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"How Do I See Myself? It's Complicated": Qualitatively Eliciting, Analyzing and Understanding Individuals' Self-Attitudes towards Identity in an Australian Jewish Community

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Abstract: It can be difficult to define what "identity" means and encapsulates in groups and communities. This is particularly true in ethnic communities, where identity can overflow neat categories like religion, culture and nationality. Yet understanding what makes and shapes identity in a community can provide insight into its activities, tensions and motivations, aiding community research. In this paper, I document a methodology of the elicitation of self-understanding, from members of a community group, of their own identities within the group context, using a case study of members of an Australian Jewish community. The themes that arise from analyzing the elicited responses, and the participants' discussions of them, highlight key ways that contemporary identity might be understood within this particular community. The exercise uncovered trends and tensions within the negotiation of identity as part of a minority community, which could inform and enrich broader study with this group.

Keywords: identity; self-attitudes; sociological tests; ethnographic interviews; Jewish identity; Australian Jews; Jewish Australians

1. Introduction

Self-identity as a member of a group can be a highly complex, multifaceted construct. Identity means a range of different things to different individuals, even within one group or community, influenced by a particular set of institutions, norms, historical traditions and external pressures. Community members comprehend being a member of the group in different ways. This makes the task of scholars seeking to understand the experience of identity for communities exceptionally challenging. These sentiments have been echoed by scholars studying identity among religious and ethnic communities [1–3] in a variety of international settings.

Taking the example of Jewish identity, Gonzales-Lesser [4] points out, "where scholarship has fallen short is in being able to theorize beyond existing trends in the literature in order to capture a theory of Jewishness that sufficiently reflects how Jewishness is embodied and interpreted by the collective of Jews themselves". However, articulating this is not an easy task, either for the individuals asked to summarize their identity and practice in clear and coherent shared forms, or for the scholar seeking to analyze and draw meaning from them. Quantitative examinations of identity utilize a range of approaches to articulate, compare and measure identification, identity and practice in particular set ways, e.g., census surveys and other demographic analyses. Qualitative approaches, which elicit more nuance and context, aim to avoid the reduction of the richness of identity into scales and statements [5]. However, without a framework through which to understand the vast, subjective nature of identity, identification and practice, it can be difficult to draw down from the nebulous question of what makes up one's identity to a voicing of this in a meaningful way.

Articulating this plurality of identity for individuals, even within a clearly defined population group, often does not come naturally. For example, I undertook a qualitative

ethnographic study of the Jewish community in South-East Queensland, Australia, trying to understand how Jewish identity was constructed and experienced. "How do I see myself? It's complicated!" commented one participant early in my research journey. Unlocking the individual 'complications' of Jewishness became key to understanding what Jewish identity 'meant' in the life of this community and its interactions with the wider world. As Samson et al. [6] argue, "greater attention to individual identity is valuable not only as a way of collecting multiple personal accounts but also as a way of developing complex understandings of individuals' attempts at reworking and redefining (rather than simply reproducing) Jewishness". It became evident that undertaking an informed qualitative study of life in this Jewish community required a means of getting to the heart of how community members qualified their own Jewishness in order to 'live' it. To do so, I turned to exploring models by which self-attitude might be elicited, analyzed and understood.

One approach to framing the articulation of identity for individuals is the use of an established socio-psychological test instrument designed to guide participants to express their identity in words. There are several quantitative instruments which measure self-concept and identity by a range of identity factors, rendering sentiments and ideas into measurable numerical values [7,8]. However, for the purposes of qualitative work, a more valuable approach is the use of a free-text framework for participants to articulate answers in their own words and from their own lived contexts. The resulting dataset generated from participants' answers to the test instruments can then be analyzed, drawing out themes, narratives, or discourses around the responses, to develop insights into experiences and expressions of identity within that group. Jerolmack and Khan [9] argue that such self-reports of identity are "overly individualistic and abstracted" and "of limited value" when compared to the observations of identity that can be made through ethnographic observation. However, I propose that self-concepts of identity may be used as an ancillary to, rather than a replacement for, broader qualitative research, to help the researcher develop their approach and scope.

This paper describes the methodological development of such an approach to aid in developing a deeper understanding of the experiences and expressions of identity within a community, and to inform the scholar's approach to conducting a qualitative ethnographic study of the community. It draws on a case study undertaken in a Jewish community in Queensland, Australia. In the study outlined in this paper, a modified version of the Twenty-Statement Test instrument, designed by Kuhn and McPartland [10], was given to a small group of members of this Jewish community, and their responses were analyzed thematically to develop some insights into key themes and debates around experiences and expressions of Jewish identity in this community's setting.

I do not claim to provide a representative analysis or exploration of Australian Jewish identity as a whole. Rather, it is a case study illustrating a methodology of the elicitation and interpretation of self-reported conceptualizations of individual Jewish identity within one Australian community, and a reflection on how these data helped refine ethnographic examination and further understanding of this community and its identity. Additionally, while I have written elsewhere on the negotiation and performance of Jewish identity in Australia, specifically a creolized "Jewish Australian" construction of identity [11], drawing on ethnographic and interview data, this current paper describes and analyses the specific methodology of eliciting and analyzing a dataset of self-description qualitative data from Jewish individuals in Australia, making an additional methodological contribution.

