss birthday parties because I was going to Temple.

Josh also described how his feelings have changed:

I think when I was younger, it was a lot more important to my parents because they would always have to like force me into going to Hebrew School because I wouldn't want to go. But then like recently I've just been like more open to going and enjoying it more.

He attributed his new outlook to simply growing up and maturing.

The family influence also seemed to be felt by the participants who expressed that they were uniquely raised to value helping others. Eleanor explained, "I think that Jewish people are raised differently than other people." She continued, "Maybe we are raised to be, I don't know what the words are, but differently in the mindset that I would like to help everyone."

This notion of helping others reflects two of Lerner's (2009) 6 C's of positive youth development, namely caring and contribution. One could also interpret this altruistic sensibility as evidence of the emergence of Malin et. al.'s (2013) purpose dabbling phase, during which individuals are engaged in beyond-the-self activities that are not necessarily linked to future goals.

Holiday celebrations with extended family members also played a significant role in shaping Jewish early adolescent perceptions of their positive youth development and identity development. When asked what they enjoyed about celebrating the Jewish holidays, participants shared that the Jewish holidays gave them an opportunity to spend time with grandparents and other extended family members. Josh explained:

I just enjoy spending time with my family because generally my nana and papa come to our house and like we have dinner...and then in the past, generally on Passover, my cousins and aunt and uncle would come down from New York and we'd like go out to

dinner with them...But I just enjoy it, like spending time with my family.

Jackson agreed:

Well, I just like holidays in general and when it's a Jewish holiday we kind of see our whole family. Because pretty much our whole family, extended family, everyone's Jewish. So we get to see our whole family which is nice because we don't see our whole family for like Halloween. If it's a Jewish holiday, it's more meaningful so we get to see them. That's what I like about that.

Jewish holiday celebrations with extended family members left participants feeling an enhanced sense of Lerner's (2009) connection. Using the Jewish identity space (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011) framework, participants' statements reflected how they felt about an affective component of their Jewishness at the family level.

How Friends Shape Perceptions. Interview data revealed that friends played an important role in shaping Jewish early adolescent perceptions of their positive youth development. When describing their Jewish friendships, participants expressed connection (Lerner, 2009) as a key characteristic. Eleanor explained, "We can like connect more...it's nice to be around people who know everything that you know, and I feel comfortable being Jewish around them because I know that they're not judging." In this instance, connection between Jewish friends emerged through an implicit shared understanding of what it meant to be Jewish. Participants also mentioned trustworthiness as an especially important quality in friendships. Using Lerner's (2009) 6 C's of positive youth development framework, trustworthiness can be considered an aspect of one's character. Eleanor explained how she experienced trustworthiness in her friendships:

I feel really comfortable around them. And I think that they feel comfortable

around me because we tell each other our secrets... I feel like I can act myself around them which I can't around other people. I think they feel the same way around me because they always say don't tell anyone this but I'll tell you this. So I think that's how I can tell.

Emily shared similar feelings when describing her friendships:

They can tell me stuff that maybe they wouldn't trust other people with. I think that I can trust them more than other people. Like if I had a secret that I maybe wouldn't want other people to know about.

Within the Jewish community, Jewish early adolescent identity, positive youth development and purpose flourished while Jewish early adolescents often felt unsafe, left out, and misunderstood within the broader secular community context

The findings are organized by four categories of the Jewish community context: the Temple, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience, sleepaway camp, and opportunities to help others.

Significance of the Temple. Study participants shared their perceptions regarding aspects of the Temple context, including religious school staff, services, celebrations, and the Rabbis. Josh described the religious school staff, "I feel like all the people at like the Temple are like really nice and caring and yeah, just good people." Josh's description of Temple staff suggested that the supportive relationships with adults and peers component of positive social contexts (Eccles & Gootman, 2002) was realized through the Temple community. Emily also shared positive impressions of her religious school teacher, "My teacher, she usually makes like fun games out of the lessons that we're doing." She continued, "Like we're learning a prayer and she splits it up. She splits us up into like break rooms sometimes."

Eleanor also described her experience going to services at her Temple:

It's been more of a new thing because I used to always go to the kid's room.

Just hang out in there during services, but I still feel like in a way I'm celebrating even if I go to the kid's services.

Eleanor's description suggested that she felt that she was a part of her Temple community regardless of whether she was inside the sanctuary or in a separate kid's room during services. Simply being present in her Temple building during services left her feeling connected to her Jewish community. Eleanor's account can be analyzed in terms of the Jewish identity space framework (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011). Being present during services activated the cognitive component of Eleanor's Jewish identity (i.e., how she views herself as a member of the Jewish people). She experienced this identity component at the community level as she began to identify as a member of the Jewish community during Temple services.

Holiday celebrations at Temple evoked similar feelings from the participants. When asked what being Jewish meant to her, Emily replied by describing Temple holiday celebrations.

It probably means like being able to celebrate with the people that I know from Temple and my family...I always like it at Temple when we can like go there and we have like a party about a holiday...maybe other religions don't have that.

Emily's statement suggested that she embodied her Jewish identity in relation to holiday celebrations with her Temple. Similar to Eleanor's description of what it meant for her to participate in services, Emily's sentiments about Temple holiday celebrations can be understood in terms of the Jewish identity space framework (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011). For Emily, the cognitive component of her Jewish identity was activated at the community level as she came to view herself as a member of the Jewish people through these Temple holiday celebrations.

Finally, the Rabbis played a significant role in the Temple context. One of the participants, Josh, described his experiences participating in his confirmation (post Bar/Bat Mitzvah studies). Josh shared that he enjoyed confirmation class due to its emphasis on learning about Jewish life rather than the Hebrew language. He also described the small group size as a positive aspect of the class, and access to the Rabbis seemed to play a key role in his enjoyment. He explained, “So it’s like a small group of kids and the Rabbis. So I like it, it’s interesting.” He continued, “And they like know what they’re talking about obviously because they’re the Rabbis. So all the information is correct.” Josh’s description of the rabbis as experts suggested that the confirmation class environment allowed Lerner’s (2009) “C” of competence to emerge. In this instance, the perceived competence of the Rabbis was indirectly experienced by Josh as evidence of his own burgeoning positive youth development.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Experience. Data from participants suggested that, within the Jewish community context, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience played a significant role in shaping Jewish early adolescent identity development and positive youth development. Jackson explained:

I’m excited for that. I want to do that. Like I’ve seen pictures of my great great great grandpas at his Bar Mitzvah and my great-great grandpa. My great-grandpa, my grandpa, my dad, my uncles, my aunts, my mom...we traced our genealogy back into the 1800’s...that kind of gave me the mindset that it would be cool.

Because then my picture would go in that kind of line.

For Jackson, becoming a Bar Mitzvah signified joining his family’s Jewish lineage. His identity, as a Jewish member of his family, was connected to completing this Jewish rite of passage. Using the Jewish identity space (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011) as a framework, the Bar

Mitzvah experience seemed to trigger the cognitive identity component (i.e., how one views oneself as a member of the Jewish people) at the family level. Similarly, Eleanor shared “I’m really glad I had the experience of the Bat Mitzvah for like public speaking...I think it kind of made me less introverted, less shy, and I feel like a lot of kids don’t get that experience.” Her statement revealed that the Bat Mitzvah experience enhanced her feeling of confidence (Lerner, 2009).

