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JEWISH COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE JUDAIC STUDIES DEPARTMENT

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandfather, Dr. Stewart Shapiro.

May his memory be a blessing.

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Anyone who has completed a PhD program and written a dissertation knows that it takes a village to reach the endpoint. First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents, Thomas Lopo and Deborah Shapiro, who have supported me in this journey from the very beginning. They have always encouraged my love for academia and were always just a phone call away when I needed a word of advice or motivation. My love and appreciation for them goes beyond what I can reasonably fit in these acknowledgements. I also want to thank my grandparents, Dr. Stewart Shapiro and Deanna Shapiro, for teaching me what it means to be Jewish and for passing on their wisdom to my cousins and me. It was my grandfather's greatest wish for me to pursue the PhD and to carry on his legacy of academic excellence. He passed before he could see me finish, so completing this program is my way of fulfilling that promise to him. I miss him still every day.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to better understand the dynamics of partnerships between Judaic studies departments and the Jewish community and to what degree Jewish community members find these partnerships useful through community-focused perspectives. This study utilized a qualitative approach with a narrative research design. A narrative design allowed Jewish community members to tell in-depth stories of their experiences in partnering with their local Judaic studies departments. Critical Social Theory (CST) combined with Community-Based research (CBR) formed the foundation of this study's theoretical framework. Results showed that although Jewish community members noted many perceived benefits from partnering with their local Judaic studies department, they also emphasized that there were many instances where they saw room for improvement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Today's universities' mission statements often state commitments to serving their community, developing civically engaged students, and creating opportunities for progress. The service-oriented mission statement can be traced to the early twentieth century with the "Wisconsin Idea" and the "California Idea" ideological movements. The "Wisconsin Idea" posited, "The notion that campus and capital ought to cooperate" making the University of Wisconsin, "A model system for providing educated, responsible experts to fill the state's civil service in a range of fields" (Thelin, 2004, p.138). Similarly, named for its origin within prominent California colleges Stanford and Berkeley, the "California Idea" focused on educational access, progressivism, and creating civically involved students who, upon graduation, could give back to their communities through both leadership and public service (Thelin, 2004).

In the 1980s, the federal government delegated the responsibility of rectifying social issues such as the "war on poverty" to researchers at universities, so in the 1990s, universities began to create offices for university-community partnerships (Barnes, et al., 2009). Thus, universities' reevaluation of their mission statements have run parallel with the creation of offices dedicated to community outreach. The shift in social responsibility from the government to universities in the 1980s and 1990s led to a reevaluation of universities' mission statements and also to the creation of university-community partnership offices (Barnes, et al., 2009).

Even though universities idealistically claim to be committed to service in their missions, it has not been the reality according to research on university-community partnerships (Barnes, et al., 2009; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Strier, 2014). Forging university

and community partnerships can benefit both partners by pooling resources, advancing social causes, and providing opportunities for both partners to gain knowledge through experiential learning (Baum, 2000; Benson, et al., 2000; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Sandy & Holland, 2006). Yet, universities have a long history of taking advantage of communities in such partnerships (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Parker, 2020). This reality causes distrust on the community's behalf and creates an uneven power dynamic between partners.

Although university partners claim to take an interest in serving their local communities, in many instances the benefits to the university partners far outweigh the benefits reaped by the local community partners (Barnes, et al., 2009; Benson, et al., 2000; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Parker, 2020; Sandy & Holland, 2006). University partners that do not take community partners' perspectives into consideration when entering into a university-community partnership risk encroaching on the very communities they aim to work with. Discussions of power and the beneficial value of community member knowledge, along with methods of preventing any possible instances of encroachment should be discussed extensively at the beginning of the partnership to avoid this historically unbalanced power dynamic (Cooper, et al., 2014; Parker, 2020; Strier, 2011; Strier, 2014).

As interest in university and community partnerships grows and develops in research literature, many university departments and programs of study are reevaluating their pedagogical approaches in their curriculum to reflect a more genuine interest in community involvement rather than simply claiming this in their mission statements (Barnes, et al., 2009; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Strand, 2000; Strier, 2014). Judaic studies departments across the U.S. are one such example of this change. Judaic studies departments have

successfully partnered with their local Jewish communities (Baskin, 2014; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016; Myers & Goodwin, 2012). Jewish communities partner with local Judaic studies departments to create new programs, host events, and expand their resources for community members and Jewish college students (Myers & Goodwin, 2012). Judaic studies departments may partner with Jewish communities on service-based initiatives like "alternative spring breaks" where students volunteer in their local communities with issues like food insecurity, disaster relief, and other social issues (Butin & Pianko, 2012; Koren, et al., 2016, p. 21).

Studying Jewish community partnerships with Judaic studies departments is timely because Jewish community members report feeling that they are not adequately included in conversations of social injustice, and that entities and people outside of the Jewish community do not fully understand either Jewish customs or the issues Jews face such as antisemitism (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009; Koren, et al., 2016; Rapoport, Engle-Bauer, Kline, & Sciupac, 2021). Judaic studies departments that are interested in civic engagement and community service should consider the above issues in future research and partnerships with the Jewish community.

Few researchers study university-community partnerships, especially from the community's perspectives in these partnerships. Instead, the literature centers the university side of the partnership(s) (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Green, et al., 2001; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998). The centering of university perspectives in the literature proves that community perspectives are not valued by universities. Applying a critical viewpoint on university-community partnerships with critical social theory (CST), can recenter community viewpoints.

One such theorist, Paulo Freire (1970) emphasizes the importance of valuing knowledge

outside of the academy where the researcher is not the only perceived holder of knowledge and community members are not seen as simply subjects of research, but equal partners in creating knowledge. Community-based research (CBR) also proposes a community-focused theoretical position where community participants are viewed as equal partners in the research process, not strictly as subjects (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Strand, et al., 2003).

The theoretical perspectives CST and CBR will be used in conjunction as the grounding theoretical framework for this study. This study will also utilize a narrative research design to take a deeper look into whether Jewish community members find partnerships with Judaic studies departments useful, why Jewish communities pursue these partnerships, and what type of knowledge they value. A narrative research design allows for the centering of Jewish community member perspectives because its focus will be on learning about the stories Jewish community members have to tell about their experiences partnering with a Judaic studies department. A narrative design ties into the combined theoretical framework for this study because they all emphasize the value of community perspectives in research.

In the few studies which do incorporate community partners' perspectives, community partners report feeling their voices are not being heard or represented well (Barnes, et al., 2009; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Strand, et al., 2003). There is even less available research on partnerships between Jewish communities and Judaic studies departments specifically. Thus, literature surveyed for this study focuses on university-community partnerships in general and not on Jewish community and Judaic studies partnerships out of necessity.

In this study, the Jewish community will be defined using Elazar's (1995) model called, "The five spheres of community activity" (p. 277-312). Because the Jewish community can be defined in many ways, for this study, Jewish community activity and its various facets will be

used to best answer the question, “What is Jewish community?” The five spheres of Jewish community activity consist of the: 1) religious-congregational, 2) educational-cultural, 3) community relations, 4) communal-welfare, and 5) Israel-overseas spheres (p. 277-279). The five spheres all have their own defining characteristics but may sometimes overlap with one another when working together on different endeavors. The five spheres of activity are distinct modes of Jewish activity, and Jewish community members might be more active in some spheres of community activity than others.

This study aims to add to existing literature on university and community partnerships by focusing on a specific topic where research is scarce, which is the examination of the types of partnerships between Jewish communities and Judaic studies departments and Jewish community partners’ perspectives on these partnerships. If universities continue to show a vested interest in community service and developing civically engaged students as they assert in their mission statements, then more research will need to be done on the various kinds of partnerships which develop specifically in different academic departments. The goal of this study is to concentrate on the Jewish community and their relationship with the Judaic studies department(s).

Problem Statement

There is a sizable gap in the literature on both the types of partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department, and community perspectives in university-community partnerships. Because university-community partnership research has risen in popularity, it is concerning that there is not yet enough research literature on how the community and its members view these partnerships. Additionally, there are still many areas in university community partnership research to be explored within specific departments and how the different academic departments choose to partner with their local communities and vice versa.

Filling this gap in the literature is important for furthering university-community partnership research because there is little research representing the community side of these partnerships. Universities and researchers that are proponents of reevaluating their mission statements to become more civically engaged, should make a concerted effort to include more community voices in research which is purportedly "community-focused." To only include the university perspective in such research would go against the university's assertion that they aim to be committed to helping and better understanding their local community. Not including literature on community perspectives in university-community partnerships is an issue of concern because university-community partnership research is still a developing area of study. Only focusing on university partners' viewpoints will not help to create a deep understanding of these partnerships.

Addressing the lack of literature dedicated to understanding the Jewish community's connection to the Judaic studies department through partnerships is a timely subject to research. One reason it is timely is because a majority of the U.S. Jewish population today are college educated, showing that higher education is important to U.S. Jews (Pew Research Center, 2021). The problem is that even though a majority of the U.S. Jewish population are college educated, universities' lack an understanding of their Jewish students, faculty, and local Jewish community, which is evidenced by the scarcity of research on Jewish communities (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009). Gaining a better understanding of Jewish communities' partnerships with Judaic studies departments through the community's perspective could help the university side to better serve this demographic.

Another issue which requires attention in the literature is the rising antisemitism in the U.S. and Jewish community members' concern that antisemitism is not taken as seriously as it

should be (Pew Research Center, 2021; Rapoport, et al., 2021). Antisemitism on college campuses is also a problem according to Jewish students and community members (Koren, et al., 2016; Rapoport, et al., 2021). The increase in antisemitic incidents in the U.S. is a problem that necessitates further research on Jewish communities to create external support from multiple sources, and not having to rely solely on internal support from Jewish community members. Filling the gap in the literature on Jewish community perspectives is important in combatting the lack of understanding which may lead to antisemitism.

Research on partnerships between the community and the university concentrates primarily on the healthcare field and has proven to be beneficial to communities (Green, et al., 2001; Kerstetter, 2012; Minkler, 2005; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998). Benefits of partnerships developed in the healthcare field include meeting the community's need for certain resources and information, addressing health disparities within the community, and providing access to various services that would otherwise prove difficult for community members to receive without assistance (Green, et al., 2001; Kerstetter, 2012; Minkler, 2005). Although such partnerships are typically formed within the field of health services and medicine, university and community partnerships (especially ones which are community-based) are not yet as prevalent in social science research although they are increasingly gaining interest (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Strand, 2000).

University-community partnerships are, however, beginning to garner more attention in social science research as universities become more interested in being meaningfully involved with their local communities (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Strier, 2014). Due to the university's decision to reevaluate mission statements to show a more sincere interest in community service, other fields of study outside of the healthcare field, like the social sciences, are following suit by

shifting their focus to civic engagement (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Strand, 2000, Strier, 2014). This is an area which could use further research to fill the gap in social science research on such partnerships. This study aims to address the gaps in the literature on the following problems: the lack of research on Judaic studies department and Jewish community partnerships, the absence of community-focused perspectives in research on university-community partnerships, and the need for further research in the social sciences on these partnerships.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this narrative study is to better understand the dynamics of partnerships between Judaic studies departments and the Jewish community, and to what degree Jewish community members find these partnerships useful through community-focused perspectives. Local Jewish community members' viewpoints are the main lens for understanding what the relationship between the university's Judaic studies department and the surrounding Jewish community is like. For this study, a partnership is defined as any type of collaborative project, course curriculum, or any other supplementary programming which involves both the local Jewish community and the Judaic studies department, regardless of whether the partnership is long, or short-term.

Research Questions

University and community partnerships in general are gaining popularity in the academic realm. This study aims to look at an underdeveloped area of university and community partnership literature by focusing on Jewish community partnerships with their local university's Judaic studies department. The following research questions will help to guide the study and to get a better idea of how this area of research is developing and in which areas it needs to be further explored. The research questions for this study are:

Q1: Are there any ways in which Jewish community members feel their community-based knowledge is valued by Judaic studies departments?

Q2: What are the perceived power dynamics in partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department according to Jewish community members?

Significance of Study

The benefits of studying this issue are important to consider when discussing the lack of research on Jewish community and Judaic studies department partnerships. Rising antisemitism in the U.S. is an important reason for conducting further research on Jewish communities since these communities need support outside of only Jewish community members. Jewish community members report feeling unsupported by entities outside of the Jewish community, and that antisemitism is a problem that is not taken as seriously as it should be (Rapoport, et al., 2021). Conducting this study to combat rising antisemitism in the U.S. is significant because it can help people and entities outside of the Jewish community to better understand this community and how to support them when they are faced with antisemitic incidents.

This study could also benefit the Jewish community and its members, the further development of Judaic studies departments, and community development and university-community partnership research. Research conducted in collaboration with the Jewish community could help to provide a better representative picture of how the Jewish community operates considering how small the Jewish population is in the U.S., while also addressing the need for more studies involving this small demographic. In this section, each of the stakeholders and the potential benefits and importance of conducting this research will be discussed in further detail.

The first group of stakeholders who might benefit from this research is the Jewish

community and its members. In studies where a Jewish community had partnered with either a university or its Judaic studies department (if the university happened to have one) there were notable benefits for the Jewish community members as well as Jewish college students. Some of these benefits included: Becoming more meaningfully engaged with the local community (both Jewish and non-Jewish), reaching out to Jewish students who were previously uninvolved with Jewish programming or community service, and pooling resources from both the university and the community (Butin & Pianko, 2012; Myers & Goodwin, 2012).

However, not all partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department will be successful. In cases where partnerships between these two entities were successful, a concerted effort was made on behalf of both entities to ensure the relationship was beneficial for both partners, and important decisions were made together with clear and open communication (Butin & Pianko, 2012; Myers & Goodwin, 2012). The characteristics of successful partnerships noted throughout the few studies on Jewish community and university affiliated partnerships are fundamental to making these relationships worthwhile for those involved.

The Judaic studies department and the university partners are other stakeholders who might benefit from this study. Because this research is focused on the Jewish community and their perspectives on partnerships with Judaic studies departments, the potential benefits they gain are of more concern in this study than that of the university or the Judaic studies department. Nevertheless, the Judaic studies department and the university could reap benefits from the research conducted in this study. Benefits for the Judaic studies department or university include: Providing both Jewish and non-Jewish college students and faculty connections to and a better understanding of the Jewish community through different programs

and service-learning projects, and engaging the Judaic studies department with community-based, socially conscious pedagogical approaches (which fulfills the university's mission of aiming to be civically engaged) (Butin & Pianko, 2012; Koren, et al., 2016).

Literature on components of successful university-community partnerships shows that in instances where the community partners gained benefits from effective partnerships, the university (or in specific cases, the Judaic studies department) also gained benefits such as increasing available resources from both the university and the community side, and establishing (and maintaining) meaningful lines of open communication and trust between partners by emphasizing the importance of elevating community knowledge (Baum, 2000; Benson, et al., 2000; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Sandy & Holland, 2006). The implications of the findings from university-community partnership literature shows that when the community benefits, everyone benefits.

Focusing on community perspectives rather than solely university partners' experiences is important because research on such partnerships indicates community partners' concerns with feeling left out, misrepresented, or mistreated during the research process (Baum, 2000; Cooper, et al., 2014; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Rubin, V., 2000; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004). Switching the emphasis onto community partners and making them feel valued and respected in the research process can alleviate the tensions which arise from bringing two partners together who have historically had a strained relationship with one another due to universities' tendency to encroach on and take advantage of communities in need (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Cooper, et al., 2014; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Parker, 2020; Rubin, V., 2000; Strier, 2011; Strier, 2014).

Literature on university-community partnerships could also benefit from this study on

Jewish community partnerships with Judaic studies departments when considering the gap in the literature on both community perspectives on partnerships, and Jewish community partnerships specifically. Because these areas of research are lacking in university-community partnership literature, this study will be pertinent in its contribution to the field. Since the area of university-community partnerships is continuing to garner attention in social science research, it is necessary for future studies to concentrate on communities (rather than solely university perspectives) that choose to partner with departments on projects. For this study, the focus will be the Jewish community and their views on the efficacy of partnering with their local Judaic studies department.

Limitations and Delimitations

Delimitations in this study will include the sample of participants, the research setting, or site chosen, and the study's overall purpose or focus. The participants in this study will be limited to Jewish community members. Elazar's (1995) five spheres of community activity will be used as a lens for deciding what constitutes "the Jewish community" and its members in this study. Because this research focuses on Jewish community members and their perspectives on partnerships with Judaic studies departments, the research site or setting includes Jewish communities which are proximal to a college or university that houses a Judaic studies department.

Another boundary set for this study is its focus. The purpose of this study is to better understand the dynamics of partnerships between Judaic studies departments and the Jewish community, and to what degree Jewish community members find these partnerships useful through community-focused perspectives. Because this study concentrates specifically on Jewish communities' viewpoints on partnerships with Judaic studies departments, it will not be fully

generalizable for all types of university-community partnerships outside of this focus. Limitations for this study will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

Organization of Study

This section discusses the overall organization of the dissertation. In this chapter, the research focus and overall purpose of the study were introduced along with the design of the study and what the reader can expect to see discussed in further detail in subsequent chapters. Chapter two will include a review of relevant literature in university and community partnership research, as well as research on Judaic studies departments and their connections to the Jewish community. In addition, service-learning, components of successful partnerships, and challenges in partnerships will be discussed. Chapter two will also explain the theoretical framework which grounds this study: Critical social theory (CST) combined with community-based research (CBR).

The third chapter of this dissertation will explain the chosen design and various methods utilized in this study. This section will aim to describe the chosen participants, data collection and procedures, data analysis, and any ethical concerns which may arise during the research process. Chapter four will involve a detailed discussion of the results of this research, and the fifth and final chapter will include a thorough analysis of these results and the implications for any future research on this topic. Any additional appendices, references, and documents will be included after the five chapters.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Understanding University and Community Partnerships

Research on university and community partnerships is gaining significant interest as universities reevaluate the efficacy of their mission statements (Barnes, Altimare, Farrell, Brown, Burnett III, Gamble, & Davis, 2009; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Strier, 2014). A university-community partnership in this review of the literature will be defined as a collaboration between a university affiliate and a community affiliate where partners have shared goals, resources, and a meaningful exchange of pertinent knowledge. Literature on university-community partnerships shows that universities are turning their focus toward a critical evaluation of their mission statements' proposed commitment to being civically engaged and serving their local communities (Barnes, et al., 2009; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Strier, 2014).