First, a theoretical overview of my conceptualization of identity, self and self-attitude is outlined, and key approaches to eliciting and articulating this are critically examined. Next, to illustrate the case study, a background of thought and scholarship on Jewish identity is established, at a historical and international level and through a more specific Australian lens, and the South-East Queensland Jewish community is profiled. The method of the present study is then described, including a profile of participants and methodological approaches. Findings from the study are then outlined and explored. Finally, reflections on

the analysis of the findings, and practical reflections on considerations regarding the use of the test instrument to help inform further ethnographic practice, are provided.

2. Identity Theories

2.1. Identity and the Self

The concept of identity is a complex theoretical phenomenon, with a myriad of different approaches and interpretations from across the social and biological sciences and humanities. In general, self and identity can be defined as the "traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is" [12]. From my own positionality as a social anthropologist, I concur with Holland et al. [13] that "identity is a concept that figuratively combines the intimate or personal world with the collective space of cultural forms and social relations". This approach adds the consideration of culture, "the ways of enacting and talking about the self" [13], to understanding how identity and self are shaped. My understanding of identity and conceptualization of self, and its interpretation within this paper, are less focused on exploring either how individuals' identities might reflect their own ego construction, or the social structures and processes might shape identity. Like Levitan et al. [5], I treat these models as "compatible epistemological stances that give different weight to aspects of human experience", and instead seek to understand what facets of self and identity might exist for individuals within the framework of their cultural self-identification, and how this might reflect cultural understandings of identity as practice [14].

2.2. Self-Attitudes

One key interpretation of identity and the self is as the process of formulation of a set of attitudes about oneself, and of self-concept as the product of that process of forming attitudes; that human behaviors are organized and directed by an individual's attitudes towards themselves, their position in society, and in the various groups they live within. Kuhn established this concept of self-attitude or "self-theory" in the 1950s, developing out of Mead's [15] work. Kuhn proposed a more positivistic and quantitative interpretation of self, on the basis that the psychological organization of self reflects the practical and ideological organization of society. The way an individual conceives of themselves is not a relationship between their impulses and responses to societal norms and stimuli, but a reflection of how they fit themselves into the categories, norms and desires of their society and its various sections [16,17]. This reflection on themselves is referred to as a self-attitude, and are "internalizations of the objective social statuses they occupy" [18].

Self-attitudes and self-identification speak to the place an individual sees themselves in with regard to their group or community, and people perform group practices and behaviors in view of their self-identifications and self-attitudes [19]. Thus, they are particularly useful for understanding the norms of the group with which the individual identifies. Often, scholars who have worked on self-concept and self-evaluation have looked at social comparison processes, and sought to uncover and discuss the way individuals consider themselves against the known, internalized standards of their normative group or their subcultural group [20]. However, the opposite may also be true; if we understand the way individuals consider themselves, we might then uncover the norms and standards of the normative group. Even if community members might hold a "minority status" within the group, the way they cast themselves in opposition, or in the negative, to particular concepts, norms and standards can tell us just as much about the community as those in the "majority". If we are able to elicit, analyze and understand the self-attitudes and self-discourses of members of a community, we can begin to develop an understanding of what is important and valued in that community, what norms of practice and culture exist, and what its power structures, key institutions and socio-political projects are [13]. Such insight has the potential to prove invaluable to the ethnographer as a way to inform ethnographic observation, particularly in an unfamiliar setting.

2.3. The Twenty-Statement Test

In 1954, Kuhn and McPartland designed a test instrument to identify and measure self-attitudes so that they might discuss how these attitudes influenced human behavior [10]. Using their class of over 200 undergraduate students as test subjects, they gave students twelve minutes to provide up to twenty responses to the prompt question "who am I?". Kuhn later added an additional accompanying analytical scheme, whereby response statements could be coded according to specific thematic categories—social groups, ideological beliefs, interests, ambitions, or self-evaluations [21].

The Twenty-Statement Test is now almost seventy years old, and has been critiqued for being overly philosophical, too vulnerable to analytical subjectivity and unsuitable for application in more collective, particularly non-Western, cultural groups [22–24]. Nevertheless, the test is still used in sociological research, both in its original and amended forms. Of particular relevance to this current study, the test has been used in several recent studies on the topic of cultural and ethnic identity [25–27]. However, the use of tests in this way in cultural anthropology is not widespread, despite the fact that "cultural identity is contextualized as a part of an overall personal identity as well as characterized as a quality of the community" [28] and that cultural identities can only be understood as being made up of shared but singular facets of the broader identities of cultural community members.