Sleepaway Camp. Three of the four participants had participated in Jewish sleepaway camp. For two of the participants, sleepaway camp was a positive experience that shaped their positive youth development and identity development. One of the participants, however, felt forced to attend sleepaway camp and did not enjoy it. For the two participants that enjoyed sleepaway camp, their feelings about being Jewish improved as a result of their camp experience along with the positive youth development assets of connection and caring. Josh explained:

I mean all the people who I’ve met at sleepaway camp are all like really nice people. Like people that I just get along with a lot. Uh, all the counselors are like really good people, are really nice and also the campers. So it positively impacted how I feel about being Jewish.

Josh’s description of sleepaway camp suggested that the experience left him with both an enhanced sense of connection to his fellow Jews, as well as an improved affective (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011) Jewish identity at the community level.

Eleanor’s sleepaway camp experience was impactful to her positive youth development in the areas of connection and caring. She explained:

It definitely changed me. I definitely feel a lot more connected. I definitely understand now the different types of people. Like how other people live. I

don't take medicines, but I could see the people taking medications before every meal. It was eye opening...I got a hands-on learning experience for four years so far and I got to experience everything. I got to live without my parents.

And I think I will be ready for college.

Sleepaway camp afforded Eleanor the opportunity to deepen her friendships with fellow Jewish early adolescents, thereby enhancing her sense of connection. Observing friends and bunkmates taking medications before meals enhanced her sense of caring.

Opportunities to Help Others. Interview data suggested that opportunities to help others through volunteer and youth group work served to shape Jewish early adolescent positive youth development as well as purpose. Three of the four participants described in detail what these opportunities meant to them. Eleanor explained what being a Madrahim (helper at Religious School) meant to her:

I feel like I'm giving back. Because there were kids who did that for me when I was younger, and I feel like it's kind of repayment for helping the teachers to help other kids. Because those teachers helped me learn.

Eleanor's statement reflects that the "C" of contribution (Lerner, 2009) began to emerge for her through doing youth group volunteer work.

Two of the pre Bar/Bat Mitzvah participants also described what volunteer opportunities meant to them. Although they have not yet reached the age for volunteering in the Jewish community context, they had already started to think about what volunteer experiences in the Jewish community would mean to them. Jackson described what volunteering for a Jewish summer day camp would mean to him, "I always liked playing with kids. Like little kids because I'm still technically a kid." He continued, "It's just always been fun. And for some reason people

think I'm good at it." In this instance, Jackson's desire to help others is tied to the "C" feeling of competence (Lerner, 2009) in his abilities to work with youth. His statement could also be interpreted as evidence of Malin's beyond-the-self purpose development dabbling phase (Malin et al., 2013). Volunteering or working in a Jewish summer day camp would allow Jackson to test out (dabble in) the field of working with youth even though he does not possess any long-term career goals in that area.

Similarly, Emily expressed an interest in opportunities to help others and described what doing so would mean to her.

After I get my Bat Mitzvah, maybe I'll go back to Jewish Religious School and like help out there as like the people that help...I've always liked helping people that like maybe can't...like my grandparents. They can't really like bend down because of their backs. I've always liked helping older people...like there's a lot of older people that like work there on Sundays. So I'd help them.

Emily's statement suggested that helping out her grandparents has fostered the development of Lerner's (2009) "C" of caring. Additionally, this caring behavior in Emily's family life has also sparked an interest in caring for elders within her Jewish Temple community. Malin et al.'s (2013) beyond-the-self dabbling purpose development phase emerged for Emily as she envisioned future volunteer opportunities through her Jewish Temple community.

Participants also expressed that they were uniquely raised to value helping others. Emily explained, "Well, if somebody like isn't being treated equally because of something like how they look or how they act." She continued, "If they have a disability of some sort. I don't think that's right because they can't really change that." This notion of helping others indicates two of

Lerner's (2009) 6 C's of positive youth development, caring and contribution. These sentiments could also indicate the emergence of Malin et. al.'s (2013) purpose dabbling phase.

In contrast to the Jewish community, participants often felt unsafe, left out, and misunderstood within the broader secular community. These findings are organized by two subcategories: the school context and the broader community context.

The School Context; Missing School. The school context posed challenges that threatened the positive youth development of Jewish early adolescents in a number of ways. Although Jewish holiday celebrations created feelings of joy for participants and fostered meaningful connections between intergenerational family members, they also created stress. This sentiment was echoed repeatedly by participants. Within the realm of positive youth development, the Jewish holidays seemed to most directly threaten participants' feelings of connection and competence (Lerner, 2009). In response to a question about whether she has ever wanted to hide her Jewishness, Eleanor shared, "Well I think sometimes on the days we have to skip school. That's when you know who's Jewish, who's not. The people who skip school for the holidays." Eleanor went on to share that a few years ago, her elementary school had held picture day on Rosh Hashanah. Picture retake day was held a few weeks later. Eleanor's elementary school required uniforms, however, students could wear nonuniform clothing on picture days. This meant that Eleanor was one of the few students at her school not in a uniform on picture retake day. This experience left her feeling disconnected from her fellow classmates.

Early on in the first interview, participants expressed that getting good grades was important to them. As we discussed the Jewish holidays, it became evident that participants experienced academic stress when missing school to observe Jewish holidays. When asked if there was anything he didn't like about the Jewish holidays, Jackson stated:

I only wish we didn't have to take off school because it's hard once you get behind... Like some of my teachers schedule tests. I think it should just be more recognized... They (teachers) should be like strongly encouraged not to have major assignments on those days. Not to shut down everything. But like I had a Civics Unit Test on Rosh Hashannah this year.

Eleanor agreed and shared suggestions for what school could look like on the High Holy days:

Even just doing less work would be enough. No tests. No big assignments. No starting new lessons. Maybe just review days because we all need review days. I wouldn't want to miss review days, but I guess that's way better than missing regular school days.

These statements suggested threatened healthy identity development and compromised positive youth development as they relate to feelings of competence (Lerner, 2009) for participants.

Getting good grades was highly salient when participants described what was important to them, and academic success was central to their identity. When academic success was threatened as a result of missing school days, Jewish early adolescent identity was affected as well. Using the Jewish identity space as a framework (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011), the affective identity component (i.e., how ones feels about their Jewishness) was impacted at the personal level.

Additionally, Lerner's (2009) "C" of competence was affected when participants faced academic challenges as a result of missing school.

Navigating Relationships during the Christmas Season. The Christmas holiday season presented a number of challenges for participants. Specifically, fitting in and feeling connected to non-Jewish friends and mentors was daunting during this time. Eleanor explained:

I feel sometimes alone because I get invited to holiday parties but I know they're not holiday parties. They're Christmas parties. So it's either you want to go and have fun with your friends even though you're technically celebrating something that isn't part of your religion. Or are you going to stay home and be sad that you didn't go because of your religion. So I get left out a lot. So I think part of me growing up in this town is not being included. Mentally people try to include me, but it's just awkward because I don't know what I would do. It's not staying true to myself.

Eleanor's statement reflected feelings of being torn between two conflicting desires: the desire to fit in and connect with her peers and the desire to stay true to her Jewish identity. Social connections are especially important to early adolescents, which can make this internal conflict challenging.