Universities have a history of including civic engagement and community service as part of their mission statements, which began with the ideological movements, the "Wisconsin Idea" and the "California Idea." Thelin (2004) noted in his work that the "Wisconsin Idea" started at the University of Wisconsin with the suggestion that the university and state government should work together to provide the state with civically engaged and socially responsible graduates from the university in various practical fields like medicine, law, engineering, and public health to name a few. A strong focus on applied research and the development of prestigious Ph.D. programs also helped the "Wisconsin Idea" gain momentum as the university continued to show substantial progress in producing well-educated graduates interested in civil service and improving their state's local communities (Thelin, 2004).

The "California Idea" developed from the universities Stanford and Berkeley in

California and asserted that higher education should not only be more accessible to potential students, but that the university should be committed to serving the community as well (Thelin, 2004). The educational progressivism which stemmed from the movement eventually spread to other parts of the U.S. in the early twentieth century, and lead to universities making stronger commitments in their mission statements to serving their communities and developing students who would eventually graduate and be able to help and support their communities (Thelin, 2004).

Expectations of the university and professors further developed in the 1980s and 1990s when universities began reevaluating their mission statements to make them reflect a more genuine commitment to serving the community. The further development in mission and expectations of the university can be traced back to instances such as the federal government's passing the responsibility of addressing the "war on poverty" and other pertinent social dilemmas of the time onto academics (Barnes, et al., 2009, p. 16). Academics then had the responsibility of conducting research (sometimes federally funded through the Office of University Partnerships, or the OUP) with local communities for the purpose of revitalization efforts, public health initiatives, and social issues (e.g., affordable housing) (Cooper, et al., 2014; Martin, et al., 2005). Because of the new responsibilities imposed on academics, in the 1990s more offices of university-community partnerships were created to address social issues, and the federal government provided incentives like grants to encourage universities to establish partnerships with the community (Barnes, et al., 2009; Cooper, Kotval-K, Kotval, & Mullin, 2014).

According to research on community partner perspectives, the university has not lived up to the specific goals set in their mission statements (Barnes, et al., 2009; Benson, et al., 2000; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Sandy & Holland, 2006). University-community partnerships, especially

those focused on service-learning, aim to address the recurrent issue of universities being out of touch with their local communities. Service-learning is a pedagogical approach where community service is included as part of a professor's course curriculum (Martin, et al., 2005). University partners are now looking to take on a more involved and community-centered partnership when it comes to fulfilling the goals set in their mission statements.

The history around university-community partnerships can be traced as far back as the establishment of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Thelin, 2004). The Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 allotted significant amounts of land to aid in the creation of universities in the west of the United States where it was cheaper for the federal government to allot stolen, indigenous land than it was for them to donate large sums of money to build universities (McCoy, Risam, & Guiliano, 2021; Thelin, 2004). Land was only "cheap" during this time because the federal government seized it from indigenous people to develop "Land Grab" universities (McCoy, et al., 2021). Thelin (2004) further discusses the creation of the Morrill Act in his work:

> The act established a complex partnership in which the federal government provided incentives for each state to sell distant Western lands, with the states being obliged to use the proceeds to fund advanced instructional programs (p. 76).

Advanced instructional programs refers to the creation of more "practical" programs like agriculture, mechanics, mining, and military-based curriculum alongside the classical education most universities based their curriculum on in the late 19th century like philosophy, languages, and arithmetic, for instance. The creation of "practical" programs signaled a shift in thought regarding what a university's curriculum should include alongside the classical curriculum. The shift also showed that universities were willing to accept potential students outside of the elite

class in order to increase enrollment. Thelin (2004) mentions that the "practical" programs were enticing to potential students from small towns as a means of social mobility (p. 78). The Morrill Act could possibly be considered one of the earliest instances of a partnership between a university and its local community because it provided an opportunity for social mobility and security for some of its young community members. The young community members the Morrill Act of 1862 aimed to entice with new programs were limited to white men only.

Although the Morrill Act of 1862 was more of an incentive for states to sell the vast amounts of cheap (and stolen) land in the western United States, (Thelin, 2004) the implications of this act really bring into question what role a university, particularly a public one, *should* hold in its local community. It is apparent in many universities' mission statements that serving their local community is an important endeavor (Barnes, et al., 2009; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Strier, 2014). Ideally, a university's role in their local community *should* involve providing opportunities for community improvement, emphasizing a commitment to civic duty and becoming engaged citizens, and learning how to value multiple forms of knowledge even outside academia.

University affiliates and community affiliates typically enter into such partnerships to reap the mutual benefits of sharing resources and knowledge. However, in some partnerships the benefits for university partners sometimes outweigh the benefits to the local community resulting in an unbalanced power dynamic (Barnes, et al., 2009; Benson, et al., 2000; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Parker, 2020; Sandy & Holland, 2006). More on this uneven power dynamic will be discussed in subsequent sections on the components of successful partnerships and the challenges of entering into partnerships, but in order to better understand how university and community partnerships operate, it is essential to take a deeper look into the community partners'

perspectives on their effectiveness.

The main purpose of a university and community partnership is to provide mutual benefits for both partners whether that be community development or improvement, encouraging university partners to become more civically engaged, or something similar. A partnership is not fulfilling its intended purpose if it is not providing any benefits to its community partners. For this reason, there needs to be further research on community partner perspectives in these relationships to match the amount of literature done on university partner perspectives. Because this particular research focuses on Judaic studies departments and their partnerships with local Jewish communities, the same assertion is true for future research on community partner perspectives from the Jewish community as well.

Service-Learning: The "Gold Standard" for Partnerships

Service-learning is a type of partnership which focuses on directly involving students and professors in community service through the course curriculum. Service-learning is highlighted extensively throughout literature on university-community partnerships (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Rubin, V., 2000). After universities established offices for community outreach and partnerships in the 1980s and 1990s, service-learning became the preferred method by universities for getting students involved in the community (Barnes, et al., 2009; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Rubin, V., 2000).

Other types of partnerships involving faculty, college students, and the Jewish community, besides service-learning, might include student internships with local partners, practicum courses, or capstone projects (Holland & Gelmon, 1998). Service-learning is at the forefront of research on university-community partnerships because of its popularity among both

respective partners, and its continual gain in momentum in the academic realm (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Holland & Gelmon, 1998). Judaic studies is just one field of study in academia that has begun to adopt service-learning into their curriculum (Butin & Pianko, 2012; Myers & Goodwin, 2012).

Koren, et al. (2016) state that service-learning initiatives can be found in various Judaic studies programs. This form of Jewish learning is often referred to specifically as Jewish service-learning when the partners identify as Jewish and use Jewish values and teachings as a framework for service-learning projects (Butin & Pianko, 2012; Koren, et al., 2016; Myers & Goodwin, 2012). Jewish service-learning projects can be a collaboration between Jewish student organizations like Hillel and the university, or Jewish community partnerships with a university's Judaic studies department or any other combination of the partnerships mentioned (Butin & Pianko, 2012; Myers & Goodwin, 2012).

Martin, et al. (2005) note that service-learning utilized in a university and community partnership is defined as engaging students through community service efforts that are included in their usual courses. They also go on to explain that service-learning is a bit different than what they define as service provision projects. The authors state that a service provision project is different in that it involves both students and faculty in more long-term projects. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (or HUD) contains the Office of University Partnerships (OUP) who have developed what they refer to as a taxonomy of various partnerships between universities and their local communities, which Martin, et al. (2005) discuss in their research.

The taxonomy created by the OUP contains both service-learning and service provision projects, faculty involvement, student volunteering, community in the classroom projects,

applied research, and major institutional change (Martin, et al., 2005). The different types of university-community partnerships included in the OUP's taxonomy show that there are other kinds of partnerships besides service-learning that may be a better fit for a particular university and their local community depending on their common goals and expected outcomes.

However, service-learning remains the most popular of these options based on the amount of attention it is given in scholarly research on such partnerships (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Rubin, V., 2000). Some researchers go as far to say that service-learning is the best way to approach relationship building with local communities (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Although this might be true for a considerable number of partnerships, it is ultimately up to the university and its community partners to decide what type of project is the best fit for them.

The OUP, which is housed within the HUD, was given funding from the HUD to create their Community Outreach Partnership Centers program (COPC) (Martin, et al., 2005). The COPC program has proven to be successful in several cases (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Cox, 2000; Martin, et al., 2005; Wiewel & Lieber, 1998). In cases where universities and their community partners need to look into acquiring sources of additional funding to get projects started, the OUP's COPC program seems to be a valuable resource. Not all partnerships will choose to utilize grants or funding from Federal entities like HUD and their umbrella programs like the OUP's COPC program.

Cooper, et al. (2014) highlight in their research partnerships between universities and their local communities that do not rely on funding from the OUP. Their reason for using this criterion for studying university and community partnerships was to prove the university and community partners' ingenuity, resourcefulness, and the ability to be proactive. Thus,

universities and communities who choose to partner with one another do not necessarily need to rely solely on funding and resources from Federal entities like HUD and their OUP branch to be successful, although it might behoove them depending on their circumstances (Cooper, et al., 2014). In some cases, involving third-party partners may be a better fit for these partnerships (Baum, 2000; Cooper, et al., 2014; Martin, et al., 2005).

As Cooper, et al. (2014) asserted in their research, third-party partners could include nonprofit organizations or other local agencies used to enhance the efficacy of certain projects. Of course, any combination of potential partners could be used to improve a university and community partnership, but one aspect of these partnerships which remains as the most utilized type, regardless of what additional partners are involved, is service-learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Rubin, V., 2000). Even in the extremely limited amount of literature on the types of partnerships that exist between Judaic studies departments and their local Jewish communities (which will be discussed further in the following section) service-learning still seems to be the most popular option for such partnerships (Butin & Pianko, 2012; Myers & Goodwin, 2012).

Judaic Studies Departments and Connections to Jewish Communities

Jewish studies as a subject has been a part of universities' curriculums since at least the end of the nineteenth century when Jewish studies curriculums were introduced as a supplement to religious studies or incorporated into theological seminaries (Baskin, 2014). Judaic studies departments were not established as distinct degree programs until the late 1960s and through the 1970s when other degree programs that emphasized the understanding of marginalized groups, like African-American studies or women's and gender studies, were created (Baskin, 2014). Baskin (2014) notes that the social change that caused the need to establish degree programs

focused on marginalized groups was credited to academics teaching courses like Jewish studies, African-American studies, or women's and gender studies who wanted degree programs in their specific areas of study for funding and recognition equal to other academic departments.

Jewish community members have needs and interests which they feel are not met by universities or outside entities. For example, research shows Jewish community members report feeling that antisemitism is not taken as seriously as it should be by universities, the government, and other entities (Koren, et al., 2016; Rapoport, et al., 2021). Antisemitism is a concerning issue in the U. S. as reports of antisemitic incidents are becoming more common and Jewish individuals report feeling less safe now than about five years ago (Pew Research Center, 2021; Rapoport, et al., 2021). Jewish students on college campuses also believe antisemitism is a problem that is not addressed in a meaningful way by the university, and report feeling the university does little to provide opportunities for both Jewish and non-Jewish students to better understand Judaism and Jewish identity (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009; Koren, et al., 2016). The Pew Research Center (2021) states in their report that Jewish community members are highly likely to have attended college, with a majority of U.S. Jews being college educated, so universities have a vested interest in understanding and better serving this demographic.

The Jewish community can be defined in many ways, but for the purpose of this literature review, the "Jewish community" will refer to what Elazar (1995) calls the different "Spheres of community activity" in the Jewish community. These five spheres of activity (also discussed previously in chapter one) in Jewish communities include: 1) religious-congregational, 2) educational-cultural, 3) community relations, 4) communal-welfare, and 5) Israel-overseas (p. 277). Taken altogether, Elazar's (1995) description of the various facets of the Jewish community and the activities that community members participate in will guide how university

and community partnerships between Judaic studies departments and the Jewish community are understood in this research.

Historically, universities and communities have been hesitant to work with or form connections with one another (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005). Although this seems to be slowly changing as more research and attention is given to the field of university and community partnerships, Judaic studies departments and their local Jewish communities also have some similar concerns and skeptical attitudes when it comes to these types of partnerships (Cooperman, 2006; Lewis, 2006). Skepticism regarding the efficacy of such partnerships stems from Judaic studies professors' apprehension to work with Jewish communities due to concerns about keeping academia and scholarly efforts separate from religious institutions (Baskin, 2014; Cooperman, 2006; Lewis, 2006).

Yet, some scholars assert that working together with the Jewish community could be helpful for both the Jewish community and Judaic studies department if done with great care and proper implementation (Lewis, 2006). Many of the same components of successful partnerships in general are noted within research on what makes for successful collaborations between Jewish communities and Judaic studies departments like open communication, and addressing power imbalances and shared goals early on in the process (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Martin, et al., 2005; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004; Wiewel & Lieber, 1998).

Results from the above studies on university-community partnerships showed that in order to be effective, partnerships must be viewed as mutually beneficial by both partners, more research needs to be conducted on service-learning initiatives and university-community

partnerships, and continuing professional development needs to be done with administrators, professors, and all other university partners to help them better understand the communities they do work with (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Martin, et al., 2005; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004; Wiewel & Lieber, 1998).

Traditionally, professors are strongly encouraged to focus primarily on scholarly endeavors with little emphasis on the curriculum and the needs or concerns of the local community, which is an expectation of Judaic studies professors as well (Lewis, 2006). However, there are successful projects or collaborations between Judaic studies departments and their local Jewish communities (Butin & Pianko, 2012; Koren, et al., 2016; Myers & Goodwin, 2012). Judaic studies departments have created courses and programs which aim to benefit both the Judaic studies department and the Jewish community (Baskin, 2014; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Koren, et al., 2016; Myers & Goodwin, 2012). These programs include such projects as Alternative Spring Breaks, partnerships which focus on service-learning, and academic programming provided by Judaic studies professors to the Jewish community (Koren, et al., 2016; Myers & Goodwin, 2012).

The Alternative Spring Break program as discussed in Myers & Goodwin's (2012) research shows how one Jewish community worked alongside their university to improve another community through service-learning. Service-learning is a type of university and community partnership which is highlighted extensively in literature on the topic (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Rubin, V., 2000). Jewish communities and Judaic studies departments alike are beginning to adopt service-learning into their everyday practices as it gains popularity in other university and community partnerships as well (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Butin & Pianko, 2012;

Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Koren, et al., 2016; Martin, et al., 2005; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Rubin, V., 2000).

Other connections between Jewish communities and Judaic studies departments include programs and community projects outside of a formal learning setting which is most common in Judaic studies courses (Baskin, 2014). For instance, local Hillels have played an important role in facilitating connections between the local Jewish community and Judaic studies departments (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009; Firestone & Gildiner, 2011; Koren, et al., 2016; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Rubin, J. L., 2000; Teutsch, 2003). Hillels are Jewish student centers located on a number of college campuses that conduct some religious services, provide Jewish learning opportunities, organize social events, and also acts as a meeting place and resource for Jewish college students (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009; Firestone & Gildiner, 2011; Koren, et al., 2016; Myers & Goodwin, 2012).

Many college campuses today have Hillels to serve their Jewish student population, but many other Jewish community members also use their local Hillels as a resource for Jewish learning, service-learning and volunteering projects, and to support the Jewish college students who attend the local college or university (Firestone & Gildiner, 2011; Koren, et al., 2016; Rubin, J. L., 2000; Teutsch, 2003). The Jewish learning opportunities provided by local Hillels might include having Judaic studies professors give a lecture on Jewish topics related to their area or field of study (Baskin, 2014). This is simply one method of connecting Judaic studies departments to their local Jewish communities but in an academic rather than spiritual manner. Hillels provide a unique service by filling the gap for both Jewish students and Jewish community members where the university is lacking in providing learning opportunities about Judaism (Firestone & Gildiner, 2011; Rubin, J. L., 2000).

Local Chabad centers, or Jewish community centers, are also bastions of Jewish community life for both Jewish college students and the local Jewish community alike (Koren, et al., 2016). Much like Hillel, local Chabad centers provide many similar programming options regarding Jewish learning, cultural and social events, and service-learning or volunteering projects (Koren, et al., 2016). Jewish community centers like Chabad along with Jewish student community centers like Hillel may be a Jewish individuals' primary source of exposure to Jewish life and culture outside of temples and synagogues, and for some may be a primary source of Jewish communal gathering or Jewish learning (Teutsch, 2003). For this reason, it might behoove Judaic studies departments who wish to form connections to the local Jewish community to look into partnering with organizations like these to reach a wider audience of Jewish community members (Koren, et al., 2016; Teutsch, 2003).

Components of Successful Partnerships

The complex and dynamic nature of university-community partnerships necessitates frameworks that guide relevant stakeholders in either the creation of new university-community partnerships or the improvement of existing partnerships (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Martin, et al., 2005; Rubin, V., 2000). Literature on components of what makes university-community partnerships successful emphasize the need for effective communication between partners (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Martin, et al., 2005; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004; Wiewel & Lieber, 1998). Research on university-community partnerships discusses the significance of stakeholders identifying common goals early in the formation and maintenance of the partnerships (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004; Wiewel & Lieber, 1998).

Because stakeholders in university-community partnerships contribute their own unique

strengths to collaborations, it is beneficial for the efficacy of collaborative projects to ensure that every voice is equally represented in the identification of common goals, the decision-making process throughout the project, and in assessing what aspects of the partnership are working effectively and what aspects are not (Martin, et al., 2005; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Studies on university-community partnerships show that there is typically an unequal power dynamic among partners (Cooper, et al., 2014; Parker, 2020; Strier, 2011; Strier, 2014). The unequal distribution of power usually entails the university side of the partnership having more power than the community partners (Parker, 2020; Strier, 2014).

For a partnership to be successful, power imbalances must be thoughtfully discussed among stakeholders or partners at the beginning of the partnerships, and if any conflicts arise in the partnership (Cooper, et al., 2014; Strier, 2011; Strier, 2014). Research suggests a more egalitarian approach when it comes to forming successful university-community partnerships (Strier, 2014). Utilizing an egalitarian approach can help to address power imbalances early in the collaborative process and to maintain strong relationships among partners through open communication. One way to establish an egalitarian approach when forming university-community partnerships is to make sure each partners' role in a project or partnership is given equal importance instead of always deferring to the researcher(s) as experts. The practice of emphasizing community member involvement is examined extensively in community-based research literature, which will be discussed further in the theoretical framework of this study.

Buys & Bursnall (2007) found that collaboration processes between university and community partners are not restricted to linear or discrete phases but rather are dynamic and constantly requiring members in the partnerships to discuss changes or issues which may arise. Bringle & Hatcher (2002) also discuss relationship development (whether personal or between

universities and communities) as non-linear and complex. The dynamic nature of university-community partnerships is discussed extensively in the literature, and because of the dynamic nature of these partnerships, both partners must be cognizant of the need to meet regularly to address any changes in goals, to evaluate what processes need to change, and to be open regarding areas of the partnership which require improvement (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Martin, et al., 2005; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004). The above characteristics are emphasized throughout research on what makes university-community partnerships successful.

Commitment to robust evaluation and assessment methods are essential to successful partnerships (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Rubin, V., 2000). Meaningful evaluation entails continual organization during the entirety of the university and community collaboration (Baum, 2000). Baum (2000) asserts that continual organization during collaboration between universities and communities requires a great deal of time and commitment and can be difficult. The importance of effective and open communication is stressed in the literature as being necessary for a partnership to be successful, and this is especially true when it comes to being clear and honest about evaluating ongoing processes in university-community partnerships (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004).

Another characteristic of effective university-community partnerships is setting and identifying shared goals, intended outcomes, and other expectations of the partnership at the beginning of its development (Cox, 2000; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004; Wiewel & Lieber, 1998). Having these discussions early in the development of partnerships between the university and the community is important because it helps to bring structure and clarity to the

collaboration along with ensuring the collaboration is supportive of both the mission of the university and the community alike (Holland & Gelmon, 1998). Universities who make a concerted effort to align the intended outcomes and goals of both the university and the community with their missions tend to have a better chance at being successful (Holland & Gelmon, 1998).

Case studies on university and community partnerships show that third-party stakeholders could help to create effective partnerships by easing the burden on universities and community partners in finding resources, funding, and the continual organization collaborations require (Baum, 2000; Cooper, et al., 2014; Martin, et al., 2005). Third-party stakeholders can include: government agencies, national or local foundations, nonprofit organizations, or professional associations (Cox, 2000). However, some partnerships may decide that including third-party partners might not be the best option for their university-community partnership, so it would need to be determined by both partners whether or not to bring in outside help when considering the intended outcomes of such projects (Baum, 2000; Cox, 2000).

Cooper, et al. (2014) assert that third-party partnerships increase the chance that a university and community partnership will be successful, even if this means that the university partners would need to give up a certain amount of power in the overall decision-making process to the third-party partner. Similarly, Baum (2000) notes that third-party partners are oftentimes necessary to get a project going. As noted previously, the inclusion of third-party partners in university and community partnerships would need to be discussed by all stakeholders at the inception of the partnership to ensure everyone concurs on important decisions concerning goal setting and intended outcomes.

For a university-community partnership to be effective, it is imperative that there is trust

between all involved partners (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Cox, 2000; Martin, et al., 2005; Parker, 2020; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004). Trust is a necessary component of successful university-community partnerships because of academia's history of isolating themselves from their local communities or exploiting local communities as simply "research subjects" and not as equal partners in their research (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Cooper, et al., 2014; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Parker, 2020; Rubin, V., 2000; Strier, 2011; Strier, 2014). It is essential for universities to recognize their community partners as equals in university-community collaborations, and to ensure community partners' knowledge of certain issues is given the same respect as academic research on university-community partnerships (Baum, 2000; Cooper, et al., 2014; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Rubin, V., 2000; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004).

Effective university-community partnerships will work to involve their local community partners in every step of collaborative projects and give community partners' concerns and ideas equal consideration in the decision-making process (Baum, 2000; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Rubin, V., 2000; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004). Community needs should be at the forefront of every decision made during the implementation of specific procedures, and also in the dissemination of research involving university-community partnerships to address the existing power imbalances among universities and community partners (Cooper, et al., 2014; Parker, 2020; Strier, 2011; Strier, 2014; Wiewel & Lieber,1998). Having a diverse set of partners in university and community collaborations is an effective way to bring in multiple perspectives on complex problems (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Rubin, V., 2000; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004). Evaluating the components of successful partnerships gives universities and communities the tools they need to create their own successful partnerships. In the next section, I will discuss

some of the challenges involved in creating successful partnerships.

Challenges in University and Community Partnerships

Establishing successful partnerships between universities and their local communities requires a thorough look into the challenges that impact all involved partners in these collaborations. Research shows that power imbalances between universities and the communities they aim to serve in collaborative projects are one of the most pertinent challenges to address when creating university and community partnerships (Cooper, et al., 2014; Cox, 2000; Parker, 2020; Strier, 2011; Strier, 2014; Wiewel & Lieber, 1998).

Power imbalances in this case refer to the historically lopsided nature of university and community partnerships where universities treat the communities they work with as less knowledgeable and even worse, as merely subjects to be studied rather than as equal partners in the relationship (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Cox, 2000; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005). The root of such power imbalances begins with universities' tendency to encroach on poor, and oftentimes black and brown communities for their own personal interest of advancing their research or accolades, while community members suffer the consequences with no real benefits from the partnership (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Parker, 2020).

Due to universities' history of devaluing the collective knowledge of the local community and exploiting them as research subjects in this way, it is easy to see why community members might be wary of entering into partnerships or collaborative projects with universities in the first place (Buys & Bursnall, 2007). A typical complaint of community members who enter into these partnerships with universities, is that academics seem to be in their own isolated "Ivory Tower" and are out of touch with the issues community members face on a daily basis (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Martin, et al., 2005; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Sandy & Holland,

2006). Because universities tend to isolate themselves from their local communities, it then becomes difficult for them to determine how the research they conduct involving local communities will be beneficial if they are not including the input and ideas of the community members themselves (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005).

There are differing ideas among university and community partners regarding how partnerships should operate based upon how both respective partners themselves operate. In other words, these opposing ideologies in how partnerships should operate create a sort of paradox when deciding the intended outcomes of partnerships and could lead to further tension among those involved (Baum, 2000; Strier, 2014). Some examples of paradoxes present in many university and community partnerships involve "top-down" practices versus "bottom-up" practices and reconciling a working relationship between the two that works for both partners, or encouraging group cohesiveness and fellowship while upholding and recognizing the importance of individual identities (Strier, 2014).

Although tensions between partners may pose a challenge, along with some paradoxes in how effective partnerships operate, this does not necessarily entail that a partnership between a university and the local community will not work. The paradoxes that are present in many partnerships are indeed a challenge, but not impossible to work through with proper time, commitment, and resources shared among stakeholders in these collaborations (Baum, 2000; Rubin, V., 2000; Strier, 2014). Baum (2000) notes that continual organization is needed throughout the entirety of university and community collaborations, and that organization in general is a difficult endeavor requiring a substantial amount of time and energy from both respective partners. Thus, another challenge inherent to university and community partnerships is

simply the amount of time which such partnerships require (Baum, 2000; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).

Even in seemingly productive and mutually beneficial university and community partnerships, there can be problems. In some cases, universities and communities might become too dependent upon each other, which is not healthy for the longevity of the relationship between the two partners (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Cox, 2000). Bringle & Hatcher (2002) compare the relationships between universities and communities to personal relationships among individual people. Both types of relationships require partners to consider factors such as determining whether or not they are compatible with one another, open and frequent communication, and commitment (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). So, just as in personal relationships between individuals, universities and their local communities also need to foster healthy and non-dependent relationships with one another in order to be successful in the long run, and in some instances, this may even necessitate the termination of the relationship for the benefit of both partners (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Cox, 2000).

Research on university and community partnerships and the way they function, how they benefit the partners involved, the challenges in sustaining healthy partnerships, and longitudinal case studies of particular partnerships are still quite limited in scope, although there are many signs of growing interest in this field of research as it continues to develop (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Rubin, V., 2000). Because of the limited (albeit growing) amount of literature on university and community partnerships, especially ones focused on community partner perspectives, it might be a challenge for the stakeholders involved when creating these partnerships to be able to readily access a variety of research specific to their case to guide them in their endeavors (Holland & Gelmon,

1998; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).

Traditionally, colleges and universities place a stronger emphasis on formal learning and research in a classroom or lecture hall setting, and place little value on engaging their local communities as a serious way of learning (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Strier, 2014). Universities who wish to partner with their local communities on collaborative projects would be remiss to not reflect the importance of engagement as a rigorous form of learning in their curriculum as a means to build rapport and trust with their community partners who typically view universities as not caring about their immediate concerns (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Strier, 2014).

Including engagement and collaborative work with the local community as a pertinent form of scholarship can be a challenge to implement in an environment where formal learning is viewed as the most efficient means of gaining knowledge, and engaged scholarship is usually treated as a less rigorous and less respected learning method (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Strier, 2014). If a university and community partnership is pursued to enhance learning through collaborative projects or community engagement, then equal efforts should be made on the university's behalf to recognize and support faculty who choose to include this form of learning in their curriculum (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Strier, 2014).

Another challenge in university and community partnerships is knowing when to end the relationship between partners if needed, because sometimes a good-faith effort to make a project work is not enough to keep the project going and maintain its success long term (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Knowing when to end a partnership, if need be, can be challenging, especially considering all of the time and resources that are poured into such collaborations. However, in

some instances ending the relationship is the best option for both the community and the university's sake whether the reason is because of an unhealthy dependency between partners, or simply because the project has run its course (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Cox, 2000). Being aware of the challenges specific to creating university and community partnerships is an important step in recognizing what to expect in the formation of these relationships.

Conclusion

It is important to understand the history of university-community partnerships and the way they developed to fully grasp where they are today. The reevaluation of university mission statements is a pertinent part of how a stronger focus on community service along with a more sincere interest in civic engagement developed over time. The literature shows that Jewish community members and Jewish college students cite antisemitism as a problem which needs to be addressed in a more meaningful way, making understanding Jewish communities a timely subject to study.

This review of the literature has also explored what components make for successful university and community partnerships along with the challenges which come along with forming partnerships. The different types of university and community partnerships were discussed with a particular interest in how service-learning has become increasingly popular within these sorts of collaborations both within Jewish community partnerships with Judaic studies departments and with university-community partnerships in general (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Rubin, V., 2000). Lastly, the various types of connections between Judaic studies departments and local Jewish communities were highlighted as well.

It was apparent throughout the literature on university and community partnerships that

many of the same components of successful partnerships were also evident in collaborations between Judaic studies departments and their local Jewish communities (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Martin, et al., 2005; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004; Wiewel & Lieber, 1998). This assertion is also true for the proposed challenges to constructing such partnerships (Cooper, et al., 2014; Cox, 2000; Parker, 2020; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Strier, 2011; Strier, 2014; Wiewel & Lieber, 1998).

Because interest in research on university and community partnerships is becoming increasingly popular (Baum, 2000; Martin, et al., 2005; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Strier, 2011; Strier, 2014) one can hope that the same will be true for future research on partnerships between Judaic studies departments and Jewish communities. However, more literature on the topic will need to be produced in order to fill in this gap and to better understand how such partnerships operate. The next section in this chapter will discuss the theoretical framework utilized for this study. The theoretical framework combines both critical social theory and community-based research as a foundation for understanding how university-community partnerships, specifically those between the Judaic studies department and the Jewish community, operate effectively. More on the specifics of these two combined theories will be discussed in the next section.

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

Utilizing a critical perspective in a theoretical framework requires knowledge of the main features of the theory. Critical social theory (CST) posits that there are dominant ideologies society unquestionably abides by without critique. For example, dominant ideologies include taken-for-granted perspectives on the forms of knowledge we value, and the unequal power dynamics in different relationships, whether professional or personal (Brookfield, 2014). To adopt a critical perspective like CST, means to be critical of taken-for-granted dominant ideologies. This study brings a critical perspective to the power dynamics and relationships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department to better understand the dynamics of their relationship.

Paulo Freire's (1970) pedagogical approach from his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, will be the focus for a critical perspective in this study. Freire (1970) examines the power dynamics between different social groups and criticizes the uneven power dynamic between the two. He also comments on the forms of knowledge society values which are disproportionately focused on institutional knowledge such as researcher knowledge, or that of the university. CST from a Freirean (1970) point of view is the foundation for this study because of his focus on uneven power dynamics regarding which types of knowledge are valued. CST provides a critical paradigm to critique dominant ideologies, and CBR or community-based research focuses on centering community perspectives rather than only the researcher perspective in a study.

Strand's (2000) approach to CBR will be the basis for CBR used in this theoretical framework. Strand (2000) utilizes CBR as a pedagogical approach where research is done in partnership with the community instead of focusing solely on researcher perspective, and treating

community members as valuable partners in a study rather than simply subjects to be researched. Strand's (2000) work with CBR builds upon Freire's (1970) work with CST in that they both address the uneven power dynamics which underly most pedagogical approaches in research. CBR differs from CST in that it further builds upon the critical social perspective regarding the forms of knowledge society values and shows specifically how researchers can adopt a community-based approach when conducting a study. A community-based approach involves framing a study based on community members' experiences and viewpoints rather than relying exclusively on the researcher's perception.

For example, CBR literature highlights the fact that universities have a reputation for taking advantage of underserved or disenfranchised communities (Minkler, 2005; Stoecker, 2003; Strand, et al., 2003; Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998). Elements of CST are used in CBR literature to critique the university's historical practice of treating communities as subjects of study rather than equally respected sites of knowledge. In addition, both theoretical frameworks express the need for critique of dominant ideology and taken-for-granted perspectives. In CBR studies, findings show that researchers are viewed as holding all the knowledge and are also seen as being the sole experts on various subjects (Stoecker, 2003; Strand, 2000). The belief that researchers are the sole experts in research partnerships is an example of a dominant type of ideology which needs to be challenged.

CST and CBR are deeply intertwined in research literature with one framework oftentimes informing the further development of the other. For instance, research on CBR acknowledges its history and background being firmly rooted in a critical perspective (Minkler, 2004; Minkler, 2005). CBR approaches the research process in a way which challenges the traditional perspective of the researcher being the sole expert in a study (Minkler, 2004; Strand,

et al., 2003). Thus, it is difficult to discuss the pertinence of CBR in a community-focused study without also discussing CST and how the two frameworks complement one another.

CST and CBR are utilized in this research as a framework for understanding university and community partnerships between Judaic studies departments and the Jewish community. The above theories are used in tandem to underscore the importance of some prevalent themes in university and community partnerships literature. One recurring theme throughout the literature on university and community partnerships are imbalanced power dynamics. Power dynamics play a major role in forming such partnerships with the university side carrying most, if not all, of the power in partnerships (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Parker, 2020). Imbalanced power dynamics include viewing the researcher as the primary source of knowledge, and the community members as merely "subjects" of the study.

The pervasiveness of uneven power dynamics between the university and community requires a theoretical framework which addresses and critiques the system that puts researchers' voices on a pedestal while community members involved in partnerships are left feeling as though they are merely "research subjects." (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Strand, et al., 2003). CST provides the necessary background knowledge to make sense of how power dynamics come into play in university and community partnerships and these systems are maintained. Research on CBR will help to better understand how a university and its researchers can elevate community voices by involving them more in the overall research process.

Together, CST and CBR are used as a theoretical framework for this study. In the next sections, I will outline the history and background of each theory, some of the core tenets, and also any inherent challenges in utilizing either of the theories. Lastly, I will summarize how CST and CBR fit together to help guide this study.

Critical Social Theory

CST can be traced back to the ideology espoused by the likes of Karl Marx, Immanuel Kant, and later carried on by members of the Frankfurt School and other modern critical theorists. Many critical social researchers agree that Karl Marx is one of the earliest predecessors responsible for shaping critical social theory into what it is today (Brookfield, 2014; Crotty, 1998a; Crotty, 1998b; Freeman, & Vasconcelos, 2010; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011; Leonardo, 2004). He was an avid supporter of G. W. F. Hegel's philosophy which emphasized "the dialectic" (Crotty, 1998b).

Hegel's dialectic as interpreted by Marx can be best described as the constant conflict between opposing classes or entities whose communications or dialogue with one another ultimately lead to an amalgamation of transformative ideas. The irony in the assertions made by early proponents of a critical perspective and dialogue is that many philosophers, like Hegel for instance, did very little to include people other than white men in their critical discourse, thus treating anyone outside of this demographic as "less-than." One can see how this is harmful to the development of a *truly* critical dialogue, but as CST continued to develop as a theoretical perspective, a stronger emphasis was put on creating an ongoing dialogue which included people other than white men (as one will see subsequently in this section with works like Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*).

Ongoing dialogue is a crucial aspect of CST which leads to further social progress. Crotty (1998b) also notes that although Marx utilized Hegel's dialectic to help explain his understanding of reality, he also criticized Hegel's strong attention to ideas and the abstract while Marx was more concerned with the actual lived experiences of people. Marx's particular attention to peoples' everyday lived experiences essentially sets the stage for other critical social

theorists who assert that social injustices do not simply occur in a vacuum, but rather take place daily, and typically are so ingrained in everyday behavior that many times they go unnoticed. Microaggressions are a prime example of this type of insidious and implicit behavior (Brookfield, 2014).

The Frankfurt School was largely influenced by Marx's ideas concerning criticism of such injustices and oppressive everyday behaviors along with Kant's critical perspective on reason, knowledge, and ethics (Leonardo, 2004). Originally established under the Institute for Social Research in Germany, the Frankfurt School was created to deeply study "scientific Marxism" although advocates for the creation of a critical field of study proposed the need for the school's creation under the more palatable guise of "scientific Marxism" as a means to an end (Crotty, 1998b). The Frankfurt School was primarily funded by Felix Weil who was a political science scholar and a major stakeholder in the school's development (Crotty, 1998b; Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010). Many of the Frankfurt School's scholars were heavily motivated by the devastating toll World War I had on Germany and felt that there was an acute need for social change (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011).

Some of the most well-known scholars involved in the Frankfurt School include the likes of Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse (Brookfield, 2014; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011; Leonardo, 2004). Although the Frankfurt School was originally committed mainly to the study of Marxism, it eventually started to move in a different direction away from the traditional Marxism which inspired its creation. One of the major events which caused this shift in the Frankfurt School's focus was the rise of fascism and Nazism in Germany (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010). Crotty (1998b) and Kincheloe & McLaren (2011) note that most of the members of the Frankfurt School were Jewish, so many of the members decided to leave

Germany to escape persecution. Being involved with Marxist theory and critical discussions on social injustices also made staying in Germany an unviable option at that point in time.

Eventually, many of the Frankfurt School members ended up in the United States to escape Nazi Germany and to continue their work and scholarship within the critical paradigm, but this time with a renewed sense of what best represented early CST as a theoretical tradition and shifting the focus away from the more orthodox Marxism which characterized its initial development (Brookfield, 2014; Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). This shift in focus from orthodox Marxism to a more modern approach to CST was characterized by the inclusion of critique on popular culture, mass media, and the dominant ideologies espoused by both (Brookfield, 2014).

Paulo Freire (1970) is one notable critical social theorist who carried on the ideas put forth by Marx and the members of the Frankfurt School. Not only did Freire (1970) carry on these ideas, but he also helped to catapult CST into popularity with his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* which is now one of the most widely referenced works of CST research today (Crotty, 1998a; Leonardo, 2004). Building upon earlier works in CST literature, Freire (1970) also critiqued the harmful dominant ideology that injustice and oppression are "natural" and commonplace, and thus cannot be fixed (Brookfield, 2014; Leonardo, 2004).