Peer relationships were not the only relationships in the lives of Jewish early adolescents affected during the Christmas season. Participants also felt tensions regarding how the Christmas season was recognized and celebrated within their schools. Jackson explained:

Well I think instead of calling it Christmas break, they should call it holiday break. And some teachers do, some teachers don't. I get it if the teachers want to put up like Christmas trees and stuff if they're Christian. That's fine with me, but I don't think the school should decorate. Like sometimes I see it in the lunch room and I'm not really totally sure like what, who did it...I mean it's fine if it's in the rooms because I mean I can't really control that and that's their room so that's good, but I don't think it should be a school thing...I just don't think that the school should set one thing up for one holiday that belongs to one religion and not for the other. Even if the other is the minority.

With this statement, Jackson expressed a desire for school norms around language and decorating to be more inclusive. Using Eccles and Templeton's framework (Eccles & Gootman, 2002), the two components of supportive relationships with adults and peers as well as opportunities to develop a sense of belonging and mattering seemed to be threatened by these school-based norms.

Broader Community Context

The broader community context was perceived by participants as making them feel unsafe, stereotyped, and left out. These findings are organized into two subcategories: encounters with anti-Semitism and local business practices.

Encounters with anti-Semitism. Participants described two ways they encountered anti-Semitism. First, three participants were aware of acts of vandalism that occurred on their Temple property. Two participants described these acts affecting them somewhat minimally in an indirect way. Josh explained, "Wasn't there something that happened at the Temple like a bit ago? Yeah, so that's not like directly to me but in a way that's like to me because that's my Temple." Using the Jewish identity space as a framework (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011), Josh's statement suggested that his cognitive identity (i.e., how he views himself as a member of the Jewish people) was connected to his identification as a member of his Temple community. At the community level, Josh's cognitive identity was shaped by the acts of vandalism on his Temple. Eccles and Templeton's framework (Eccles & Gootman, 2002) is also useful for understanding the impact of the vandalism. One of the key components of positive social contexts is adequate provisions for safety (Eccles & Gootman, 2002); the vandalism posed a significant threat to Temple community members feeling safe. Jackson's reflections on the Temple vandalism suggested more deeply felt psychological effects:

It made me a little sad because we don't bother anyone. Going to Temple, not going to Temple, doing Hebrew school. It's not bothering anyone...so I don't understand why someone would do that. The way I see it is, I get it. I get why people do mean things if they're being bothered...but going to Temple isn't bothering anyone...so I really just don't understand it.

Jackson's statement suggested that these acts of vandalism affected his affective identity (i.e., how he feels about his Jewishness; Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011) as he felt confused and sad. These acts may have also threatened his sense of connection (Lerner, 2009) to the broader community.

In addition to the Temple vandalism, one participant experienced anti-Semitism through being stereotyped. The stereotypes centered around physical appearance and perceived financial success. Eleanor explained:

They said well...like aren't all Jewish kids rich? And I know I have a nice house because my parents work hard but I don't know how much money my parents make honestly...And also online I see videos of people saying that you're probably Jewish because of your nose...and a lot of people that are Jewish have darker features, apparently. So I have been told that I look Jewish.

Using Lerner's (2009) 6 C's of positive youth development, participants' confidence could be impacted as they experienced being stereotyped in these ways.

Local Business Practices. Finally, two participants voiced that local business practices sometimes made them feel left out. Jackson explained:

I think there's things they could do to support just like the Jews because like some people, some businesses ignore Hanukkah but like I get that because their beliefs may be different and they're not like required by law to be inclusive. It's

more of a choice. But I think that everyone would be better off if they just made that choice to be more inclusive...because it doesn't require much effort. To just put up a plastic Menorah next to the plastic Christmas tree on the hostess stand.

Josh agreed, and shared that the general lack of awareness in the community about Jewish people was something he wished would change. Jackson's statements described how some local business settings caused Jewish youth to feel left out. This feeling may have also shaped Jewish early adolescent identity development at the community level, and impacted the affective identity component (i.e., how one feels about their Jewishness) as local Jewish youth connected feeling excluded by their community with being Jewish.

Conclusion

The findings from this chapter suggested two major themes. First, Jewish early adolescent perceptions of their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose were shaped by self, family, and friends. Second, within the Jewish community, identity, positive youth development and purpose flourished. The broader secular community context, however, threatened the positive youth development, identity development, and purpose development of Jewish early adolescents. Subthemes related to the Jewish community included the Temple, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience, sleepaway camp, and opportunities to help others. Subthemes related to the broader secular community include the school context, encounters with anti-Semitism, and local business practices.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION

The current qualitative study aimed to understand the perceptions of Jewish early adolescents in the Sarasota Manatee region regarding their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose. Additionally, this study aimed to understand how local Jewish early adolescents perceived aspects of their community as shaping their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose. This study was informed by literature in the fields of positive youth development, identity development, and purpose, as well as relevant literature in the areas of Jewish identity and Jewish educational models. Key theories from the research literature were identified and formed the basis of the a priori codebook for the qualitative interviews.

Guided by a phenomenological approach and a constructivist worldview, this qualitative study utilized a hybrid data analysis strategy to identify themes related to how four Jewish early adolescents perceived aspects of their development and the influence of certain community contexts on their development (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Two themes were identified. The first theme is that Jewish early adolescent perceptions of their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose were shaped by the self, family, and friends. The second theme is that within the Jewish community, Jewish early adolescent identity development, positive youth development, and purpose flourished; however, participants felt unsafe, left out, and misunderstood in the broader secular community context. This chapter includes a discussion of findings organized by research questions. There is also a discussion of practical and theoretical implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Jewish early adolescent perceptions of their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose were shaped by the self, family, and friends

Interview data revealed that self-perceptions shaped participants' identity development. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience, as well as the small size of the Jewish religion, also influenced participants' identity development. Family shaped participant perceptions of their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose by emphasizing the value of helping others. Extended family members also influenced participants' positive youth development, particularly feelings of connection and identity development. Friends shaped participants' positive youth development by influencing their perceptions of religious school activities. Participants also emphasized the importance of trustworthiness in friendships, which in turn had a positive effect on participant self-esteem. Self-esteem can be reconceptualized as Lerner's confidence (2009), thereby linking trustworthiness with enhanced positive youth development.