Freire's (1970) work points to one of the most important tenets of CST today: being critical of often taken-for-granted and socially constructed dominant ideologies. The idea that people live in oppressive conditions because it is a "natural" way of being is a dangerous yet pervasive notion in our society which asserts that we would not be able to function normally without oppressive institutions (Brookfield, 2014; Freire, 1970; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). This sort of ideology is so deeply ingrained in our society that many people do not question or

critique it because of how normalized this sort of thinking has become. One example of this happening in everyday interactions are microaggressions.

Microaggressions are more implicit forms of sexism, racism, classism, etc. which oftentimes go unaddressed because they are seen as either being benign and harmless, or worse are dismissed as "normal" behavior to justify their occurrences (Brookfield, 2014). The classification of microaggressions as being harmless is what makes critique of dominant ideologies and behavior so fundamental to CST as a theoretical framework. However, this is not to say that such normalized ideologies are benign by any means. Oppressive institutions are made to uphold the status quo of inequity. Thus, these institutions are working in precisely the way they were intended to work: keep the masses complacent by inhibiting critical dialogue to keep things the way they are. Critical dialogue is mentioned as being an important facet of CST in a majority of the literature on the framework (Crotty, 1998a; Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011; Leonardo, 2004).

One can see the importance placed on dialogue between various groups with different ideas and experiences in critical social theory literature. Critical dialogue is characterized by the continued discourse or discussion among groups which would ideally lead to transformative and progressive ideas (Crotty, 1998b). What makes critical dialogue pertinent to CST as a theoretical framework is its emphasis on the continuous exchange of ideas and the critical discussion of those ideas. Transformation stems from critical dialogue, so the cyclical and fluid nature of CST as a theoretical perspective encourages ongoing, critically engaging dialogue as a means to this transformation (Crotty, 1998a; Freire, 1970; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011).

Along with critical ongoing dialogue, discussions of power and ideology are the fulcrum of a solid CST framework. Kincheloe & McLaren (2011) and Brookfield (2014) state that power

and ideology are essentially the underlying pieces to every issue regarding systemic injustice and oppression. Where there are discussions of inequity, there should also be discussions of how power imbalances play a role in those situations. In almost every instance, power has an influence on how systems and institutions operate (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). This is true for places of work, in institutions of learning, in the government or politics, and essentially every other type of transactional relationship between people or groups.

As CST continues to develop, one can see throughout the literature on the topic that there are many different underlying tenets to the theoretical perspective, most of which concentrate on the importance of addressing inequity. Although CST encourages critical thinking, there have been some critiques in the literature which state that CST in some cases fails to be critical of itself in general (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010). Another critique which CST researchers discuss in their works is that CST is simply too idealistic regarding societal and systemic transformation and that it pushes the idea of living in a sort of "utopia" rather than being grounded in reality (Crotty, 1998a; Leonardo, 2004).

To address these critiques, it is necessary for critical researchers to always be questioning their research process, their taken-for-granted assumptions about the world, and considering how their own experiences and biases may affect the research they produce. As discussed previously, an important facet of CST is that it is both critical and reflective as well as being concerned with the lived experiences of people (Crotty, 1998a; Crotty, 1998b; Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010). The rampant idealism which critics often associate with a CST framework can be challenged by continuing to emphasize the need for a strong focus on the lived experiences of different people and groups.

As a theoretical perspective, CST both answers many questions regarding why society

functions as it does and the power dynamics and systems which sustain it, and at the same time leaves a great deal of questions up for interpretation. CST is dynamic in nature (Crotty, 1998a; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011), so it is constantly adapting to keep up with the changes occurring every day in our society. As CST continues to gain recognition in research circles, more discussions need to take place concerning critique of itself as a theoretical perspective and by reflecting on how it can continue to stay grounded in lived experiences and praxis. Ultimately, transformation and understanding are the end-goals of a critically-grounded theoretical perspective.

Community-Based Research

Community-based research (CBR) is gaining significant interest in the academic community as researchers and communities alike are seeing the benefits which stem from successful partnerships (Minkler, 2005; Stoecker, 2003; Strand, 2000; Strand, et al., 2003). There is considerable overlap between CST and CBR as theoretical perspectives in terms of their overall goals. Combining the basic principles of CST with the principles of CBR will help to best understand the grounding framework for this specific research study. In this section I will discuss the development of CBR as a theoretical perspective as well as outline the fundamental principles and the various benefits and challenges to utilizing this framework.

CBR has firm roots within the health field (Green, et al., 2001; Kerstetter, 2012; Minkler, 2005; Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998). In a majority of CBR studies, public health is usually the focal point of researchers in the field with the end-goal in most of these studies typically being an improvement in the health and access to health-related resources in the local community involved (Green, et al., 2001; Kerstetter, 2012; Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998). In CBR literature, service-learning is also mentioned many times as an effective framework for creating

successful partnerships with communities. CBR studies or projects might incorporate service-learning into such projects with the community and the local university the researchers are usually involved with (Stoecker, 2003; Strand, 2000; Strand, et al., 2003). Service-learning was discussed in greater detail in the previous review of the literature as being quite popular for use in university and community partnerships as well.

The inclusion of service-learning as an important feature of both university and community partnerships and CBR literature alike shows the overall commitment on both subjects' behalf to action and praxis-based research. Social change and justice, action, and praxis-based collaboration are core facets of a CBR framework (Stoecker, 2003; Strand, et al., 2003). It is difficult to discuss the principles of CBR without also recalling the principles of CST mentioned in the previous section. Both theoretical frameworks outline the need for a focus on social justice and critical reflection on how our institutions operate (Crotty, 1998a; Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011; Leonardo, 2004; Stoecker, 2003; Strand, et al., 2003). In fact, CBR literature also highlights the teaching and research of some of the same scholars which CST research also uses such as Paulo Freire (Minkler, 2004; Strand, et al., 2003).

In CBR literature, Freire's (1970) work is utilized to understand why academic settings typically function as a top-down hierarchy of knowledge where the teacher or professor is the expert, and the student or community members are like a receptacle for this knowledge. Freire (1970) challenges the reader to question why academic settings necessarily function in this manner and encourages a more critical pedagogy where gaining knowledge is viewed as a shared and equalizing experience. This type of ideology is iterated throughout the literature on CBR (Minkler, 2004; Minkler, 2005; Stoecker, 2003; Strand, 2000; Strand, et al., 2003). CBR as a theoretical framework aims to address why community members in research partnerships are not

seen as being experts on their own lived experiences, and why the majority, if not all, of the power in such partnerships is delegated to the perceived experts: researchers and/or professors.

Multiple scholars touch upon three core tenets of CBR studies. These three core tenets include: 1) Full and equal collaboration between researchers and the community, 2) Democratizing knowledge by validating that knowledge comes from many different sources and can be disseminated in various ways as well, and 3) Social justice and change or social action is a primary goal (Stoecker, 2003; Strand, et al., 2003). Minkler (2004) also emphasizes similar principles for CBR as a theoretical framework in her research, like CBR's focus on collaboration and cooperation, balancing research with action or change, and equalizing the sharing of knowledge. These core tenets are fundamental to an effective CBR project.

One recurring finding in the literature on CBR is the lack of community perspectives presented in research in general (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Green, et al., 2001; Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998). This is an issue which CBR seeks to correct through focusing first and foremost on community members' input. In studies which focus on community viewpoints, community members commonly express their concern with researchers using their communities for their research projects, but not actively involving them in the process or being transparent enough about how the project will be managed (Ferman & Hill, 2004). Including community members more in the research process not only helps to build trust and rapport between partners, but it also builds a broader base of knowledge by including perspectives outside of the academy.

Democratizing knowledge is a main goal of CBR research, thus including the experiences and community knowledge outside of the academy helps to build on and provide more well-rounded, informative data regarding CBR studies. When it comes to research studies which directly involve a community and its members, it makes sense for the researchers to consult the

community members on how they think the project can be implemented, improved, or disseminated. In most instances, community members are going to have highly informed ideas about how to best serve their own communities, especially in studies where the researcher(s) are "outsiders" (Kerstetter, 2012).

In CBR studies it is important for the researcher(s) to consider what type of position they have in relation to the community they are collaborating with. Typically, researchers come from a position of privilege whether they are community insiders, outsiders or otherwise (Kerstetter, 2012; Minkler, 2004). Due to this position of privilege where the researcher is usually seen as the expert and community members are seen as merely the "subjects" of study, it is necessary to acknowledge researcher privilege to build trust between the researcher and community members. For instance, even though I would be considered an "insider" within the Jewish community, because I am in the researcher position, I still come into the project with considerable privilege. My position as an insider within the Jewish community should also be an important position to reflect on in this study. For this reason, a statement of reflexivity (or a reflection on the lived experiences which have shaped my thought processes) is included in the methods chapter of this study.

Cultural humility is also discussed in the literature concerning researcher privilege and critically reflecting on the researcher's position in relation to the community (Minkler, 2004; Minkler, 2005; Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998). CBR projects require a considerable amount of critical reflection on the researcher's behalf. Cultural humility, also known in some cases as cultural competence, is an approach to CBR studies which emphasizes the need for ongoing, critical self-reflection, a commitment to lifelong learning, and subsequent changes in behavior or attitude when presented with new knowledge which better serves community members and

society at large (Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998).

Tervalon & Murray-García (1998) essentially coined the term "cultural humility" as a better fitting definition for "cultural competence" because it more accurately describes the end-goal of the practice, humility, rather than simply being "competent" with a community's culture or experiences. Because CBR aims to address power imbalances in research studies done in collaboration with communities, cultural humility is an efficacious approach to solving issues of power imbalance as they inevitably arise. As was discussed previously, the researcher almost always has inherent privilege when it comes to such partnerships. The cultural humility approach to research is just one way to uphold the collaborative and democratic nature of CBR.

Although there are many benefits to CBR as a theoretical framework, there are also some critiques of CBR. Minkler (2004; 2005) notes that there could be some ethical issues which arise from utilizing a CBR framework. For instance, a study with a CBR theoretical background should make a concerted effort to critically evaluate their project throughout the entire process to be sure that the study is truly community-focused and that community perspectives are given precedence in the findings. Otherwise, the project could end up taking advantage of community resources, time, and trust without actually giving the community members a platform to express their perspectives and share their knowledge.

Lacking the cultural humility which Tervalon & Murray-García (1998) discuss in their work is another critique of researchers who use CBR as a theoretical framework who do not put in the effort to better understand the communities they collaborate with. It is not necessary to know every single detail about the members of the community and every facet about how and why it functions, but a researcher with a CBR theoretical background must work diligently to ensure that they approach the project with a sense of humility, a willingness to learn from and

adapt to new knowledge and information coming from the community, and to critically reflect on preconceived notions of what types of knowledge society deems as important.

Summary

Together, CST and CBR are the foundation for this study's theoretical framework. Because this specific study concentrates on Judaic studies departments' partnerships with their local Jewish communities, and Jewish community perspectives on such partnerships, a CBR and CST theoretical background are dually used to inform this study's research questions and overall motivation for choosing to focus on this topic. Both theoretical backgrounds have a strong focus on critical reflection and open communication or dialogue. CBR in particular has many principles of practice which can also be seen in CST literature and in many cases, is heavily influenced by a CST.

CBR and CST research emphasize the importance of acknowledging and appreciating the lived experiences of people and communities. An effective method of acknowledging community members' lived experiences in research partnerships is through dialogue and open communication (Ferman & Hill, 2004). Dialogue and effective communication play a significant role in both theoretical frameworks and are essential in forming healthy and authentic partnerships and building trust between the university and the community (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Strand, et al., 2003). Trust between partners is fundamental to the success of a collaborative research project, thus dialogue and continual communication are needed to further build rapport.

Based on the literature surveyed from both CST and CBR studies, it is not difficult to see that there is significant overlap between the two. Specifically, CBR draws heavily upon CST being that CBR's main goal is to challenge the existing ideology that community perspectives are somehow less valuable in collaborative research projects. This particular research study is

grounded in a critical, and community-focused framework for understanding. Consequently, CST and CBR combined as a theoretical framework informed the development of the research questions and concentration of this study with the above principles in mind.

Chapter 3: Methods

Methods Overview

This qualitative study utilized a narrative research design to best address the proposed research questions. Critical social theory combined with community-based research was the theoretical background which framed how the findings for this study were understood. Because this study was community-focused, participants included members from the Jewish community and centered their perspectives on the dynamics of partnerships with the local Judaic studies department. Sampling for this study used a purposeful sampling strategy beginning with criterion sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Criterion sampling was the main method used to identify potential participants for the study.

The criteria for identifying potential participants included: participants must be members of the Jewish community (as defined by Elazar (1995)) in the previous section on the background of the study), and Jewish community members also must have had experience or some familiarity with a partnership or collaborative project with their local Judaic studies department. Additional methods of purposeful sampling included snowball sampling which was included later as I continued to collect data. Participants for this study did not need to meet any other specific requirements regarding age, gender, educational level attained, or otherwise.

Data were collected through conducting one-on-one interviews via Zoom (a teleconferencing platform). Prior to conducting interviews with participants, I provided them with verbal consent forms, and participants were notified of how the interview process would work. During the interview, open-ended questions were used to give participants the opportunity to answer interview questions as detailed as they saw fit. In the following sections, each methodological choice mentioned in this general research statement are discussed in further

detail along with a statement of reflexivity, methods of ensuring trustworthiness, and a discussion of ethical considerations for this study.

Research Paradigm

A qualitative paradigm was used in this study to best answer the proposed research questions. This study is qualitative in nature based upon not only the aim of the research questions, but also based upon the overall purpose of the study, and the theoretical framework. Recalling back to chapter one (the introduction), the overall purpose of this study is to better understand the dynamics of partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department, and to what degree the Jewish community members find these partnerships to be useful. This was done through strongly community-focused perspectives. Because this study is interested in the lived experiences and perspectives of the Jewish community members, a qualitative research paradigm aligns best with the purpose of this study considering the qualitative paradigm is most concerned with the interpretation of peoples' lived experience(s) (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Research Questions

As discussed in previous chapters, the research questions for this study include:

Q1: Are there any ways in which Jewish community members feel that their community-based knowledge is valued by Judaic studies departments?

Q2: What are the perceived power dynamics in partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department according to Jewish community members?

Study Design

A narrative approach was the chosen qualitative research design used in this study. The narrative approach entails a focus on lived experiences, as is customary for an approach rooted in

the qualitative paradigm, but its primary focus is on meaning-making through storytelling (Chase, 2018). A narrative approach was the best fit for this study because it gives the participants (Jewish community members) the opportunity to share their stories in a way that centers their lived experiences as the primary focus of the study. My intent in utilizing a narrative approach was to elevate the voices of the participants.

For this study, I used Hickson's (2016) approach to incorporating a narrative research design. Hickson (2016) focuses strongly on critical reflection combined with narrative inquiry to create what she refers to as the "critical narrativist." For my study specifically, being a critical narrativist as Hickson (2016) describes entails critical reflection regarding my own personal lived experiences and how they have shaped my worldview and thought processes. Critical reflection was addressed in this research through a statement of reflexivity (in the next section), where I discussed my personal background and thought reflectively on both why this subject matter interested me, and how my background influenced the way I approach conducting and thinking about research. Because I am part of the Jewish community, it was important for me to consider my position within the Jewish community and its influences on my chosen research design.

In addition, utilizing a critical narrativist approach in this study necessitated involving the participants in a way that allowed them to reflect on their own personal experiences with their upbringing, their involvement in their Jewish communities and what involvement means or looks like to them, and their experiences as community partners in collaborations with their local Judaic studies department. These subjects were discussed through a narrative inquiry-focused interview protocol which encouraged participants to share their stories. The interview protocol for this study can be found in Appendix A at the end of the document. Adopting the critical

narrativist approach in my study design was pertinent to this research because of my theoretical background which is rooted in a critical, and community-based framework.

Focusing on participant viewpoints or narratives in this study is a research practice which is strongly encouraged in a community-based research (CBR) theoretical framework. A CBR framework is community-based, meaning that community narratives are given precedent over traditionally researcher-focused narratives of understanding. Incorporating a critical social theory (CST) framework in conjunction with CBR, helped to further explain why it is pertinent to be critical of taken-for-granted perspectives such as what types of knowledge are valued in scholarly research. Traditionally, community perspectives are seen as not being as important or valued as researcher perspectives, which makes community members feel as though they are being taken advantage of as research participants for researchers' or universities' personal gain (Ferman & Hill, 2004).

For the theoretical framework of this study, CST was utilized to critique the traditional ideology of what type of knowledge is valuable, and a CBR framework shifted that focus onto community narratives rather than placing sole importance on the researcher's viewpoints. A narrative study design builds upon the theoretical framework of this study because of the narrative design's focus on understanding and interpreting participants' stories or personal experiences. First-hand narratives from Jewish community members' points of view helped to gain further insight into the power dynamic between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department.

Reflexivity Statement

Creswell & Poth (2018) posit that a statement of reflexivity in a qualitative study is important because the researcher must reflect on the various personal attributes that could

possibly influence their ideas and attitudes when it comes to the subject they are studying. The authors also state that the reader will want to know what external factors impact the researcher's thought processes and what makes them think in the manner that they do. The researcher is not outside of the research process and cannot possibly be completely objective or free from social contexts considering our experiences necessarily shape the way we think (Minkler, 2004). This section will include my reflective thought processes on the personal experiences which influence the way I think as a researcher and in general.

I am a white, Jewish woman from a middle-class family, and was born and raised in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. I was raised in a Jewish home where my family and I celebrated most Jewish holidays (namely the "big ones:" Passover, the High Holidays, and Chanukah). Outside of family holidays, no one in the family, myself included, ever went to temple or synagogue, and I would go as far to say that most of the family identifies more as "cultural Jews" at this point than religious *per se*. My grandfather was the main catalyst for my interest in my own Jewish identity. He was more religiously involved during his childhood than I was in mine, but he sought to it that I had a solid appreciation and understanding of our culture and even organized a Bat Mitzvah for me when I turned thirteen. Although this was not a "formal" Bat Mitzvah in the sense that it took place at my grandparents' house rather than a temple, and was overseen by my grandfather and not a rabbi, it was very special to me all the same.

It was not until my college years that I decided to become more involved in Judaism religiously. I already knew some Hebrew from reciting prayers and could easily pick up on Yiddish sayings and phrases, so I enrolled in Hebrew as my required language course upon entering college. I also started attending services at the local Hillel (a national center for Jewish students on college campuses). I quickly realized that because I was away from my family, that if

I wanted to continue to observe certain holidays, then I would need a place to go to in order to do so (considering most Jewish holidays take place in the middle of the school semester and not during the designated breaks, I could not skip class to go home for every holiday). Thus, I became much more religiously involved in college and still to this day try to observe holidays to the best of my abilities, but I am by no means orthodox (I identify as a Reform Jew).

As I became acquainted with other Jewish students, community members, and Jewish faculty members from my university, I became even more interested in both issues and interests involving the Jewish community as well as a burgeoning love for academia. The amalgamation of these two developments are what eventually lead me into a PhD program and into the subject I chose to focus on for my dissertation study: Jewish community partnerships with Judaic studies departments. Because I come from a family where academia is held in high regard with most family members having at least a bachelor's degree, it is important to note the privilege and elitism which comes along with being so entrenched in academia. It is for this reason that my theoretical foundation and methods will focus on a more critical, and community-based approach to try to elevate the voices of the Jewish community, which is my foremost concern in conducting this research.

Research Sites

For this study, I included two different research sites located in the Southern United States within Division I research universities that have Judaic studies departments and local Jewish communities who partner with them. The reason for focusing on universities in the American South with Judaic studies departments, and the Jewish communities affiliated with them, as research sites is due to the disproportionately high prevalence of studies on Jewish communities and Judaic studies programs in the Northeastern U.S. Because most studies focus

on Jews in the Northeast, a large portion of Jewish community members are left out of the bigger picture in academic research. By focusing on universities with Judaic studies departments and local Jewish communities in this region, the data collected for this study can provide a different view of Jewish communities outside of the traditional research locations in the Northeast.

The two research sites included in this study fit the proposed criteria of being Division I research universities located in the Southern U.S. which have Judaic studies departments and local Jewish communities. Both sites were either previously or currently involved in partnerships with their local Jewish communities, and each site also had a local Hillel which was an important subject participants discussed at length during their interviews. Although the options for participants in the chosen locations were more limited than they would be in larger Jewish communities, each site still had reasonable access to various Jewish institutions such as temples and synagogues, Jewish federations, and Hillels on campus.

However, some of these institutions like places of worship and local Jewish federations were more spread out at the included research sites than in cities with larger Jewish communities according to participants. For this reason, the participants viewed their local Hillels as being important pillars of their communities. When other Jewish entities were more spread out, the Hillels, which are located centrally on campus, were more accessible for participants living in closer proximity to the university. Further discussion on the specificities of the research sites can be found in the next chapter on findings where participants describe how they interact with and describe their local Jewish communities.

Participants and Sampling Strategies

Participants for this study were chosen using two purposeful sampling strategies. I used both criterion and snowball sampling to recruit potential participants. I started first with criterion

sampling and later moved on to snowball sampling as potential participants recommended other people to contact who they thought might be interested in participating. Criterion sampling is when potential participants for a study are chosen based upon their fulfillment of a specific set of criteria needed to best answer the study's research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The first criterion for choosing participants required potential participants to be members of the Jewish community as defined by Elazar (1995). Recalling back to previous chapters, Elazar's (1995) idea of what constitutes Jewish community and who its members are involve the five different spheres of community. The five spheres were: 1) religious-congregational, 2) educational-cultural, 3) community relations, 4) communal-welfare, and 5) Israel-overseas. If a potential participant was involved in at least one of these five spheres, they met the criterion of being a Jewish community member.

Another criterion for choosing potential participants for this study was: potential participants need to have past or current experience, or a basic familiarity with, partnerships or collaborative projects with a Judaic studies department at a Division I research university located in the Southern U.S. Potential participants were recruited from two different communities in the Southern U.S. which are in close proximity to Division I research universities housing a Judaic studies department. In addition to criterion sampling, snowball sampling was also used to recruit potential participants. Snowball sampling involves asking study participants whether they could recommend other potential participants that they know would meet the sampling criteria and provide relevant information on the study subject. (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles & Huberman 1994).

The first criteria-eligible participants were located through the use of solicitation e-mails

and social media posts approved by my University's Institutional Review Board or IRB. Interested Jewish community members from the chosen research sites e-mailed me to express their interest in participating in my study (this was the same process for both e-mail responses and social media responses). A total of five participants were chosen based on the criteria mentioned above. Participants included three women and two men from different walks of life. Each participant had various methods of participation in their respective Jewish communities and partnerships with their local Judaic studies departments.

Adam, the first participant to take part in the interview process was born in the town he currently resides in. He had been involved in his local Jewish community from childhood into adulthood and had attended services at many different Jewish places of worship including the local temple, synagogue, and Chabad. He mentioned he did this so he could experience the many different sects of Judaism to observe their differences and see what he liked best. He was also highly involved with the local university's Hillel. Adam also noted that his father was a professor at a university.

Barbara, the second to participate in the interview process moved to her small Jewish community from a larger city. She grew up Jewish and continued to practice Judaism and establish friendships with other Jewish community members when she moved to a different town. Her husband was a professor at their local university and she herself was a staff member at the university. Lifelong learning (and a love for learning in general) was an important factor which Barbara discussed at multiple points during her interview. She is a member of several different Jewish clubs and initiatives and is highly involved in the Jewish community.

Sharon, the third participant in this study, also moved to her smaller Jewish community from a larger city. She was born to Jewish parents, but she says her parents were never very

religious when she was growing up. Sharon is a member of her local synagogue and temple (being religious herself) and is involved in leading some of the local Jewish groups and initiatives. She earned her PhD in her twenties and enjoys going to scholarly lectures on Jewish subjects. Like Barbara, Sharon is also highly involved in a variety of Jewish clubs and activities.

The fourth participant to take part in this study, Reeder, was born outside the U.S. and was raised in a religiously Jewish home. He moved to the U.S. in his adult years. He is a member of his local synagogue and was involved at his local Hillel as well. Reeder has a degree in the medical profession and practiced in his field until he received his PhD and became a professor in his respective medical field. Religious observance is an extremely important aspect of Reeder's Jewish identity.

The fifth and final participant, Sarah, stated that she was not born Jewish, but she now identifies as Jewish. She works for a Jewish organization which she mentioned helped to shape her Jewish identity and also to become more involved in the community. Sarah helps organize many Jewish events and activities through her job and she does significant outreach work with local Jewish places of worship, community centers, the local Hillel, and other Jewish entities in her community.

Participants did not need to meet any other criteria to participate in this study. In other words, participants were not chosen to participate in this study based on race, class, gender, age, or any other factors. Only the criteria described were used to recruit potential participants. The two different sampling strategies were used in this study because they both helped to identify participants with rich and detailed stories to tell about their experiences partnering with a Judaic studies department. Because this study was strongly community-focused, snowball sampling gave Jewish community members an opportunity to share who they thought should be included

in the study.

Data Collection and Procedures Followed

Before data collection began, I obtained approval for the study from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). After the IRB approved the study, participants were recruited from two different Division I research universities located in the Southern U.S. based on the purposeful sampling strategies outlined above. The five chosen participants were then asked to verbally consent to participation in the interview by answering questions detailed in an IRB-approved verbal consent form stating they understand the different steps involved in the interview process, and what they can expect to happen both during and after the interviewing process. Participants were also reminded of their rights as individuals during the interview process in the verbal consent forms. Copies of the verbal consent forms were provided to participants as well, in case they had any questions or concerns before taking part in the interview.

The verbal consent forms and interview protocol also gave the participants an idea of what the research questions and purpose of this study was, as well as a reminder that they could skip or decline to answer questions, or state if they want to redact (or strike) things they said during the interview from the transcript. The interviews were semi-structured in that they included a pre-made list of open-ended interview questions, but allowed for some leeway in the way the interview was conducted in the moment depending upon the participant's answers. The participants at different times during the interview brought up points in their story I wanted to learn more about by going "off-script" or asking additional probing questions not included in the original protocol. Using a semi-structured format for creating an interview protocol allowed me to conduct the interviews in this manner.

The interview questions created for this study followed a narrative study design. For instance, to encourage participants to discuss their lived experiences with being members of the Jewish community, participants were asked questions regarding how they became members of the Jewish community, how long they have been involved in the community, how they define their own personal identities, and what the nature of their involvement in the Jewish community looks like to them, to name a few. The interview questions were not set to be in exact chronological order, so participants could tell the stories of their experiences in any order they saw fit.

Interview questions that covered participant involvement with the local Judaic studies department inquired about what participants' experiences partnering with a Judaic studies department is/was like, whether or not participants found these partnerships to be effective or useful, whether they felt their knowledge or opinions were valued, and so on. The different areas covered in the interview questions were also followed by additional probing questions to encourage the participants to expound further.

The interview protocol closed by asking the participants if they had any questions or concerns before ending the Zoom meeting. Participants were reminded that I would be following-up with them by sending (e-mailing) them drafts of my results so they could give their input on what was written. This process is known as member-checking and is discussed in further detail in the next section on data analysis. The interviews were expected to last for at least one hour, or however long the participant felt was necessary to tell their narrative completely. Some interviews fell a little under an hour and some went to almost two hours depending on the participant. The interview protocol for this study can be found in Appendix A.

After completion of the interview, the recorded questions and answers were transcribed.

Transcription took place following the end of the interviewing process. After transcription of the interview, I analyzed the data based on the participants' recorded answers to complete this step in the data collection process. A more in-depth look at how the data for this study was analyzed is discussed in the next section on data analysis.

Data Analysis

Following data collection, I transcribed each of the interviews and began the coding process. Each interview went through a cycle of what is referred to as initial coding (or sometimes also called "open coding") (Saldaña, 2021). Initial coding involves an "open-ended approach to coding the data" (Saldaña, 2021, p.148). Initial coding was used in this study as a starting point to analyze the similarities and differences in what each participant discussed during their interviews. Initial codes were identified based on their relation to the proposed research questions for this study along with their relation to the theoretical framework. To reiterate, the research questions were:

Q1: Are there any ways in which Jewish community members feel that their community-based knowledge is valued by Judaic studies departments?

Q2: What are the perceived power dynamics in partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department according to Jewish community members?

Any part of the data which touched upon either discussion of feelings that Jewish community knowledge was or was not valued, or the perceived power dynamics between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department were included as initial codes. Additionally, the theoretical background for this study, critical social theory (CST) combined with community-based research (CBR), was also used to analyze the data when creating initial codes as well as when theming the data. Thus, any data which discussed critical perspectives on

social structures or norms, uneven power dynamics, or any mention of the importance of community-focused perspectives were also included in the initial coding process. After the initial coding, I identified common themes in the data using narrative thematic analysis. This process involved studying the codes identified in the data and creating themes based on the commonalities in the participants' stories of their experiences.

Narrative thematic analysis as discussed by Riessman (2008), involves identifying the main themes discussed when telling or recounting a story about a person's lived experience and interpreting these themes as a part of a whole rather than as discrete categories. This type of narrative data analysis focuses on a person's story as a whole and the specific events, or experiences, in their story rather than on *how* the story was told (Riessman, 2008). Because I focus on the content of what was said by each participant and not *how* they said it, narrative thematic analysis was the best fit for data interpretation for this study. The themes were generated by combining the most common codes identified in the data and turning them into overarching themes according to Riessman's (2008) approach of focusing on the content, rather than the structure, of what was discussed in the interviews.

After coding the data, the codes were then organized into different initial themes using narrative thematic analysis. There were fourteen initial findings or themes generated which touched upon the criteria discussed above. The fourteen initial themes can be found in Appendix E. Because many of the initial themes were similar in nature, they were combined into larger, overarching themes which narrowed the focus down to five total themes: 1) The experience of being Jewish in the Bible Belt 2) The different types of collaborations between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department 3) Benefits of partnerships with the Judaic studies department and Jewish community involvement 4) Areas needing improvement to help foster

successful relationships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department 5) Jewish values and community-based knowledge.

Trustworthiness

Because this study was qualitative in design, the term "trustworthiness" was used to address the overall reliability of this study (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Morse, 2018). In a quantitative study, the term "validity" would be used instead of the term trustworthiness when discussing the reliability of a study. The four different methods of establishing trustworthiness in a qualitative study include consideration of the following: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Morse, 2018; Terrell, 2016). Guba & Lincoln's (1985) four categories were used in this study to establish trustworthiness. Each one of these four methods for establishing trustworthiness for this study are discussed in further detail in this section.

To establish credibility in a qualitative study entails triangulation either in methods, sources, or investigators (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Morse, 2018). As discussed in Guba & Lincoln's (1985) work, member-checking with study participants was used to further establish credibility in this study as a method of triangulation. This was accomplished by sharing the results of the research with study participants to give them a chance to provide their input on anything they believe needs to be amended. Using two combined theoretical frameworks (CST and CBR) also helped to establish credibility. For transferability, creating "thick descriptions," or richly detailed descriptions of the data are encouraged and also used in this work (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

The last two methods, dependability, and confirmability, both require auditing the research process. To establish dependability means showing the study is consistent and

replicable for future research, while confirmability demonstrates the study can be confirmed as accurate by participants to eliminate any potential biases on the researcher's behalf (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Member-checking with participants was also used as a method of auditing for dependability and confirmability to prevent any unintentional biases while analyzing the data and writing-up the results.

Ethical Considerations

As with all other studies involving people, there were some ethical considerations that had to be considered when conducting this study. As the study involved collecting data through interviewing participants, it was important to consider the ethical issues which had the potential to occur during the research process. To minimize ethical issues, participants were asked to give verbal consent by answering a few questions approved by the IRB in the consent forms stating that they were aware of each step in the interview process. Participants were made aware that they could choose to reveal as much or as little as they wished during the interviews, that they could redact things they had already discussed in the interview, they could withdraw at any time in the process without consequence, and their privacy would be protected.

Participants were also made aware of their overall role in the research process. Because this study utilized a theoretical framework focused on community-based research and critical social theory, it was pertinent to let participants know that their role was an important one and that this process was collaborative in nature through an emphasis on Jewish community members' perspectives. Another ethical consideration for this study was minimizing researcher bias by reflexively thinking about external factors which contributed to shaping one's thought process and any potential biases. To address and minimize any potential biases, a statement of reflexivity was included in the methods used for this study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed and outlined the various steps needed to conduct a qualitative, narrative study in a thorough and ethical manner. Along with explaining the chosen study design, this chapter also delineated the different sampling strategies and participants included in this study, as well as the various methods used for analyzing data at the conclusion of the data collection phase. Trustworthiness was another fundamental aspect of a qualitative study discussed in this chapter on research methods. The various ethical considerations one must keep in mind when conducting a study was an important feature of the methods chapter of this dissertation as well. The ethical considerations for this study naturally differed from quantitative studies since it was qualitative in design.

Overall, the purpose of this chapter on research methods used for this study was to give a detailed description of the specific steps required to conduct an ethical and rigorous qualitative study that can be used to inform future studies on the subject matter. The methods outlined in this chapter correspond to the intent of this study in that they address the steps taken by myself as the researcher to better understand the dynamics of partnerships between the Jewish community and their local Judaic studies department through community-focused perspectives. The next chapter will discuss the results obtained from the data collection process outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Four: Results

Thus far, the purpose of this study has been to better understand the dynamic of partnerships between the Jewish community and their local Judaic studies department. The research questions used to build a foundation for this study included:

Q1: Are there any ways in which Jewish community members feel that their community-based knowledge is valued by Judaic studies departments?

Q2: What are the perceived power dynamics in partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department according to Jewish community members?

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results generated through the methods utilized and described in the previous chapter. The following sections include: A brief description of the sample of participants, a condensed reiteration of the data analysis methods utilized to generate the results, a section outlining how the results are presented in this chapter, a presentation of the resulting themes, and a brief chapter summary.

Description of Sample

The five participants in this study included three women and two men from all walks of life who are involved in their Jewish communities in various ways. Participants were chosen based on the criteria outlined in chapter 3 (methods). The criteria required participants to be members of their Jewish communities, as defined by Elazar (1995) and outlined in greater detail in chapter 3-Methods, and required that participants had some experience (past or present) or at least some basic familiarity with any partnerships or collaborations between their Jewish community and their local Judaic studies department. No other criteria based on age, race, class, gender, socioeconomic status, or the like were required to participate in this study.

Data Analysis-Revisited

Before beginning data analysis, the interviews were transcribed and then coded using initial coding (sometimes also referred to as open coding). The initial codes were generated according to their relation to the research questions, and the proposed theoretical framework for this study. To reiterate, the theoretical framework for this study included critical social theory (CST) combined with community-based research (CBR). After the coding process, the most frequently occurring codes that both related to the research questions and theoretical framework were then combined into overarching themes, comprising the results presented in this chapter.

Riessman's (2008) narrative thematic analysis was used to analyze the data to create the themes mentioned above. Narrative thematic analysis was chosen based on its focus on the content of what was said by the participants during their interviews, rather than the structure of how they relayed their stories or experiences. There were 14 preliminary themes generated during data analysis. These preliminary themes were then combined with other themes that were similar in nature to avoid redundancy in the results. Overall, the preliminary themes were consolidated into the 5 overarching themes discussed further in the sections that follow.

Presentation of the Results

The results of this study are presented using short narrative excerpts taken from the interview transcripts. Some longer excerpts from the data were used in cases where participants had more to share on the topic being discussed. Each subsequent section presenting the results of this study was organized by theme.

Theme 1: The Experience of Being Jewish in the Bible Belt

A recurring theme through each interview was participants' discussions of their experience being Jewish in the Bible Belt and the difficulties which stemmed from being Jewish and living in this region. The frequent occurrence of this topic in the interviews shows that the

specific region Jewish people live in in the U.S. has a significant impact in shaping their everyday experiences. Participants discussed issues of dealing with antisemitism, a general lack of knowledge about Judaism as a religion and culture, the scarcity of options for Jewish activities (religious, cultural, and social) compared to larger cities with more Jews, and attempts by some Christian individuals to proselytize them. Adam mentioned in his interview his belief that it is especially important to be involved in the Jewish community in some capacity (even if it is not frequent) when living in the Bible Belt. He says:

> In a community this size, which you know, is just…so small, that being involved you get to know the others in the Jewish community even though you may not go to the same congregation, or you know, see them on a daily, weekly, or even monthly basis. I think that's important. Especially here in what I'll call the Bible Belt, where you know, I think it would be unusual if you didn't speak to someone in the Jewish community who didn't feel like they had been a victim of some sort abuse of some kind.

Adam also went into further detail regarding antisemitism and the lack of knowledge about Judaism he has experienced living in the Bible Belt:

> It was not easy growing up being Jewish. And, you know, it was not uncommon for a while to hear about vandalism at one of the buildings. Or to be at school and to be made fun of. I remember having to explain to my teachers that I was gonna be out on a certain day, 'cause it was high holidays. And they go, "What? No, that's not excused." And when I was in fourth grade each day we would do the, and this was a public school, each day we would do the flag salute, and then we would have a prayer. Then one of us would be chosen to read from the Bible.