The Influence of the Self. The findings of this study revealed that participants often thought of themselves primarily as a Jewish person. When asked whether they thought of themselves just as people as opposed to Jewish people, two of the four participants indicated that they thought of themselves as Jewish people. The Jewish identity space framework (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011) can be utilized to understand these perspectives as cognitively grounded (i.e., concerned with how one views oneself as a member of the Jewish people) at both the personal (self) as well as community (i.e., self in relation to other similar selves) levels. It is important to note, however, that the two participants who expressed this view had already become Bar/Bat Mitzvahs. This finding suggests that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience may play a significant role in shaping Jewish early adolescent identity formation. It is useful to situate this finding in the

literature. Lerner's developmental systems model of positive youth development includes a combination of individual strengths and ecological assets (Lerner, 2009). Within this model, these strengths and assets reinforce each other, as well as promote the 5 C's of positive youth development (Lerner, 2009). The Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience shapes Jewish early adolescent competence through Hebrew study, confidence through performance, and character, caring, and contribution through the volunteer component. It is this combination of individual study (i.e., internal assets) and external performance and volunteering (i.e., ecological assets) that situates the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience as a prime example of Lerner's (2009) positive youth development model.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience is similar to the quinceanera, which is a traditional religious ceremony for Latina girls to celebrate their fifteenth birthday and serves as a rite of passage into adulthood (Davalos, 1996). Both ceremonies occur during adolescence in houses of worship and are attended by friends and family. The Bar Mitzvah ritual was initially designated exclusively for Jewish thirteen-year-old boys, and was eventually expanded to include Jewish girls. While the secular world also offers adolescent rites of passage such as a driver's license or the right to vote, these milestones are not particularly meaningful or significant in a spiritual way (Seidman, 1973). What is unique about the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and quinceanera rituals is that they afford the individual a sense of transition through a ceremony that is witnessed and supported by peers as well as supportive adults (Seidman, 1973). Being seen by others in a new way allows Jewish early adolescents to turn inward and view themselves in a new light as well.

Participants also thought about the Jewish religion as special due to its relatively small size. Although the Jewish identity space framework (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011) can be utilized to categorize these feelings as affective (i.e., how one feels about their Jewishness) at the personal

level, the framework fails to explain the reasoning behind these feelings. The participants seem to be connecting positive feelings about being Jewish with perceived membership exclusivity. This finding aligns with prior literature on religious and cultural identity. Previous Jewish identity research has found that Jewish identity is more salient in areas with smaller Jewish populations (Olson & Alper, 2013). Similarly, participants in this research study indicated that being part of a religion with a small membership size enhanced its value to them.

The Influence of the Family. The findings also suggested that family shaped participants' positive youth development and identity development. Family influenced participants placing a high value on helping others, which reflected Lerner's (2009) "C" of caring. Participants developed a sense of caring primarily through dialogue with family members. These conversations with family members also served to enhance purpose development for participants (Malin et al., 2013). As family members described the importance of helping others, participants began to consider the ways in which engaging in such efforts could serve a deeper purpose (Malin et al., 2013). An inductive finding was that participants voiced spending time with extended family members as one of their favorite aspects of Jewish holiday celebrations. Although this finding reflects the literature in some ways (Lerner, 2009) in that it signifies connection, it also reveals a new insight. This finding suggests that holiday celebrations with extended family members activated participants' affective identity component at the family level (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011). This finding also suggests that intergenerational family members played a pivotal role as patriarchal and matriarchal family mentors modeling positive feelings about the Jewish holidays through their enthusiasm and commitment to observance. The positive youth development literature on mentors has tended to focus on parents or other adult mentors as primary influences without acknowledging the role that extended

family members may play (Bowers et al., 2015). This finding contributes to the positive youth development literature by suggesting that extended family members may serve as positive adult mentors for Jewish early adolescents.

The Influence of Friends. In addition to the self and family, the findings indicated that friends played a pivotal role in shaping participants' perceptions of their positive youth development. Participants' feelings about participation in Religious School activities depended on their friendships with other Religious school students. As those friendships blossomed, participants' feelings about participating improved. This finding reflects the importance of Lerner's (2009) "C" of connection on positive youth development, as participants described feeling comfortable being themselves around close friends. The positive youth development literature indicates that adolescents tend to spend time with peers who are similar to them (Lerner, 2009). As these friendships between similar individuals develop, adolescents tend to behave in ways that satisfy the expectations of their peers (Donlan et al., 2015). In the case of friendships formed through Religious School affiliation, positive behaviors and feelings towards Religious School emerged as a result of these peer relationships. In the peer relationship literature, friends are categorized as a subset of peers and friendships are categorized by trust, intimacy, and support (Donlan et al., 2015). Two participants described trustworthiness, an inductive code, as an especially important friendship characteristic. Although trustworthiness somewhat resembles Lerner's (2009) character, its meaning has certain unique characteristics as well. Rotenberg's (2010) interpersonal trust framework is one approach for conceptualizing trust. This framework includes three bases for trust (i.e., honesty, emotional, and reliability), two dimensions of the target of trust (i.e., specificity and familiarity), and three domains of trust (i.e., cognitive/affective, behavior dependent, and behavior-enacting; Rotenberg, 2010). It is important

to note that the two participants who discussed trustworthiness as an important quality were females which could suggest a gender difference. A study by Wissink, Dekovic, and Meijer (2009) revealed that female friendships during adolescence are more intimate in nature than male friendships. One characteristic of this intimacy is a high degree of trust in these friendships (Wissink et al., 2009).

Within the Jewish community, Jewish early adolescent identity, positive youth development and purpose flourished; however, Jewish early adolescents felt unsafe, left out, and misunderstood in the broader secular community context

The Jewish Community

The findings for the theme on the Jewish community were divided into four categories: the Temple, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience, sleepaway camp, and opportunities to help others. Participants shared positive feelings about Religious school staff which signaled the presence of positive social contexts in the realm of supportive relationships with adults and peers (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Participating in services and holiday celebrations positively influenced participants' cognitive identity at the community level (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011). Although the relationship between participants and Rabbis influenced positive youth development, the influence was somewhat indirect. Participants shared that it was the expertise of their Rabbis that they most prized. Expertise can be interpreted as competence (Lerner, 2009), however, in this instance it is not the competence of the participant that matters but rather the perceived competence of their Rabbi.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience shaped participants' cognitive identity development at the family level (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011). The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a rite of passage in Judaism that has unique features and characteristics. The performative and ceremonial aspect of the

Bar/Bat Mitzvah ritual is one unique element. In terms of the family context, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process allowed participants to feel more connected to extended family members as part of a historical family lineage. This sense of historical connectedness within the family enhanced participants' sense of connection as well as their Jewish identity.

Participants' positive experiences at Jewish sleepaway camp may have positively influenced their development of Lerner's (2009) five C's of caring and connection, as well as affective identity development at the community level. Participants shared that they felt especially connected to friends from sleepaway camp due to an unspoken understanding about being Jewish. Experiences observing fellow campers taking medications also increased participant feelings of empathy and caring. The sleepaway camp environment seemed to meet all of the criteria for the components of positive social contexts, namely adequate provisions for safety; supportive relationships with adults and peers; opportunities to develop a sense of belonging, mastery, mattering, and the chance to learn essential skills for success; and strong positive social behavioral norms (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). It is important to note, however, that one participant had a negative sleepaway camp experience; it is possible that this may negatively shape aspects of one's development.

Opportunities to help others through volunteer and youth group work shaped participants' positive youth development and purpose. These opportunities promoted three of Lerner's (2009) five C's: contribution, competence, and caring. One participant shared how she enjoyed helping her grandparents and how doing so sparked an interest in helping other elderly people. Other participants described volunteering at a Jewish youth group and day camp as enjoyable experiences doing something they excelled in (i.e., competence). Participants described these experiences as meaningful opportunities to help others (i.e., contribution). These experiences

also supported purpose development and reflected the literature on the beyond-the-self purpose development dabbling phase (Malin et al., 2013). These experiences allowed participants to test out meaningful activities without having to fully commit to an academic or career trajectory related to these experiences. These experiences form the basis of purpose exploration and development that continues to unfold throughout adolescence and into adulthood, shaping identity along the way (Malin et al., 2013).