For Adam, being involved in his local Jewish community provided him with the type of support

and understanding that he could not find in school or other social circles while living in the Bible Belt. The experience of being Jewish living in this region is unique in that Jewish individuals, like Adam stated, may feel it is necessary to have some sort of involvement in the Jewish community to form connections with other individuals who truly understand them. Other participants in this study reiterate what Adam mentioned in his interview about the importance of being involved in the Jewish community when you live in a place with so few Jews. For instance, Sharon stated:

> Because we're smaller and we're in a state where there are fewer Jewish people, it differs in that way. I mean, if you were in Chicago, or New York, or certain areas of California, you're gonna have a huge Jewish population, and maybe when you have a huge Jewish population, there's less need to be part of what is going on. I mean, we have conservative and reform, we don't have Modern Orthodox, so the choices are fewer.

Sharon also discussed the need to actively seek out Jewish activities and form relationships or connections with other Jewish people in a smaller Jewish community (something she said is much easier to do when living in an area with a larger Jewish community and population):

> My parents weren't religious. However, the majority of their friends were Jewish, so I was involved in that way. I went to a high school [with] almost all Jewish people, so when there was a Jewish holiday, nobody was in school, you know? Even the two or three Christian kids would write themselves notes excusing themselves for the Jewish holiday. There, I was surrounded by Jews, here I have to seek them out.

In these excerpts, Sharon mentioned a relevant viewpoint when it comes to community involvement in smaller Jewish communities. She, like Adam, highlighted the importance of being involved in the Jewish community when living in the Bible Belt. Sharon then went on to

compare her small Jewish community with other larger Jewish communities in the U.S. She believed that there is less of a need (or a want) for Jewish people in cities with larger Jewish populations to be involved with their Jewish community. Perhaps this belief is partly because there are simply more options for Jewish activities in cities with sizable Jewish communities. In other words, Jewish individuals living in cities with higher Jewish populations may feel that because they are surrounded by Jewish activities, places of worship, and plenty of options for forming connections with other Jews, that they do not need to constantly be seeking Jewish connections like Jews living in the Bible Belt.

One participant, Reeder, believed Jewish communities in smaller towns or cities are on the decline and may not recover. He said:

> Jewish communities are on the way out, and all the other people who are heavily involved immigrate to a larger city where there's a larger Jewish community, or anywhere else in the United States. Or their kids don't go to the school [Jewish day school] because it's not that big of Jewish environment. [It] used to be like in [small local town], some people we met when we first came here still had family in [small local town] and came from [there] and are very proud of it. But it doesn't exist anymore. There's still a synagogue…not sure if anyone ever goes there.

Reeder's comments echoed what was said by both Adam and Sharon concerning the difficulty in finding Jewish activities, places to meet, congregate, or worship, and making connections with other Jewish community members. The options are extremely limited (if there are any at all) in smaller cities in the Bible Belt. Across every interview, participants could not help but compare their smaller Jewish communities with those in larger cities with bigger Jewish populations. Participants were adamant that being involved in their small, local Jewish communities was even

more important, because they are working to keep them strong with limited options and resources.

Sarah, who is highly involved in various Jewish organizations in her community, made a strong point about the significance of supporting other community members in a smaller Jewish community:

> I am very involved with the other organizations and the community. I mean we're a very small community, so we have to, and this is just kinda how I view life in general, is if we're not here to support each other, then what's our purpose? You know? It just makes sense. Let's help each other out.

Sarah, like the other participants, asserted the value of being connected to the local Jewish community and with other members when being part of a small Jewish community. The general belief reiterated among the individuals who participated in this study was that in a small Jewish community, the support and connection they were looking for came from being involved in their Jewish community. The participants in this study felt that if they wanted to be truly understood by others who shared similar experiences, then being involved in their small Jewish community was necessary when living in the Bible Belt where there are fewer opportunities for forming Jewish connections.

Theme 2: The Different Types of Collaborations Between the Jewish Community and the Judaic Studies Department

Another theme mentioned by each participant in their interviews was their descriptions of the different types of collaborations they were familiar with between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department. Each participant discussed the types of events and activities they took part in, or the ones they were familiar with, but may not have attended themselves. This

topic was pertinent to include as a main theme because it led to the further discussion of the benefits of such partnerships and areas needing improvement, which are discussed in subsequent sections as relevant themes.

Sarah mentioned that she took part in a conference that the local Judaic studies department and other Jewish entities partnered together to help organize:

> The [Name of the conference] …we really didn't have to do a whole lot of work for it. The third party that was involved that was leading it, they kinda did most of it. But [a Jewish organization] helped send out the promotional materials and the registration links and all that, but otherwise [the Jewish organization] didn't really have to do much for it. For two of the years that I've been involved... it was COVID. So, I wasn't really a part of that. But they [the third-party partners] were the ones that did most of the legwork.

In this excerpt Sarah mentioned the use of third-party partners to help organize events. The use of third-party partners is a topic highlighted in the literature on university and community partnerships and is utilized to help facilitate the organization of different collaborations among partners. This is especially common for larger events which require more logistical planning. The use of third-party partners could also help to ease the stress of planning, thus relieving some of the tension which may arise in facilitating partnerships between the Jewish community and Judaic studies department.

Sarah also noted how the COVID-19 pandemic made in-person events like the conference difficult to organize or attend for many people, and stated how during the pandemic, she was not as involved in this partnership. Other participants mentioned how the COVID-19 pandemic changed the types of events or activities that were offered by the Judaic studies department and Jewish community organizations. For example, Barbara talked about how

COVID-19 changed the format of some of the activities offered to the Jewish community through the Judaic studies department:

> I do see a handful of people go to [the public lectures put on by Judaic studies], and with COVID and going onto Zoom, I don't know how many people are out there. It honestly depends on the topic. But, this year, I noticed they're doing some films, and that's run through [a partnership with] women's studies, I think. They did, through Jewish studies, they did films with subtitles, so foreign films. And they did [that] at [a building on campus]. Those were interesting. So, when those are offered, they're offered to the whole Jewish community.

Like Sarah, Barbara discussed how COVID-19 made the organization of various events or partnerships more difficult, and how it influenced the number of people who attended those events. The COVID-19 pandemic, as Barbara also pointed out, also necessitated the move from in-person events to events hosted on virtual conferencing platforms like Zoom. Even with fewer participants due to the pandemic, there were at least some events and partnerships offered via Zoom by the Judaic studies department to Jewish community members. This move from in-person to virtual partnerships was considered a positive step on the Judaic studies departments' behalf in trying to foster or maintain partnerships even during a global pandemic.

Another topic mentioned by participants was the importance of having a Hillel organization on campus for both Jewish students and Jewish community members. Hillel is a Jewish student organization on many college campuses in the U.S. They host various activities aimed at Jewish college students, but many Jewish community members who do not have a Jewish community center or place of worship nearby use the Hillel as a communal meeting place for social events, religious services, and for partnerships with the Judaic studies department.

The participants viewed Hillel organizations on college campuses as a sort of liaison between the Judaic studies department and the Jewish community. Adam stated he was heavily involved at the local Hillel and enjoyed the partnerships they had with the Judaic studies department:

> [The Hillel] would try to have activities for everyone. We would, especially around Hillel, we would just stay with Hillel quite a bit. In fact, [they] even had… like a Judaic studies Shabbat. And we invited [professors] to come and speak, and it was good, but you know, it was like…it just wasn't consistent. So, yeah. I think there's been a disconnect there. Now, I think that [Judaic studies leadership] has done a good job and is trying to bridge the gap between the university and the community through different programs that they've sponsored. I get the emails, and I've been to a couple [events]. But, I think that, you know, doing something once a quarter just isn't quite enough.

As Adam asserted, Hillel is an essential meeting place for not just Jewish college students, but for Jewish community members as well. The Judaic studies department also uses the local Hillel as a central location to host the events they sponsor as well as partnerships with the Jewish community. Even though Adam enjoyed participating in partnership opportunities between the Jewish community and Judaic studies department, he felt as though the Judaic studies department could do more to create opportunities for partnerships with the local Jewish community. Having more frequent, and consistent partnerships could be a positive way to, "Bridge the gap between university and community," as he stated.

Theme 3: Benefits of Partnerships with the Judaic Studies Department and Jewish Community Involvement

The participants in this study listed some benefits they thought stemmed from being

involved in their Jewish community as well as the benefits of partnering with the local Judaic studies department. Sharon listed some of the benefits of being involved with her Jewish community and partnerships during her interview:

> It [being involved] gives me an opportunity to be around other Jewish people-which is nice. There's a great deal of simpatico there. You know, for our religious activities-that's part of it. I would say it's a wonderful Jewish community. It's not huge-it's limited in size, but I think there's some very active people, and it's wonderful supporting Jewish causes together.

For Sharon, a benefit of being involved in her local Jewish community was that she was able to be around other Jewish people who shared similar interests and experiences. Going to religious services, she stated, is a significant part of that same communal support system. Sharon also mentioned that she enjoys supporting Jewish causes together with other Jewish community members, and even though it is a small Jewish community, the members are still quite active and supportive of one another.

Reeder echoed the same sentiment in his interview about both the benefit of being active in a small Jewish community, as well as the benefit of partnering with the Judaic studies department:

> With the [Jewish] community as a whole, I'm not really clear...what that community structure is other than Hillel or Judaic studies. I don't know the structure of the Jewish community now. I don't know how many people are interested in having a structure. I don't think it'd be very big compared to what it was before. I can think of half a dozen or a dozen families…[they] have all grown up and moved away, and some of them have passed away. [They're] not being replaced by the same kind of people. That's what I'm

> saying, the small Jewish community [is] facing all the problems of very small Jewish communities. But, Hillel and the Judaic Studies Department are very important in making sure that it survives, [and] important in keeping the Jewish community here… [along with] professors there who are Jewish and are that interested [in being involved].

Reeder made a critical point in this excerpt about the benefit of having a local Judaic studies department and what that means for the Jewish community. He asserted that the local Hillel and Judaic studies department together were (whether knowingly, or unknowingly) doing the important task of trying to keep Jewish families and individuals from moving away to larger Jewish communities. Reeder went on to say, besides the local Hillel or Judaic studies department, that have a set structure for how they both operate, the Jewish community lacked this clear structure.

Although he believed the Jewish community lacked a clear structure (and was unsure of whether community members would even want something structurally similar enacted in the Jewish community itself) this structure was more apparent in entities like the Hillel and the Judaic studies department. So, at least for individual Jewish community members like Reeder, partnerships with the Judaic studies department or the Hillel might give community members the structure they believe is not as strong within the small, local Jewish community. Having professors who are interested in being involved in the Jewish community along with partnering with the Judaic studies department could be a useful way to improve upon what the community already has-by keeping Jewish community members from moving away according to Reeder.

In addition, Sarah believed there were some other benefits of partnering with the Judaic studies department. She expressed that the relationship between her Jewish community and the Judaic studies department was both positive, and useful to community members:

> It's been a really positive experience. I think it's a pretty good relationship. We have some of our community members that will [go to the events] that they have, [and] whatever other events that they put on as well. They've had a couple speaker events-we have people that will go specifically for those. [The Judaic studies department] know more scholars that can speak to certain topics than some of us. I think they're pretty useful because they can reach a different audience than what [other Jewish entities] can. Part of it is that they can reach some of the folks down in [the college town]. Some of our community members are pretty involved with the Judaic Center. [Whenever] we can have them [Judaic studies] partner with us, and get the word out, then we get more folks that'll wanna participate.

As Sarah stated, the local Judaic studies department helped to provide opportunities for Jewish community members to participate in a variety of activities outside of just religious services. She noted that community members used the Judaic studies department as a resource for continuing education on Jewish topics. Partnering with the Judaic studies department also helped to encourage more Jewish community members to become involved in various events and activities because they helped the Jewish community reach a wider audience. So, in partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department, the Judaic studies department can be an asset by providing Jewish community partners with valuable resources when shared between them both.

Theme 4: Areas Needing Improvement to Help Foster Successful Relationships Between the Jewish Community and the Judaic Studies Department

The fourth theme, or the different areas for improvement in partnerships, was another theme participants discussed extensively in this study. Although the participants stated there were

benefits of partnering with the Judaic studies department, every participant had suggestions for ways to improve the relationship between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department. For instance, Adam stated the following regarding what he thought an ideal partnership should look like:

> I think, ideally... it would be a two-way relationship [between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department] where the community helps the students feel at home, feel a sense of belonging, feel a sense of Judaism, and especially if they're far from home. And the students bring a little bit of their cultural Jewish identity to [our community].

Adam also commented on why having a variety of outlets for developing Jewish knowledge and education (outside of solely the religious leaders) was necessary to have a thriving Jewish community:

> I think we count too much on the rabbis to be the leaders. Because we do count on them to be the leaders in every aspect of things, [so] it makes it very hard when we have to transition to a new rabbi. 'Cause there's no continuity… So, a professor's, especially a [Judaic studies] professor's involvement in the Jewish community…how can a professor teach about Jewish culture when they're not involved in it? Even in a small community like [ours], or even purposefully separate themselves from it. That doesn't make sense. That's like if…a psychology professor, said, "I'm gonna teach about psychology, but I'm never gonna relate to anybody. I'm just gonna read the books."

So, according to Adam, there were a couple ways Judaic studies departments or professors could improve the relationship between themselves and the Jewish community: 1) Making a concerted effort to ensure there is a reciprocal relationship between the two entities, and 2) Encourage Judaic studies professors to try and take an active role in understanding the community they

research by being more involved. Ensuring a reciprocal relationship between the two entities, as Adam stated, could help to prevent the historically uneven power dynamics mentioned in university-community partnership literature.

Barbara added to the list of suggestions for improving the relationship between the Jewish community and Judaic studies department. She said:

> Well, it's there, but I think it could be improved. I know that's kinda beating around the bush, but I think there's always a possibility of adding more things. And I don't know if people are too busy to go to things. I honestly don't know. So, it doesn't hit their interest, or what. It's interesting, because the same people seem to come to them. But then again, in any community, you're gonna have people that will go and participate, and most of 'em will stay home. It's [difficult to] judge on what [partnerships] you could have that would interest people.

In Barbara's opinion, the Judaic studies department could provide more opportunities than they currently did to create partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department. As Barbara noted, there were not many choices when it came to deciding what events, activities, or other partnerships to take part in as a member of the Jewish community. In addition, she commented that the partnerships that did exist between the Jewish community and Judaic studies department were reaching the same people over again. A change in the type of partnerships the Judaic studies department offers could help to attract more Jewish community members to participate.

Sharon concurred with the sentiment that the Judaic studies department could do more to provide better opportunities for creating partnerships with the Jewish community. What she said in her interview touched upon a common issue in university-community partnerships: the

community partners feeling as though they are alienated from their university partners in a way that makes them difficult to reach or collaborate with. Sharon expressed:

> It seems as if Judaic Studies is an entity unto itself. I wish there were more partnerships. All the information I get about Judaic Studies and programs that they have, [I'm] so impressed with it, and I wish I had more time to be involved. The fact that it's always on campus…I wish some of those [were] in [our community], because [then] I would attend…and so I feel cut off from it in a way that I wish I wasn't.

The feeling of being "cut off" from the Judaic studies department when it comes to maintaining a successful partnership is a facet of this specific relationship which Judaic studies departments can improve upon in the future. Sharon stated that she wished she could be more involved in the different partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department, but because all the meetings and events take place on campus, she does not always attend. It is understandable that Jewish community partners would want to host some of the meetups or events associated with these partnerships in a place they choose. Only hosting events and activities on campus could contribute to the occurrence of an uneven power dynamic, whereas a meetup in a place chosen by Jewish community partners could help them to feel more comfortable in the partnership.

Theme 5: Jewish Values and Community-Based Knowledge

The fifth theme generated from the interview data was comprised of a few different topics. Participants discussed the meaning of community-based knowledge and their own personal definitions of a specifically Jewish community-based knowledge, their Jewish values stemming from their upbringing, education, or other social interactions, and critical perspectives on their lived experiences. This theme gave a glimpse into what the participants in this study

viewed as important aspects of their Jewish identity, and their reflections on what a collective Jewish knowledge might look like. Knowing what values Jewish community partners view as being important to them and their identity can help Judaic studies partners better understand what community members want from a partnership with them.

Both Sarah and Adam defined community-based knowledge in the Jewish community as being multi-perspective and varying depending on who you might ask. Sarah stated:

> Knowledge of the Jewish community as a whole… I think it varies. I think we have certain groups that have a wealth of knowledge. But I think it just varies. That's a hard one to answer. I say it kinda just depends on, you know, the demographics, their interest, what they get involved in.

Similarly, Adam defined community-based knowledge as follows:

> I think community-based knowledge is multi-perspective. So, you've got the religion knowledge, which typically comes from the rabbis. They are the ultimate educator, they are the ultimate source of Jewish law, and culture, and Torah, and everything. Then, you've got the cultural [knowledge]. And the cultural is headed by the rabbis, and by select families that are typically a bunch of old people. Then you've got the more historical education. And that's an area where the leaders of the program [Judaic studies] could take an active role. But they really don't. And that's more historical, what does Judaism look like, what does the Jewish culture look like.

So, both Sarah and Adam suggested that there might not be one singular definition of a collective Jewish community-based knowledge. Both participants implied this was because the definition differed depending on which individual in the Jewish community you asked, and what their experiences or interests were. Judaism is multifaceted being a religion, culture, and ethnic group,

so it makes sense to suggest a more dynamic or flexible definition of a Jewish community-based knowledge which is multi-perspective. On the other hand, Reeder defined Jewish community-based knowledge as follows:

> Well…I was taught that Jewish knowledge involves two major things for the ordinary person: Shabbat and Kashrut. Kashrut has never been very strong [living in the Bible Belt]. Shabbat has been, and it still is to a limited extent anyway.

Reeder's definition of a Jewish community-based knowledge was based on two core aspects: Kashrut (keeping kosher) and Shabbat (observing the Sabbath). This differed from what Adam and Sarah mentioned when they gave their definitions of Jewish community-based knowledge in that their definitions were more multifaceted and Reeder's were based on two core concepts on what he believed to be the most important aspects of Jewish community-based knowledge.

When asked whether they felt as if the local Judaic studies department valued Jewish community-based knowledge in partnerships, the participants had differing thoughts. Some thought that their community-based knowledge was valued, and others did not. Some participants who did not feel as though their community-based knowledge was valued by their local Judaic studies department said they felt this way because they did not believe the Judaic studies department knew who they were as individuals. However, two of the three participants (Barbara and Sharon) who shared this perspective did not necessarily see this as being a major issue in partnerships because of the large number of people the Judaic studies department interacts with regularly. For instance, Barbara stated, "I honestly have to say they don't even know who I am. They know I live here. They see me sometimes. But nobody's ever asked me questions."