The Broader Secular Community Context

Outside of the Jewish community, the findings suggested that the broader secular community context left participants feeling unsafe, left out, and misunderstood. Findings for the broader secular community context are divided into two categories: the school context and the broader community context.

Within the school context, the findings are subdivided into two categories: missing school and navigating relationships during the Christmas season. Interview data related to missing school closely reflected themes found in the positive youth development and identity development literature. Missing school due to Jewish holidays threatened participants' feelings of connection with fellow students, as they experienced feeling targeted and singled out upon returning to school. Participant competence was also threatened as a result of falling behind academically (Lerner, 2009). Academic success was salient to the participants and integral to their sense of self and identity. Academic expectations within Jewish families tend to be rather high, and getting good grades is considered the norm. When academic success was threatened for participants, their affective, personal identity may have been compromised (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011). How participants felt about being Jewish, then, was directly related to their experiences of disconnection and threatened academic success due to missing school.

Navigating relationships during the Christmas season also presented challenges for participants. Participants' feelings about school norms indicated that two components of Eccles and Templeton's (Eccles & Gootman, 2002) positive social contexts framework were compromised during this period. These two components were supportive relationships with adults and peers as well as opportunities to develop a sense of belonging and mattering (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Participants felt unsupported by teachers and school administrators who failed to acknowledge their holiday observances. Internal conflicts that arose for participants around holiday party invitations reflected the importance of Lerner's (2009) "C" of connection to positive youth development. Participants described the desire to fit in as feeling somewhat invisible and also wrought with internal conflict and these descriptions are a non-example of Lerner's (2009) connection.

As with the school context, the broader community context also threatened participants' positive youth development and identity development. Interview data on the broader community context was subdivided into two categories: encounters with anti-Semitism and local business practices. Participant data related to anti-Semitism reflected themes in the literature, including threatened cognitive and affective identity at the community level (Horenczyk & Wolf, 2011), impaired connection (Lerner, 2009), as well as the compromised provisions for safety component of positive social contexts (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Participants' reactions to anti-Semitic graffiti shaped their thinking and feelings about being part of a Jewish community. Participants' sense of safety was also threatened as they reflected on the impact to their physical place of worship. Connection was compromised for participants who expressed hurt feelings and confusion following the anti-Semitic incident at the Temple, as well as an anti-Semitic experience in an online environment. Participants' experiences with being stereotyped impacted

feelings of confidence (Lerner, 2009) as participants shared how their peers discuss Jewish characteristics among each other. Interview data also indicated that participant encounters with local businesses caused them to feel left out. This feeling of being left out can be considered a non-example of Lerner's (2009) connection. This feeling of being left out was most prevalent during the Christmas holiday season when participants observed local businesses displaying Christmas decorations without including Jewish holiday decorations. This feeling may have also impacted participants' affective identity at the community level, as participants' feelings about being Jewish may have changed as a result of this practice by local businesses in the community.

Implications

The findings from the current study have implications for theory and practice. The findings illuminated positive as well as challenging personal and contextual features that shape the positive youth development, identity development, and purpose of Jewish early adolescents. Specifically, this study contributes to the literature by highlighting perceptions and supportive contexts specific to early adolescents, whereas the bulk of the literature has tended to focus on a wider adolescent age span. Additionally, this study centers on a specific subset within early adolescents, namely Jewish early adolescents. An inductive finding related to the role of extended family members, as well as the non-example for connection (e.g., feeling left out), offer new insights on perceptions and experiences that may be particular to Jewish early adolescents.

The findings also have implications for my scholarly practice. I am uniquely positioned in my scholarly and professional practice to inspire changes in supporting early adolescents within the Jewish community in Sarasota. Based on findings from the literature as well as my research study findings, I offer a call to action for stakeholders within the local Jewish community (Geldhof et al., 2015). First, programs can capitalize on the notion of feeling special.

Participants indicated that part of what they valued about being Jewish was the small size of the religion, and how this feature made them feel special. Synagogues, as well as community-based programs, can capitalize on this feeling by designing small, targeted programs based on various specific community interests. For example, the Federation could offer college night programs specifically for high school juniors, seniors, and their parents. Similarly, local synagogues could join together to host middle and high school information session events for rising middle and high school students. Small, intimate events focused on shared interests would allow community members to connect with each other as peers in a meaningful way.

Second, community programs can enhance intergenerational Jewish programming. The participants shared that what they most enjoyed about the Jewish holidays was spending time with extended family members. The positive youth development literature also highlights the importance of young people and adults collaborating and learning from each other through joint programs (Geldhof et al., 2015). The local Jewish Day School, the Synagogues, and the Jewish Federation can design more programs that invite extended families to participate together. Intergenerational Passover seders could be designed such that families are seated together and able to participate collectively in specific aspects of the service or meal. Jewish early adolescents could be assigned helping roles during these programs to give them an enhanced sense of purpose as well as support feelings of caring and contribution.

Third, Federation leadership can partner with academic leaders to build increased awareness of Jewish holidays. Participants expressed that missing school for the high holidays created academic stress. Although local school districts have a policy that addresses these holidays as excused absences, in practice school administrators and teachers vary in how they treat these school days. Advocacy and ongoing dialogue with school leaders is critical to

building awareness and creating solutions that work for all students. The Federation's Heller Community Relations Committee should meet with the Sarasota and Manatee County School District Superintendents and Chief Academic Officers each summer to discuss the upcoming High Holy Days and to develop policies and practices to address missed schoolwork.

Fourth, local business can be educated regarding inclusive holiday practices. Participants indicated that the omnipresence of Christmas decorations, coupled with the absence of Hanukkah decorations, in local businesses during the Winter holidays made them feel left out. Jewish community leadership could partner with local business chambers and councils to build awareness and offer suggestions in order to create a more inclusive business environment. The Federation's Marketing department can create brochures or pamphlets to educate businesses regarding the Jewish holidays and appropriate decorations. The Federation and Synagogues could also launch a fundraising campaign to raise money to purchase plastic Menorahs for local businesses to display.

In an effort to inform the local community regarding my research, I plan to create an executive summary of my findings for distribution to the local Jewish Federation, Synagogues, the local Jewish Day School, and the two School Boards.

Positionality

From a personal standpoint, engaging in this work has been challenging and deeply fulfilling. The interviews caused me to reflect on my own experiences as a Jewish early adolescent, and many of the feelings expressed by the participants mirrored my own experiences. Learning that the participants expressed similar perceptions and experiences as me strengthened my resolve to facilitate change as part of my scholarly practice. I end this study feeling a resurgence of my own adolescent perceptions and wondering how other adults in my community

have made sense of their own Jewish upbringing, in terms of how various contexts may have influenced their development as adolescents, and how they are currently raising Jewish families of their own. Research into parent reflections on their adolescent development as well as their current parenting experiences could be a possible next step in my work.

Limitations and Future Research

The findings of this study should be considered within the context of certain limitations and possible directions for future research. First, the interviews were conducted during the Winter holidays which meant that the Christmas holidays were more salient for participants than may have been during other times of the year. Second, the study was limited to four participants in a specific community; findings should be considered contextualized and reflective of a particular Jewish community, rather than all Jewish communities.

The bulk of the literature on positive youth development, identity development, and purpose is based on a broader adolescent age group ranging from ages 12-18. My study, however, focused on adolescents ages 11-14. Additionally, the literature tends to be neutral in terms of religious or cultural identity, whereas my study focused specifically on Jewish youth perspectives. Future research could aim to study a larger and more diverse group of Jewish early adolescent participants. Adolescents from other geographic locations, such as larger cities or more rural areas, could offer new insights. Another possible area for research could target perceptions of either female or male Jewish early adolescents to investigate whether perceptions vary by gender. Additional research in the area of purpose development for Jewish early adolescents could also be explored as purpose was less salient in my research findings than positive youth development and identity development. Research studies aimed at understanding

the perspectives of parents of Jewish early adolescents could reveal new insights as well, including potential differences among mothers and fathers.

Conclusion

The findings of this qualitative study offer new insights regarding Jewish early adolescent perceptions of their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose. The findings also reveal important information regarding supportive and threatening contexts of development that serve as a call to action for stakeholders. Two themes emerged from the findings: 1) the positive youth development, identity development, and purpose of Jewish early adolescents was shaped by the self, family, and friends; and 2) the Jewish community served as a supportive context, while the broader secular community acted as a threatening context. The findings can contribute to understanding ways to support Jewish early adolescents. First, programs for Jewish early adolescents can capitalize on the notion of feeling special. Second, communities can expand intergenerational programming. Third, Jewish community leadership can partner with school leadership to increase awareness of the Jewish holidays. Fourth, local businesses can be educated regarding inclusive business practices.

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APPENDIX A:

RESEARCHER BACKGROUND AND POSITIONALITY

I was born and raised in Sarasota, Florida, the setting for my study. Growing up Jewish in Sarasota was not easy. When I was an early adolescent, public middle school options in Sarasota were limited and underperforming. My parents chose to enroll me in a local Episcopal school for a few years. Although I received a world class education, I felt different and out of place as the only Jewish kid in my grade. My classmates were nice and welcoming for the most part, however, they were part of a community that was foreign to me. Many classmates attended Bible Study groups during the week, and a few of them invited me to join. Part of me wanted to join them to fit in. However, I knew that doing so would mean betraying my Jewish identity. I felt this push and pull, this sense of half belonging throughout my middle school years.

My family life was what I would characterize as Jew-ish. Growing up, we belonged to the reform (most progressive, least observant) synagogue in town, and we observed Shabbat at home every month or two. I completed a Bat Mitzvah at age 13, and I attended Jewish sleepaway camp for three summers. On the surface, we were checking all of the boxes of what being a “good” Jewish reform family entailed.

My inner Jewish life, however, told a different story. My parents grew up under very different circumstances, and their relationship to Judaism differed as well. My father grew up in Birmingham, Alabama which had a very small, but tight knit Jewish community. He spent his summers at the Jewish Community Center, and many of his close friends were Jewish. Jewish

families tended to stick together and were deeply involved in each other's lives. My father completed a Bar Mitzvah, and to this day he can still recite many Hebrew prayers and blessings.

My mother, on the other hand, grew up with minimal exposure and connection to her Judaism. Both of her parents were Jewish, however, they divorced when she was a young child and she spent most of her childhood moving from one place to another. Her mother worked fulltime as a teacher, and the chaos of her life prevented her from enrolling her children in a supplementary religious school program to learn Hebrew.

As a result, my mother never learned any Hebrew prayers or blessings and often felt out of place at our Temple. She described herself more as spiritual, rather than religious. My father also shared with us that he had feared his Rabbi as a young child. He described him as a stern and unwelcoming presence in his life. The message I received from my parents, albeit unintentionally, was that belonging to a synagogue was a Jewish obligation, rather than something you do to pursue meaning and joy. I internalized these feelings and felt detached from my Jewish education and identity. As a "good" Jewish girl, I diligently studied for my Bat Mitzvah, but never felt deeply connected to my Jewish studies or community. I almost felt like I was living in two worlds, one as the Jewish girl at the Episcopalian school and another as the detached student at the synagogue. I did not feel truly at home in either environment.

These mixed feelings about my Jewish identity remained with me throughout high school and college. I majored in Philosophy as an undergraduate student, and strongly identified as an intellectual rather than as a spiritual or religious person. I went on to pursue a master's degree in Social Work, and committed myself to pursuing social justice and fighting inequality for all. After working in the nonprofit sector for a few years, my career trajectory led me to positions in higher education administration where I was able to fight inequality by supporting students

through the many challenges on their path to pursuing higher education. My work in each of these spheres was satisfying for the most part, but I always felt like some part of me was dormant, inactive.

All of that changed in 2017 when I went to Israel for the first time. I was selected to participate in a special program for local Jewish mothers to travel to Israel together. The program was sponsored by the Jewish Women's Education Project and the Sarasota Manatee Jewish Federation, and the trip was a fully subsidized 8-day experience in Israel for Jewish mothers. The only criteria for the trip was that you had to identify as Jewish and have at least one child under 18 living at home with you. I had never been to Israel before, and was intrigued by the idea of experiencing it for the first time surrounded by a community of Jewish mothers. Without my husband or children along for the ride, I felt like I would be able to fully immerse myself in the experience.

Those eight days in Israel were life changing. Each day began with a seminar on a Jewish value or lesson and was followed by an excursion to a significant cultural, historic, or religious site. The curriculum of the trip provided participants with many opportunities for self-reflection and learning. I instantly felt deeply connected to the people of Israel, the place, and my fellow travelers. As the trip progressed, I began to think about my life in an entirely new way. At the time, I was working fulltime at an intense job with heavy supervisory responsibilities. I felt stressed, overwhelmed, and exhausted most of the time. I barely saw my husband and kids. I knew that my situation was not sustainable, but I did not realize just how unbearable it really was until I was able to fully step away from it for a week.

I returned from the trip with a renewed sense of clarity and purpose. I knew that I wanted to spend more time with my family and start to observe Jewish rituals such as Shabbat. In

Jerusalem, everything shuts down for Shabbat. Stores are closed, streets are empty, and everyone simply stays home with their family. I was determined to bring some version of that back to my home life. I knew that our modern lives would not be compatible with a full 24-hour Shabbat observance, however, I believed we could commit to having Friday night Shabbat dinners as a family a couple of times each month. I also started to work on an exit plan for my job, and within less than a year I had transitioned to a part-time role at another university that allowed me to be more present for my family.

Over the last couple of years, I have become increasingly involved in local Jewish life. I now regularly attend and support Jewish Federation events, and my husband has joined the Federation's Granting Committee. My children attend a supplementary religious program at the same reform synagogue that I attended as a child. I joined the Religious School committee so that I could take an active role in shaping their religious school experience. I want to do everything I can to ensure that they feel connected to, rooted in, and proud of their Jewish identity. Similar to my experience growing up in Sarasota, my kids are usually the only Jewish children in their school classes and have expressed to me that they just want to fit in (Christmas time is especially hard). I hope their Jewish pride and affinity strengthens over time.

As a researcher, naturally I carry my personal history and all of these complicated feelings with me to the work. Reflexive journaling is a strategy I will be utilizing throughout my study to bring self-awareness to my subjectivity and selfhood in the research process.