On the other hand, Adam felt as though the Judaic studies department could do more to

show that they valued Jewish community-based knowledge in partnerships. He also stated that he did not feel as though his Jewish community-based knowledge was valued in partnerships because the Judaic studies partners did not know or care who he was as an individual. However, unlike Barbara and Sharon, Adam *did* see this as being a significant problem in partnerships. He specified:

> No. I don't think that they know anything about me. I think when I show up to a seminar or something, it's, "Oh, great, one more." Or they say, "Oh, great. That's that guy." I don't think they really know anything about me…I think that they value at least to some extent the rabbinical aspect of knowledge. But, not just generally speaking, no [they do not value Jewish community-based knowledge].

Adam felt that the rabbinical aspect of Jewish knowledge was valued to some extent by the Judaic studies department, but he also said that outside of rabbinical or religious knowledge, he did not believe Jewish community-based knowledge was valued by the Judaic studies department in partnerships. Adam's comment touched upon the issue of what types of knowledge are valued in university-community partnerships. In his opinion, community knowledge was not considered valuable by university partners in his experience. In contrast with this sentiment, both Sarah and Reeder felt as though their community-based knowledge was valued by their respective Judaic studies departments because of the positive interactions they had with Judaic studies leadership in partnerships with them. Sarah shared, "Yeah, it's just any conversation I've had with [one of the professors] or with anybody else on [the] staff, it's always been very receptive."

Continuing with the topic of Jewish knowledge, the participants also communicated their thoughts on Jewish values. Based upon the interview data, one value mentioned frequently by participants was the importance of education, at all ages of life. Each participant had some type

of connection to academia, whether they had attained degrees in higher education, had family members, spouses, or were professors or academics themselves, or whether they worked in a higher education setting. Lifelong learning was another subject some participants found to be a pertinent facet of their Jewish identity.

Barbara discussed during her interview how her Jewish upbringing instilled certain values in her life. She said:

> My father was an immigrant, so I'm first-generation. He was born in Ukraine, in Kyiv. So I mean, it's kind of interesting. And, again, here's the idea: You had to make something…you came from nothing, and you had to make something of yourself.

She also added the following regarding the value of education and lifelong learning:

> [Doing] things to promote excellence and the use of your brain…I think that's necessary. You can't just sit and do nothing… I've served on the Interfaith Council, here in [local city], which was fascinating. [People] from all religions getting together for the common good of the community. Yeah, I think everything that I do is related to my Jewish-ness. That comes [from knowing] who I am. And that's important to me.

Barbara's Jewish values impacted the way she lived her everyday life and the way she viewed the world. She had some critical perspectives concerning being a first-generation American as well as the need to be involved in activities which promote lifelong learning, like with the interfaith projects she participated in. In her opinion, learning about other people's religions and beliefs helped her to feel even more connected to her Jewish identity. Furthermore, she voiced the value of, "Making something of yourself" as being an important lesson learned from her upbringing. This value, though not specifically Jewish, is one which is given high importance in American Jewish culture in general. The, "Make something of yourself" ideology could explain

the high numbers of Jewish people who enroll in college and institutions of higher education.

All other participants in this study were connected to higher education in some way. A couple participants had attained PhDs themselves (one of which taught as a professor), one person worked as a staff member at a university and had a spouse that was a professor, one person had a parent who was a professor, and one participant had worked closely with the local university through their job. Thus, the participants who took part in this study may have had an interest in participating because of their connections to academia, or it could simply be because many American Jews have degrees in higher education and value the institution of higher education.

One final critical perspective, noted by Adam, was on how he believed researchers could work harder to give equal value to the different types of Jewish community-based knowledge in future research on this study's topic:

> I think that especially being [in] Judaic Studies, students need to learn, like you're doing with your dissertation, [they] need to learn about Jewish communities all over. Not just what it looks like in Brooklyn, or in LA, or in Kansas City, or St. Louis, but what does it look like in a little town [like ours]?

The implications for future research on the topic of Jewish community partnerships with the local Judaic studies department, according to Adam, involved continuing to conduct research with smaller Jewish communities who tend to get left out in studies on Jewish communities. Jewish community members in smaller cities would like to have their voices represented in research on Jewish communities and have their own Jewish community-based knowledge be given the same credence as larger Jewish communities.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The overarching goal and purpose of this study was to better understand the dynamics of partnerships between the Jewish community and the local Judaic studies department through community-focused perspectives. Research on university and community partnerships continues to develop as universities look for ways to be more involved with their local communities and fulfill the goals outlined in their mission statements of aiming to serve and support local communities as well as create civically engaged college graduates (Barnes, et al., 2009; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Strier, 2014).

I chose to focus on Jewish community partnerships with the local Judaic studies department because it is an area which is lacking in available research. Other departments at the university level have begun to incorporate community partnerships into their curriculum, and Judaic studies is no different (Baskin, 2014; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Koren, et al., 2016; Myers & Goodwin, 2012). However, little research has been done on the efficacy of partnerships between the Jewish community and Judaic studies department, even though it is certainly happening in various communities across the U.S. (Butin & Pianko, 2012; Koren, et al., 2016; Myers & Goodwin, 2012). Even less is said in the literature specifically about Jewish community partners' perspectives on partnerships with the Judaic studies department.

Exploring this topic was important to me because as a Jewish community member myself, I wanted to see further interest in studies on Jewish communities, especially those smaller Jewish communities which typically get overlooked in the research in favor of higher populated areas with more Jewish people. Additionally, as antisemitism and threats to Jewish communities continues to get worse in the U.S., I believe it is necessary to make a concerted effort to help people to better understand Judaism as a religion and culture. This may be

accomplished through continued research on Jewish communities as well as providing further support of Jewish communities through partnerships such as the ones mentioned throughout this study in the participants' interviews.

The fifth and final chapter of this study includes a detailed discussion of each theme presented in the previous chapter and how the themes relate back to the literature presented in the literature review and theoretical framework. The strengths and limitations of this study and the implications for future research are included after the discussion of the findings followed by a summary and conclusion which addresses answering the proposed research questions for this study.

Discussion of the Findings

This study included a sample of five participants who live on or near college campuses located in the southern U.S. that have Judaic studies departments. Participants were chosen based upon the following criteria: Participants need to have at least some knowledge of or experience with partnerships between the local Jewish community and the local Judaic studies department, and they also need to live either on or near a college campus that has a Judaic studies department. Division I colleges or universities located in the southern U.S. were chosen as a location site for this study.

The five participants were interviewed virtually through a teleconferencing platform using a semi-structured interview format, and the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed before completing data analysis. After coding the data, narrative thematic analysis was used to generate themes from the interview data and five total themes were created as a result. The following sections discuss how the five themes generated through narrative thematic analysis connect to the purpose of this study: Better understanding the dynamics in partnerships between

the Jewish community and the local Judaic studies department.

Theme 1: The Experience of Being Jewish in the Bible Belt

Participants' experiences of being Jewish and living in the Bible Belt was a topic that was discussed extensively during the interviews. The narrative nature of this study encouraged participants to reflect on their personal experiences and their life stories that helped shape their Jewish identities. Participants revealed during the interviews, that the environment that they lived in had a profound impact on their experience of being Jewish. Because there were less options for Jewish activities, places of worship, and community centers in the Bible Belt, it was difficult for participants to seek out and form connections with other Jews as compared to larger cities with higher Jewish populations.

Due to the lack of options for Jewish activities, the participants believed it was even more important for them to be involved in their local Jewish communities if they wanted to have any type of Jewish connections. Participants espoused a critical perspective on the lack of understanding about Judaism living in the Bible Belt. This lack of understanding was made apparent to them through antisemitic incidents, attempts at proselytization, and the overall absence of any knowledge about Judaism by non-Jews.

Literature shows that American Jews have become increasingly concerned with antisemitism as it has become more prevalent in recent years (Pew Research Center, 2021). In addition, many Jews believe that antisemitism is not taken as seriously as it should be and that there is a general absence of pertinent knowledge on Judaism by non-Jews (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009; Koren, et al., 2016). One of the participants, Adam, expressed this sentiment in his interview excerpts when he discussed the prevalence of antisemitism and attempts at proselytization in his small Jewish community. He also mentioned another instance of others

displaying a lack of understanding about Judaism when he recalled a time where an absence was not excused for a Jewish holiday.

The experience of being Jewish while living in the Bible Belt was included as a relevant theme not only because it was discussed extensively by every participant, but also because it highlighted the participants' assertion that it is even more crucial to them to be actively involved in their smaller Jewish communities to form connections with other Jews. Because the participants believed it was important to be involved in their smaller Jewish communities, this led to their further interest in being involved with partnerships or collaborations with their local Judaic studies department. Based on participants' perspectives on living in the Bible Belt, it could be true that for Jews living in smaller communities, partnerships with the local Judaic studies department are viewed as being a decent option for being actively involved in their Jewish community since there are less options than in larger cities.

Theme 2: The Different Types of Collaborations Between the Jewish Community and the Judaic Studies Department

There were several different types of partnerships between the Jewish community and the local Judaic studies department mentioned by the participants. The partnerships discussed during the interviews ranged from events such as academic or educational conferences on Jewish topics, activities offered to the Jewish community like public lectures and films, and events sponsored by the Judaic studies department held at the local Hillel. Out of all the events mentioned, there was nothing said specifically about any type of service-learning partnerships between the Jewish communities and Judaic studies departments included in this study, which was a prevalent topic in literature on the various types of university-community partnerships. Service-learning involves participating in community service through a college course curriculum organized by

the professor and carried out by the students enrolled in the course (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Butin & Pianko, 2012; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Rubin, V., 2000). Because service-learning is a newer type of curriculum in the academic realm, it could be that it has not caught on yet in smaller Jewish communities like it has in larger cities.

However, discussions on power dynamics in university-community partnership literature shows that university partners have not lived up to their mission statements' assertions that they are committed to community service or creating civically engaged students and faculty (Barnes, et al., 2009; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Strier, 2014). The fact that service-learning types of collaborations were not mentioned by any of the participants in this study signifies that there is still work to be done by universities that have not yet addressed the discrepancies between what is said in their mission statements and what they practice in their curriculums and research. Although the participants in this study did not explicitly mention service-learning projects between their local Judaic studies departments and Jewish community, they did highlight other types of partnerships such as public lectures, educational and cultural events hosted at local Hillels, film showings, and academic conferences focused on Jewish topics.

The participants noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the type of partnerships that took place during this time. Partnerships that used to have in-person meetings had to be held through a teleconferencing platform (Zoom). One of the participants, Sarah, expressed that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, she was not as involved in the partnership that helped organize the educational conference as she would have been normally. So, the interview data showed that external circumstances, like the COVID-19 pandemic, influenced Jewish community members' level of involvement in partnerships, along with the types of

partnerships happening between the two partners.

The use of third-party partners was also mentioned during the interview as a useful way to assist both partners in organizing large-scale events. In the literature on university-community partnerships, the use of third-party partners was discussed as a potential method to alleviate some of the stress that occurs when facilitating partnerships between university and community partners (Baum, 2000; Cooper, et al., 2014; Martin, et al., 2005). Though not all partnerships between university and community will utilize a third-party partner, sometimes it might be beneficial in large-scale partnerships which require more planning and labor.

Another topic on the different types of partnerships participants commented on was viewing the local Hillel as a sort of intermediary between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department. The use of the local Hillel as an intermediary between partners was a topic discussed extensively by participants in regard to the different types of partnerships they were either involved in themselves, or were the most familiar with. Literature on partnerships between the Jewish community and Judaic studies department showed that Hillel was a common choice for a meeting place for both partners because the Hillels could draw in Jewish community members, Jewish college students, and Judaic studies faculty and staff alike (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009; Firestone & Gildiner, 2011; Koren, et al., 2016; Myers & Goodwin, 2012; Rubin, J. L., 2000; Teutsch, 2003). Although Hillel's primary focus is serving Jewish college students, they also attract Jewish community members to their events including religious services for Jewish community members who might live too far away from the closest temple or synagogue.

Theme 3: Benefits of Partnerships with the Judaic Studies Department and Jewish Community Involvement

All participants noted that they believed there were some significant benefits to

partnering with the local Judaic studies department. Even though each participant had suggestions for how these partnerships could be improved, which will be discussed further in the next section, they all had at least one benefit they could name from collaborating with the Judaic studies department. In the excerpt from Sharon's interview, she mentioned that being involved in partnerships with the Judaic studies department gave her the opportunity to connect with other Jewish community members. Being involved in this way was important to Sharon because the options for forming connections with other Jews were limited living in a smaller Jewish community in the Bible Belt.

Even though the Jewish community Sharon is a member of is small, she noted that many people she knows were still highly involved, and she enjoyed that they could all support Jewish causes together through being involved in partnerships with the Judaic studies department. Research on university-community partnerships shows that community partners enjoy the benefits that come along with taking part in collaborations with university partners, as long as there are opportunities for the community partners to be involved in a respectful and meaningful manner (Baum, 2000; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Parker, 2020; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Rubin, V., 2000; Suarez-Balcazar, et al., 2004). In Sharon's case, forming connections with other Jewish community members and taking advantage of the opportunities for supporting Jewish causes when there were not many offered living in the Bible Belt, was a meaningful way Judaic studies partners could support the Jewish community.

Another benefit which Reeder mentioned during his interview was that he believed the local Hillel and Judaic studies department were helping to keep Jewish families and individuals from moving away to cities more densely populated with Jews by providing the Jewish community with chances to be involved through partnerships. As the literature shows on

university-community partnerships, in successful partnerships, community members appreciate when the university is involved and shows a genuine interest in supporting the local community by putting community members' knowledge and needs at the forefront of collaborative projects (Cooper, et al., 2014; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Strier, 2011; Strier, 2014; Wiewel & Lieber,1998). Providing opportunities for collaborations between the Jewish community and Judaic studies department could help to keep Jewish individuals and families from moving away from cities with smaller Jewish populations.

Lastly, Sarah noted in her excerpt that a benefit of partnering with the Judaic studies department was being able to pool resources, thus making it easier for various Jewish organizations to reach a wider audience of community participants in different collaborations. The ability to share resources is a topic also discussed in literature discussing the benefits of partnering with the university, but university partners must be careful to ensure the community partners are receiving equal access to those shared resources (Barnes, et al., 2009; Benson, et al., 2000; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Sandy & Holland, 2006). It is especially important that community partners reap the benefits of such collaborations. If the community partners do not see any benefits from a partnership with the university, then university partners run the risk of creating a one-sided relationship where the university puts the community partners in a position where they are viewed as being simply subjects to be studied and not as equals (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Cox, 2000; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005; Parker, 2020).

Theme 4: Areas Needing Improvement to Help Foster Successful Relationships Between the Jewish Community and the Judaic Studies Department

In the previous section, the benefits of partnering with the Judaic studies department was discussed by participants. This section examines participants' thoughts on the different ways

their local Judaic studies department could improve upon existing relationships with the Jewish community. In Adam's excerpt presented in the previous chapter, he highlighted two main suggestions for improving partnerships between the Jewish community and the local Judaic studies department. He suggested: 1) Making a concerted effort to ensure there is a reciprocal relationship between the two entities, and 2) Encourage Judaic studies professors to try and take an active role in understanding the community they research by being more involved.

Adam went on to say that partnerships with the Judaic studies department helped to fulfill his personal need for more opportunities for Jewish-based activities outside of religious services. He asserted that he believed the Jewish community relied too heavily on their rabbis for being the sources for everything Jewish, whether that be religious, cultural, educational, or the like. Adam felt that because of the overreliance on rabbis being the sole Jewish educators in the community, that when a specific rabbi leaves, there is no continuity. He believed that partnerships with the local Judaic studies department could help fill the void if, or when, a rabbi left or retired by providing more outlets for Jewish-based activities and educational opportunities.

Barbara also touched upon the idea that her local Judaic studies department could further improve the relationship with the Jewish community by creating additional partnerships and taking a more active role within the community. She noted that she felt as though the existing partnerships were becoming stale because they were reaching the same community members over again. So, either the partnerships need to be revamped to reach a wider audience of Jewish community members, or there needs to be additional partnerships made that will attract more members. The idea that Judaic studies partners could improve the relationship with the Jewish community by making a concerted effort to take on a more active role in the community, while

consciously creating an environment of mutual respect and reciprocity, was a shared perspective among participants on methods of improvement in existing partnerships.

Literature on the challenges in university-community partnerships states that a common sentiment among community partners is that university partners are out of touch with the community's wants and needs in a way that makes it difficult for community members to feel as though they are genuinely valued in their partnership (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Martin, et al., 2005; Sandy & Holland, 2006). This sentiment was apparent in Adam and Barbara's statements concerning their desire for Judaic studies partners to be more active in their local Jewish communities than they currently are, as well as working to be better in touch with community needs.

Sharon's excerpt also touched upon a common complaint among community partners in literature on university-community partnerships, that university partners are in a sense "cut-off" from the community due to isolating practices on the university's behalf (whether intentional or unintentional) (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Martin, et al., 2005). Sharon emphasized her feeling of being "cut-off" from the Judaic studies department in a way she wished she was not. She noted that the feeling of isolation was due to her local Judaic studies department hosting events, meetings, and other collaborations almost exclusively on campus rather than a location based in the community. Hosting partnership-related activities only on campus and not in the community puts community partners in a position where there is an uneven power dynamic because, as Sharon highlighted, she would be more likely to be involved in partnerships if they hosted activities in a community-based location.

Theme 5: Jewish Values and Community-Based Knowledge

The fifth theme generated from the interview data involved a few different topics discussed by the participants. During their interviews, the participants reflected on how they would personally define community-based knowledge, and whether they felt as though their community-based knowledge was valued by the Judaic studies department in partnerships. They also spent some time reflecting on how their Jewish values shaped their identities, and how these Jewish values impacted both their everyday lives as well as their overall worldviews.

The various topics chosen to be included in this theme were selected because they each highlighted how the participants' perspectives on their Jewish values and Jewish identity shaped their own personal definitions of community-based knowledge. This theme was pertinent to this study's purpose because it is important for future research on partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department to better understand the values, wants, and needs of Jewish community members. Understanding the values, wants, and needs of different Jewish community members can help the Judaic studies department to be better partners in future collaborations with the Jewish community.

The participants in this study noted what they thought a Jewish community-based knowledge looked like, and how they would define it. For instance, both Adam and Sarah stated in their excerpts that they would define a Jewish community-based knowledge as being multi-perspective and varied depending on the individual. Recognizing that knowledge can come from many different sources outside of formal institutions of education is a concept which is reiterated throughout the literature on community-based research (CBR) (Minkler, 2004; Stoecker, 2003; Strand, et al., 2003). On the other hand, Reeder defined a Jewish community-based knowledge as consisting of two core practices: Shabbat (or observing the Sabbath) and Kashrut (or keeping kosher). Reeder's definition of Jewish community-based knowledge differed from Adam and

Sarah's in that his definition was less broad than the multi-perspective definition and focused instead on two core concepts.