APPENDIX B:

PARENT CONSENT FORM

Title of study: Early Adolescent Perceptions of their Positive Youth Development, Identity Development, and Purpose

Overview: We are asking you to allow your child to take part in a research study. The following information is presented to help you and your child decide whether or not your child should participate in a research study. The sections in this overview provide the basic information about the study. More detailed information is provided in the remainder of the document.

- **Study Staff:** This study is being led by Lauren Kurnov who is a doctoral student at the University of South Florida. This person is called the Principal Investigator. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Sarah Kiefer, Ph.D. Other approved research staff may act on behalf of the Principal Investigator.
- **Study Details:** The purpose of the study is to learn more about Jewish early adolescent perspectives and the contexts that can best support the positive youth development, identity development, and purpose development of local Jewish youth. The study will take place virtually via Zoom. Your child will be asked to participate in three interviews which will take about 45 minutes to 1 hour each. The total amount of time your child will be asked to volunteer for this study is 3 hours over the next month.
- **Participants:** Your child is being asked to take part because they meet the selection criteria as a Jewish early adolescent age 11-14.

Total Number of Participants: About 4-6 individuals will take part in this study. Your child does not have to participate in this research study. Your child should only take part in this study if they want to volunteer. Your child should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. They are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if your child stops taking part in this study.

Benefits: We cannot promise that your child will receive benefit from taking part in this research study. However, some students have experienced greater self-awareness about their identity and purpose development as a result of participating in similar studies.

Risks or Discomfort: To the best of our knowledge, your child's participation in this study will not harm them. Although we have made every effort to try and make sure this doesn't happen, they may find some questions we ask may upset them. If so, we will tell you both about other people who may be able to help with these feelings. In addition, your child may experience something uncomfortable that we do not anticipate at this time.

Compensation and Costs: You will receive no compensation for participating in this study. It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

Privacy and Confidentiality: We will do our best to keep your records private and confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Certain people may need to see your interview transcripts, including: 1) the research team, including the doctoral student and four dissertation committee members; and 2) the USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and its related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, and staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance. Your information collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will NOT be used or distributed for future research studies. We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are. Data collected for this research will be stored at the doctoral student's home office, as well as on a secure cloud-based server. Your personal information collected for this research will be kept as long as it is needed to conduct this research. Once your participation in the research is over, your information will be stored in accordance with applicable policies and regulations. Your permission to use your personal data will not expire unless you withdraw it in writing. You may withdraw or take away your permission to use and disclose your information at any time. You do this by sending written notice to the Principal Investigator at the following address: 5164 Kestral Park Terrace, Sarasota, FL 34231. While we are conducting the research study, we cannot let you see or copy the research information we have about you. After the research is completed, you have a right to see the information about you, as allowed by USF policies.

What if new information becomes available about the study?

During the course of this study, we may find more information that could be important to you. This includes information that, once learned, might cause you to change your mind about being in this study. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints.

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, call Lauren Kurnov at 646-413-3740. If you have questions about your rights, complaints, or issues as a person taking part in this study, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at RSCH-IRB@usf.edu. While we are conducting the research study, we cannot let you see or copy the research information we have about you. After the research is completed, you have a right to see the information about you, as allowed by USF policies.

Consent for My Child to Participate in this Research Study

I freely give my permission to let my child take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to let my child take part in research. I have received a signed copy of this form to take with me.

Signature of **Parent** of Child Taking Part in Study

Date

Printed Name of **Parent** of Child Taking Part in Study

Printed Name of the **Child** Taking Part in Study

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent and Research Authorization

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

Date

Printed Name of

Person Obtaining Informed Consent

APPENDIX C:

ASSENT OF CHILDREN TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of study: Early Adolescent Perceptions of their Positive Youth Development, Identity Development, and Purpose

Why am I being asked to take part in this research?

You are being asked to take part in a research study about Jewish early adolescent positive youth development, identity development, and youth purpose in the Sarasota Manatee region. You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are a Jewish early adolescent in the Sarasota/Manatee area. If you take part in this study, you will be one of about 4-6 people taking part in the study.

Who is doing this study?

The person in charge of this study is Lauren Kurnov. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Sarah Kiefer, Ph.D. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge.

What is the purpose of this study?

By doing this study, we hope to learn more about Jewish early adolescents' perspectives about aspects of their local Jewish community that can best support their positive youth development, identity development, and purpose development.

Where is the study going to take place and how long will it last?

The study will take place virtually via Zoom. You will be asked to participate in three interviews which will take about 45 minutes to 1 hour each. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is 3 hours over the next month.

What will you be asked to do?

You will be asked to answer several questions during each interview session. The first interview will focus on getting to know you and your Jewish background, the second interview will ask you questions about your participation in Jewish activities and programs, and the final interview will explore possible challenges Jewish people may face.

Why are you being asked to take part?

You are being asked to participate so that the researcher can learn firsthand from Jewish early adolescents about their perceptions and experiences.

Study Procedures:

At each visit, you will be asked to answer several interview questions. The first interview will focus on getting to know you and your Jewish background, the second interview will ask questions about Jewish activities and programs, and the final interview will explore possible challenges Jewish people may face. The researcher would like to audio record the interviews, and you will be given the option to agree to the recording. Only the researcher will have access to these audio recordings which will be downloaded to a secure cloud-based server. No information on the audio recordings will be identifiable, and the recordings will be destroyed within two years.

What things might happen if you participate?

To the best of our knowledge, your participation in this study will not harm you. Although we have made every effort to try and make sure this doesn't happen, you may find some questions we ask may upset you. If so, we will tell you and your parents or guardian about other people who may be able to help you with these feelings. In addition to the things that we have already talked about, listed above, you may experience something uncomfortable that we do not anticipate at this time.

Is there benefit to me for participating?

We cannot promise that you will receive benefit from taking part in this research study. However, some people have experienced greater self-awareness about their identity and purpose development as a result of participating in similar studies.

What other choices do I have if I do not participate?

You do not have to participate in this research study.

Do I have to take part in this study?

You should talk with your parents or guardian and others about taking part in this research study. If you do not want to take part in the study, that is your decision. You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer.

Will I receive any compensation for taking part in this study?

You will not receive any compensation for taking part in this study.

Who will see the information about me?

Your information will be added to the information from other people taking part in the study so no one will know who you are.

Can I change my mind and quit?

If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to change your mind later. No one will think badly of you if you decide to stop participating. Also, the people who are running this study may need for you to stop. If this happens, they will tell you when to stop and why.

What if I have questions?

You can ask questions about this study at any time. You can talk with your parents, guardian or other adults about this study. You can talk with the person who is asking you to volunteer by calling Lauren Kurnov at 646-413-3740. If you think of other questions later, you can ask them. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant you can also call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact the IRB by email at RSCH-IRB@usf.edu.

Assent to Participate

I understand what the person conducting this study is asking me to do. I have thought about this and agree to take part in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____	_____
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study	Date
Signature of child agreeing to take part in the study:	_____

_____	_____
Printed name & signature of person providing Information (assent) to subject	Date

APPENDIX D:

INTERVIEW GUIDES

First Interview

Theme: Getting to know the Participant and their Background

I'm excited to get to know you better. Today I'll be asking you some general questions about being Jewish, your friendships, and holiday celebrations. There are no right or wrong answers, and I will keep all of your answers confidential. You can also skip any questions you don't want to answer and end the interview at any time. Does that sound good?