Much like with the varying definitions of community-based knowledge, there were varying opinions among participants on their experiences of feeling valued in partnerships. When participants were asked whether they felt their community-based knowledge was valued in partnerships with the Judaic studies department, some stated they did feel as though their knowledge was valued while others did not. As discussed in the previous chapter, Sarah and Reeder both thought their community-based knowledge was valued by Judaic studies partners. Adam, Sharon, and Barbara stated they did not feel like their community-based knowledge was valued in partnerships.

Both Sharon and Barbara shared that they did not take issue with Judaic studies partners not valuing their community-based knowledge because they knew the Judaic studies faculty and staff interact with many different people daily, making it difficult for them to remember and show a genuine interest in each individual Jewish community member in partnerships. However, Adam asserted that the Judaic studies department could do better in terms of appreciating Jewish community partners' community-based knowledge when collaborating with them. Literature on critical social theory (CST) and community-based research (CBR) both address the power-based issue of viewing professors or teachers as the sole experts and purveyors of knowledge (Freire, 1970; Minkler, 2004; Stoecker, 2003; Strand, et al., 2003).

Adam's belief that his local Judaic studies department could make improvements in showing they value Jewish community-based knowledge during partnerships conveys there is an issue of who is viewed as the "experts" in partnerships he has been involved in. He went on to say that one suggestion he had for assigning equal credence to all types of Jewish community-

based knowledge in future research on partnerships would be to include more studies on smaller Jewish communities as this study had done.

The last topic included in this theme involves participant discussions of their Jewish values. Each participant expressed their belief that education is extremely important, and a few of them stated that lifelong or continual learning was a pertinent facet of their Jewish identity. Every participant involved in this study had some sort of connection to academia or higher education. Whether they had attended college, received advanced degrees, had family members or others close to them who were professors, were professors themselves, or had jobs in the higher education sector, every participant had a vested interest in academia and higher education. Another value the participants discussed was how being involved in partnerships and being active members of their Jewish community helped them to further develop and express their Jewish identity by forming meaningful connections with other Jewish community members.

Strengths and Limitations

There were some limitations in this study that included time constraints, a limited number of participants, research sites focused on Division 1 universities, and a setting focused on a specific region. Because this study was research conducted for a dissertation, there was a limited amount of time that the project needed to be completed. In future studies on this topic that do not have the time constraints that are common in dissertation research, conducting longitudinal studies on partnerships could give a more comprehensive understanding of how partnerships operate from beginning to end while they are happening in real time. Because this was a narrative study, the number of participants was limited to a smaller number compared to other types of study designs. The intention in having a smaller sample pool was to go more in depth with the interviews, meaning the interviews for a narrative study such as this one involve longer

interviews detailing participants' experiences.

Future studies might consider including more participants, conducting focus groups, or carrying out multiple interviews with participants throughout the process. Because this study was focused on partnerships between Jewish communities and Judaic studies departments located within Division I research universities, future studies might also consider researching partnerships at other institutions of higher education like community colleges. This study was also limited to a specific region (the southern U.S.) so although it might not be completely generalizable for Jewish communities in other parts of the country, it helped to highlight the experiences of Jewish community members in smaller Jewish communities.

The purpose of this study was to better understand the dynamics of partnerships between the Jewish community and the local Judaic studies department through community-focused perspectives. This study has added to the existing body of literature on the topic of university-community partnerships by focusing on community member perspectives rather than solely the university partners' side. Additionally, this study has attempted to expound on the topic of Jewish community partnerships with local Judaic studies departments-a subject which is still developing, especially with research on smaller Jewish communities. This study was timely because it is important at this point in time to provide more opportunities to better understand Judaism as a religion and culture given the steady rise of antisemitic occurrences in the U.S. (Pew Research Center, 2021; Rapoport, et al., 2021). It is my hope as a scholar to have meaningfully contributed to the body of work on Jewish communities, and to give a voice to Jewish community members in smaller Jewish communities.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

The implications and suggestions for future research in this section are based on the

results presented in chapter four and the discussion of those results presented in this chapter. The participants' stories of their experiences with partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department resulted in an amalgamation of five overarching themes that informed which areas of research needed further exploration in future studies on this topic. Implications and suggestions for future research include:

1. Continue to conduct research on smaller Jewish communities in the U.S. in regions like the Midwest, the South, and other regions outside of large coastal cities. These areas tend to be left out of research involving Jewish communities. Jewish community members in this study emphasized how living in a smaller Jewish community is vastly different than living in cities with large Jewish populations.
2. There needs to be a concerted effort made by researchers to include the voices of community partners in studies on university-community partnerships. Not including community partner perspectives in research on partnerships perpetuates an uneven power dynamic where the university partners are the primary purveyors of knowledge, and community partners are treated as not being the experts on their own lived experiences.
3. University partners looking to become more involved with local communities need to be well-educated on the benefits and challenges of partnerships. Continuing education and professional development on best practices for university partners should be strongly considered *before* entering into a partnership with the local community to avoid any potential encroachment or power imbalances.
4. More research needs to be conducted specifically on partnerships between the Jewish community and the local Judaic studies department to gain a better understanding of

how these partnerships operate. Research on university-community partnerships is continuing to gain interest in academia, but even with this being true, there is still scant available research on partnerships between the Jewish community and the local Judaic studies department.

5. Researchers should consider looking into what types of colleges or universities (community colleges, private colleges, state universities, etc.) are participating in service-learning partnerships with their local communities and where they are happening. Participants in this study did not explicitly mention any type of service-learning projects during their interviews even though service-learning was discussed extensively throughout university-community partnership literature. This leads me to infer that it is possible that service-learning is "catching on" at some universities and not at others. Future research could investigate the development of service-learning projects and curriculums at a variety of different colleges or universities to see where it is "catching on" and where it is not.
6. Professors, higher education professionals and staff, and college students need more education on Judaism as a religion and culture. Participants in this study noted that outside of other Jewish community members, there were not many people (especially living in the Bible Belt) who knew even the most basic knowledge about Judaism. This could be remedied through offering Judaic studies courses as part of the university's required "multicultural credit" for students, or through diversity training courses for professors and staff.
7. Higher education administrators need further education on the benefits and challenges of service-learning projects and other partnerships with the local community in order

to better support the professors who wish to incorporate partnership work into their curriculum.

Conclusion

In this study, I focused on partnerships between the Jewish community and their local Judaic studies department. My intent with conducting this research was to better understand the dynamic and the relationship between these two entities through community partner perspectives. Research on university-community partnerships is continuing to develop and gain popularity within the academic community as universities are making a concerted effort to show their commitment to their mission statements of serving their local communities and creating civically engaged graduates (Barnes, et al., 2009; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Strand, 2000; Strier, 2014). I chose this topic because I wanted to contribute to university-community partnership research in an area where it is lacking: Partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department. Being a member of the Jewish community myself, I could see that there were partnerships happening between my own Jewish community and the local Judaic studies department, but there was scant research available on efficacy of such partnerships.

Conducting research on the Jewish community was an important endeavor to me as a scholar because I would like to see more interest and understating of Judaism as a religion and culture both inside and outside of the academy. A better understanding of Judaism by people outside of the Jewish community could help to combat the rising antisemitism in the U.S. Participants in this study voiced their concerns regarding antisemitism and the general ignorance of non-Jews about the most basic aspects of Judaism. They also emphasized their want for more opportunities to partake in partnerships with their local Judaic studies departments. According to

the results of this study, partnerships provided a unique opportunity for Jewish community members living in the Bible Belt to be able to participate in Jewish activities where there are limited options to do so.

Future research could look to studies such as this one as an example when conducting research on community partnerships with specific departments within the university. The results of this study show that there is still more work to be done on university-community partnership research. Elevating community partners' voices in studies on partnerships is perhaps the best place to start. Learning about community members' values and concerns, working to better understand the underlying power dynamics in partnerships, building rapport and fostering a mutual respect between partners, and giving credence to all forms of knowledge (not just within the academy) are all useful suggestions for becoming better partners in service to the community.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Introduction

Before we begin, I will ask you to choose a pseudonym, or I can pick one for you if you wish. If at any point during the interview you need to take a break, we can pause and pick up where we left off. If the questions are general and abstract, you may volunteer any detail you wish. You also have the option of declining to answer, or passing on, any of the questions. Do you have any questions before we start?

Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about how you first became involved in the Jewish community. How long have you been involved?

    a. What role do you play in the community?

    b. What does the nature of your involvement look like? (In other words, what activities do you take part in, and how much time do you spend doing these activities?)

2. What do you believe is the value or benefit in being active in your Jewish community?

3. How would you describe your Jewish community to someone who was unfamiliar with it?

4. How would you say your Jewish community differs from other Jewish communities in the U.S.?

5. How do you identify? -Racially, by class, gender, and ethnically? -

a. How does your identity (as you just described it) shape your involvement in your Jewish community?

6. How do you think others in your Jewish community perceive you?

    a. Do you think your identity shapes their perception? If so, how?

7. Does your local university have a Judaic studies department?

a. Are you aware of any collaborations or partnerships between your Jewish community and the Judaic studies department?

b. Have you been involved in any collaborations between the Jewish community and Judaic studies department? (If yes, what was your experience in being involved in a partnership with the Judaic studies department?)

8. What would you say the relationship between your Jewish community and Judaic studies department is like?

9. For what reasons do you think Jewish communities pursue partnerships with a Judaic studies department?

10. How effective or useful do you think partnerships with a Judaic studies department are?

11. What do you believe the Judaic studies department's role in the local Jewish community should look like?

12. Do you feel that your knowledge as a Jewish community member is valued by the Judaic studies department? (Why or why not?)

13. How would you personally define community-based knowledge in the Jewish community?

    a. Can you provide an example of community-based knowledge?

14. What does meaningful representation in a partnership with the Judaic studies department look like to you as a Jewish community member?

15. What suggestions do you have for future partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department?

16. Is there anything else you would like to add or discuss, or any questions you would like to return to?

Closing

Now that we are finished, do you have any questions you would like to ask me about this study? I will give you my contact information in case you would like to contact me later with any questions or concerns. Also, I may need to contact you later for additional questions or clarification. Can I also have your follow-up contact information?

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Approval of Initial Submission – Exempt from IRB Review – AP01

Date: July 12, 2022 **IRB#:** 14833

Principal Investigator: Rachel L Lopo

Approval Date: 07/12/2022

Exempt Category: 2

Study Title: Jewish Community Views on Partnerships with the Judaic Studies Department

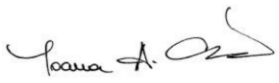
On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed the above-referenced research study and determined that it meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon. **Please note, the IRB made a minor revision to the oral consent script (removed a redundant sentence regarding transcription). Please ensure that you are using the IRB stamped and approved oral consent script once data collection begins.**

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications as changes could affect the exempt status determination.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- Notify the IRB at the completion of the project.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,



Ioana Cionea, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Approval of Study Modification – Expedited Review – AP0

Date: August 29, 2022 **IRB#:** 14833

Principal Investigator: Rachel L Lopo **Reference No: 739214**

Study Title: Jewish Community Views on Partnerships with the Judaic Studies Department

Approval Date: 08/29/2022

Modification Description: Changing faculty sponsor

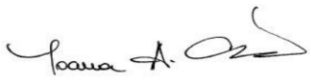
The review and approval of this submission is based on the determination that the study, as amended, will continue to be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46.

To view the approved documents for this submission, open this study from the My Studies option, go to Submission History, go to Completed Submissions tab and then click the Details icon.

If the consent form(s) were revised as a part of this modification, discontinue use of all previous versions of the consent form.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the HRPP office at (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu. The HRPP Administrator assigned for this submission: Kat L Braswell.

Cordially,



Ioana Cionea, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT SCRIPTS

Recruitment Message

Subject line (For e-mails): Invitation to Participate in Research Interview

(Insert potential participant's name),

Hello! My name is Rachel Lopo, and I am a Doctoral candidate at the University of Oklahoma in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies department. I am reaching out to you because I am conducting interviews for my dissertation research on Jewish community member's views on partnerships with the Judaic studies department. I will be the principal investigator for this study.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the dynamics of partnerships between Judaic studies departments and the Jewish community through Jewish community member perspectives. The interviews in this study will be semi-structured and conducted via Zoom.

If you decide to participate in this study, your responses will be kept as confidential as possible. To ensure confidentiality, you will be given a pseudonym so your name will not be attached to your responses. You can decline to answer specific questions during the interview, and may also withdraw from the study at any point in time without consequence.

If you are interested in participating in this interview, or if you would like more information before you decide, then you can contact me by e-mail: rlopo2011@ou.edu or on my cell: [redacted]

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Respectfully,

Rachel Lopo

Recruitment Message- Social Media Post

Hello!

My name is Rachel Lopo, and I am a Doctoral candidate at the University of Oklahoma in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies department. I am conducting interviews for my dissertation research on Jewish community member's views on partnerships with the Judaic studies department.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the dynamics of partnerships between Judaic studies departments and the Jewish community through Jewish community member perspectives. The interviews in this study will be semi-structured and conducted via Zoom.

If you decide to participate in this study, your responses will be kept as confidential as possible. To ensure confidentiality, you will be given a pseudonym so your name will not be attached to your responses. You can decline to answer specific questions during the interview, and may also withdraw from the study at any point in time without consequence.

If you are interested in participating in this interview, or if you would like more information before you decide, then you can contact me by e-mail: rlopo2011@ou.edu or on my cell: [redacted]

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Rachel Lopo

APPENDIX D: VERBAL CONSENT SCRIPT

Verbal Consent Script

Introduction: Thank you for participating in this interview today. My name is Rachel Lopo, and I am a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Oklahoma. This study focuses on Jewish community member's views on partnerships with the Judaic studies department.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to better understand the dynamics of partnerships between Judaic studies departments and the Jewish community through Jewish community member perspectives.

Interview Procedures: The study entails participating in this interview, which will be conducted through Zoom and will last between one to two hours. If you agree to participate, your responses will be audio and video recorded for transcription purposes. I may use a professional transcription service to transcribe this interview. The transcription service I will use will have their own confidentiality agreements for anonymity. If you consent, then I will use direct quotes from this interview. All quotes will be made anonymous by using a pseudonym, so your real name will not be attached to your responses. None of the recordings will be used in any presentations or publications.

Risks and Benefits: If any of the interview questions make you uncomfortable, then you can decline to answer, or skip the question. You can stop or withdraw from the interview at any point in the process without consequence. If I see any signs that you are distressed, I will also pause the discussion and ask if you would like to continue. If you experience any emotional distress as a result of this study, you can contact a professional mental health provider. You can access free, confidential mental health counseling through https://www.opencounseling.com/

Additionally, because this study will deal with biographical information, there is a risk for re-identification based on information like job title and personal demographics discussed in the interview. To minimize this risk, I will be sure to only use your pseudonym for your given responses, and will also give your place of employment, and university a pseudonym as well. If you believe any of the interview questions may cause re-identification, then you can skip or decline to answer.

Finally, there is a risk of accidental data release if we collect your data using audio and video recordings. If this occurred, your identity and statements you made would become known to people who are not on the research team. To minimize this risk, I will transfer data to, and store your data on, secure devices and platforms approved by the University's Information Technology Office.

There are no benefits from participating in this research.

Confidentiality: Your responses in this interview will be kept confidential.

Your name will not be recorded digitally or on paper. A pseudonym will be used in place of your real name.

Interviews will be recorded via Zoom, and a recording device will also be used as a backup. The recordings on the device will be deleted immediately after they have been saved on the researcher's computer on an encrypted and password-protected storage platform. The recordings will only be used for transcription purposes, and will not be used in any presentations or publications. Please note that Zoom has their own privacy and security policies for keeping your information confidential. No assurance can be made as to their use of the data you provide for purposes other than this research.

Audio recordings may be shared with a professional transcription service who will have their own confidentiality agreement as well to ensure confidentiality of your data.

All recordings of interviews and all other documents with identifiable information will be permanently deleted after the closing of the study.

Access to your study records will only be given to the University of Oklahoma's IRB and myself, the principal investigator. Your responses will be kept as confidential as possible unless there is legal or ethical reason to report information that shows abuse of others or intent to harm others or oneself.

Future Use of Data: Research data will be retained until the closing of the study, after which, I will destroy all identifiable data. Once all identifiers are removed, I may share your data with other researchers or use it in future research without additional consent from you.

Rights as a Participant: Your participation is completely voluntary. You can also withdraw from the study at any point in time without consequence.

Questions or Concerns: If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you can contact the researcher (myself) at: rlopo2011@ou.edu or Dr. William Frick at frick@ou.edu

If you have any questions or concerns about your personal rights as a participant in this study, or if you want to contact someone other than the researcher, then you can contact the University of Oklahoma's Institutional Review Board (Norman Campus) at: (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu

Consent: Now, let me ask you several questions to which you can indicate 'yes' or 'no.'

Are you 18 years of age or older?

____ Yes ____ No

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

____ Yes ____ No

Do you consent to have this interview audio and video recorded for the purposes and uses laid out above?

____ Yes ____ No

Do you grant me permission to use quotes from this interview attached to your pseudonym in research write ups and reports?

____ Yes ____ No

May I contact you again for additional phases of this research or to gather additional information?

____ Yes ____No

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research! I will email you a copy of this consent form for your records.

If you want to stop or take a break at any point during the interview, please let me know. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? With your permission, we can begin the interview.

Name of Interviewee: _____

Email address for electronic consent copy: _____

Name of Researcher and Date of the Consent Process: _____

Signature of the Researcher: _____

APPENDIX E: FOURTEEN INITIAL THEMES

Fourteen Initial Themes

1. Involvement in the local Jewish community is especially important in the Bible Belt where there are less Jews
2. There are more options for activities in more highly populated cities with larger Jewish communities
3. There are more options for forming relationships with other Jewish community members in cities with larger Jewish populations
4. Involvement in the Jewish community helps to build a sense of identity
5. Perceived benefits of being involved in the Jewish community
6. Perceived benefits of partnerships between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department
7. Connections to academia
8. Critical social perspectives
9. Types of collaborations between the Jewish community and Judaic studies department
10. Defining Jewish community-based knowledge
11. Suggestions for improvement in the relationship between the Jewish community and the Judaic studies department
12. Separation of "Town and Gown"
13. Difficulties being Jewish while living in the Bible Belt
14. Hillel as an important entity to Jewish community members