Introduction

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself. How would you describe yourself? What kind of person are you? (Developmental assets-positive identity-self-esteem)
2. What matters to you? What are some of the things that you care about? What is really important to you? Why is that important to you? (Malin's purpose development)
3. Who do you spend time with? Tell me about your close friends. How do you know they are close? Who is your most important friend? Who do you feel most connected to? (Lerner's connection)

Jewish identity

4. In general, what does being Jewish mean to you? (Jewish identity-affective dimension, personal level)
5. How do you feel about being Jewish? (Jewish identity-affective dimension, personal level)

6. Have your feelings about being Jewish changed over time? (Jewish identity-affective dimension, personal level)
 - a. (if yes) In what ways have your feelings changed?
 - b. (if no) Why not?

Jewish relationships/family life

7. Tell me about your Jewish friends. Are they like you? (Lerner's connection)
 - a. (if yes) How do you know these friends? Do you know these friends from school, the Temple, or from somewhere else? (Eccles and Templeton-positive social contexts-supportive relationships with adults and peers)
 - b. (if yes) Are these friendships different from your other friendships? (Jewish identity-cognitive dimension, community level). How so?
 - c. (if not) Why not?

Jewish rituals

8. Would you say that being Jewish is important to your parents? How do you know? Would you say that its more important to your parents than it is to you or less so? Why do you think that it? Do you celebrate Jewish holidays with your family? (Jewish identity-behavioral dimension, family level)
 - a. (if yes) What do you enjoy about the holidays? What do you not like?
9. Do you plan to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah? (Jewish identity-behavioral dimension, community level)
 - a. (if yes) Can you talk to me about how you feel about becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah? Why do you think you feel the way you do? (Jewish identity-affective dimension, global level)

- b. *(for students that have already gone through the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process)*: Do you think of yourself now first and foremost just as a person or as a Jewish person? (Jewish identity-cognitive dimension, global level)
- c. (if no) Why not?

Second Interview

Theme: Jewish activities

Today, we are going to talk a little bit about your goals, your school, and activities. I'm excited to learn more about your experiences. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers, and I will keep all of your answers confidential. You can also skip any questions you don't want to answer and end the interview at any time.

Future Goals

1. Think about the future. When you grow up, what do you think you'll want to be doing?
Are you doing anything now related to this goal? (Malin's purpose development)
2. Do you think being Jewish plays a part in that? (Jewish identity-cognitive dimension, personal level)

The School Context

3. Can you describe your school for me? What's it like going to your school? (Eccles & Templeton-components of social contexts: adequate provisions for safety; supportive relationships with adults and peers; opportunities to develop a sense of belonging, mastery, mattering, and the chance to learn essential skills for success; and strong positive social behavioral norms)
4. What does it feel like to be Jewish at your school? (Jewish identity-affective dimension, community level)

Out-of-School Time Activities

5. Are you involved in any Jewish activities or programs (religious school/youth groups, etc.) outside of school? Can you describe these activities for me (Eccles and Templeton-components of social positive contexts: opportunities to develop a sense of belonging, mastery, mattering, and the chance to learn essential skills for success)
 - a. (*if yes*): Do you enjoy these activities?
 - b. What does it mean for you to participate in Jewish activities? (Jewish identity-affective dimension, community level)
 - c. How does your participation in these activities relate to what we talked about earlier in this interview when we talked about your future goals? (Malin's purpose development)
 - d. (*if no*): Why not? Is this something you would like to do and haven't had a chance to yet?

6. Have you ever attended Jewish sleepaway camp? (Eccles and Templeton-components of social contexts: adequate provisions for safety; supportive relationships with adults and peers; opportunities to develop a sense of belonging, mastery, mattering, and the chance to learn essential skills for success; and strong positive social behavioral norms)
 - a. (*if yes*): Can you describe in detail what that experience was like for you?
 - b. Did attending sleepaway camp impact your feelings about being Jewish? If so, how? (Jewish identity-affective dimension, global level)
 - c. (*if no*): Why not? Is this something that you would like to do and haven't had a chance to?

7. Are there other Jewish activities that you would like to participate in that you don't do currently? (Eccles and Templeton-components of social contexts: opportunities to develop a sense of belonging, mastery, mattering, and the chance to learn essential skills for success)
 - a. *(if yes)* What would it mean for you to participate in this activity? (Jewish identity-cognitive dimension, community level)
 - b. *(if yes)* How does that relate to what you value and who you are? (Developmental assets-positive identity: sense of purpose)

Third Interview

Theme: Challenges Jewish people face

For our third interview, I'd like to talk about some of the challenges people sometimes face just because they are Jewish. Some of these topics may make you feel uncomfortable so just let me know if you want to skip any of the questions. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers, and I will keep all of your answers confidential. You can also skip any questions you don't want to answer and end the interview at any time. At the end of this interview, I will also ask you if you would like to clarify anything that you shared with me during any of our prior interviews.

Feelings of Shame and Experiences of Anti-Semitism

1. Have you ever felt like you wanted to hide the fact that you are Jewish? (Developmental assets: Positive identity: self-esteem)
 - a. *(if yes)* Can you talk to me about what made you feel this way?
 - b. *(if no)* Why not?

2. Would you say that you have experienced anti-Semitism? (Jewish identity-affective dimension, personal level)

Israel and the Holocaust

3. What comes to mind when you think about Israel? Can you talk to me about how you feel about Israel? Do you feel connected to Israel as a Jew or not really? (Jewish identity-cognitive dimension, global level)
4. Have you learned about the Holocaust?, (Eccles & Templeton-components of positive social contexts-adequate provisions for safety)
 - a. *(if yes)*: Can you talk to me about how you feel when you think about the Holocaust? (Lerner's caring)
 - b. How does your knowledge of the Holocaust shape who you are and how you want to be in this world? (Jewish identity-behavioral dimension, global)

Wrapping Up

5. Is there anything else you would like to share with me to help me better understand what it feels like to be a Jewish early adolescent in the Sarasota/Manatee area today? Is there anything the local Jewish community could do to better support you?
6. Is there anything you want to clarify or discuss more from any of our interviews?

APPENDIX E:

IRB LETTER



APPROVAL

December 8, 2020

Lauren Kurnov
5164 Kestral Park Ter
Sarasota, FL 34231

Dear Ms. Kurnov:

On 12/7/2020, the IRB reviewed and approved the following protocol:

Application Type:	Initial Study
IRB ID:	STUDY001760
Review Type:	Expedited 6 and 7
Title:	Jewish Early Adolescent Perceptions of their Positive Youth Development, Identity Development and Purpose
Funding:	None
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Approved Protocol and Consent(s)/Assent(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protocol, Version #2, December 7, 2020;• Parental Permission, Version #1, November 30, 2020;• Social Behavioral Assent, Version #1, November 30, 2020; Approved study documents can be found under the 'Documents' tab in the main study workspace. Use the stamped consent found under the 'Last Finalized' column under the 'Documents' tab.

Within 30 days of the anniversary date of study approval, confirm your research is ongoing by clicking Confirm Ongoing Research in BullsIRB, or if your research is complete, submit a study closure request in BullsIRB by clicking Create Modification/CR.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Institutional Review Boards / Research Integrity & Compliance

FWA No. 00001869

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