3. Jewish Identity

3.1. Historical Trends in Jewish Identity

As this paper uses a case study of exploring Jewish identity within a community in South-East Queensland, Australia, it is useful to give a background of the historical development of Jewish identity, both generally and in the specific case, and major contemporary issues. While contemporary Jewish identity is complex, many of the understandings and interpretations of Jewishness as religion, culture and ethno-national identity are inventions of the modern period, and are both European and Protestant Christian in their philosophical origins [29]. Before the 18th century, Jewish identity was strictly defined by law; from antiquity through to the Roman conquest of Judea in AD 70, this meant the traditional religious law of the Hebrew Scriptures as interpreted and proclaimed by Jewish religious leaders and scholars. From the time of Roman occupation and exile, however, Jewish identity also became defined by the laws of the lands in which Jews lived; first Roman, then Christian and later Muslim. Under both Jewish and non-Jewish law, the identities of Jews were simultaneously religious, political and cultural. There was no conception of different facets or elements of Jewishness for individuals or communities, simply a binary of Jewish/Gentile as prescribed through this law, and Jews, Christians and Muslims alike conceived of Jewishness in this way, right through to the early modern period [30,31].

These ideas of homogenous Jewish identity began to shift in the later years of the Enlightenment. A parallel intellectual movement or "Jewish Enlightenment", known in Hebrew as the Haskalah meaning "wisdom", from the late 18th century to the end of the 19th century, developed out of central and Eastern Europe, which drastically changed the way Jewishness could be understood internationally. The Haskalah movement sought to synthesize Jewish life and practice with modernity and secular knowledge, reshaping it in line with Enlightenment values from outside the Jewish world. From this movement, new developments in Jewish philosophy and theology saw new approaches to the interpretation of scripture and religious practice, which led to diverging strands and schools of religious interpretation of Jewish law. This eventually manifested in the development of discrete new forms of religious Jewish identity, including Reform Judaism, Modern Orthodox Judaism, and forms of ultra-Orthodox Judaism like Chassidism and Haredism, as well as a new sense of a secular Jewish identity not tied to religious belief or practice [32]. At the same time, new nations like the United States of America were emerging where Jews shared the same rights as all citizens, and many of the nations of the Old World were also granting their Jewish residents full or partial citizen rights for the first time, known as "emancipation".

This further changed Jewish individuals' understandings of their own identities as they negotiated this new, and often changing, status [33].

However, rising antisemitism that came with emancipation began to manifest itself within the growing field of racial science; Jewish identity now became racialized, both by outsiders and by Jewish thinkers themselves [34]. Such thinking was to eventually culminate in the Holocaust of 1939–1945, where among the millions of Jews killed there was a wide spectrum of nationalities, genealogies, ethnic groupings and religious traditions, including non-belief [35]. Growing out of the Holocaust, with its roots in the Enlightenment, was the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. The formation of this Jewish nation state was the realization of the quest for a Jewish homeland at the heart of the Zionist political movement, first formed in the late 1890s in response to emancipation and racial antisemitism in Europe [36]. This added a further element of connection to Israel to Jewishness and Jewish identity across the world, regardless of whether individuals relocated to the homeland or not, changing as its fortunes and interactions with the wider world varied [37]. In particular, it brought additional dimensions of political positioning, questioning and sometimes conflict, as individuals considered their own views and connections to debates of belonging, sovereignty and colonial ethics around the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and people over the land [38]. Jewish communities and individuals in various places, like the USSR, South Asia and the Middle East, have also experienced different national policies and attitudes towards them in various ways, which have sparked different understandings of identity and boundaries [39–41].

3.2. Contemporary Views on Jewish Identity

All these elements and debates around what constitutes Jewish identity—the ethnic, the religious, the genealogical and the national-political—feature heavily in questions about what constitutes Jewish identity today, both for those individuals and communities who identify themselves and for the wider world which aims to position Jewish groups and individuals within society's frameworks. The topic of identity has been a recurring theme in the discourse of Jewish communities worldwide. In particular, there has been constant discussion around the issue of assimilation and the diffusion of Jewish identity within mainstream culture, bringing a perceived risk to Jewish continuity—that is, that Jewish individuals continue to identify, congregate and practice Jewish identity and traditions, and pass it onto the next generations [42]. However, alongside this have developed many "assumptions about Jewish identity . . . taken for granted rather than questioned and challenged" [43]. Scholars of contemporary Jewish identity across disciplines and around the world have wrestled with fitting the plurality of Jewish identity into neatly defined categories [44–46]. The bulk of early and mid-20th century scholarship evaluated Jewish identity quantitatively on scales of predetermined Jewish behaviors and attitudes, attempting to measure of Jewish individuals "how Jewish are you?", often to the detriment of the personal significance of Jewishness to Jewish individuals. Towards the end of the 20th century to the present day, a paradigm shift in Jewish identity research has seen a more qualitative understanding, even in quantitative studies, of the relationship between Jewishness and Self, and what makes Judaism and Jewishness personally meaningful, guided instead by asking Jewish individuals "how are you Jewish"? [47].

Contemporary understandings of Jewish identity see Jewishness through a situational, communal and societal lens. Jewish identity is seen as hybrid or multifaceted, made up of a variety of religious, cultural, genealogical and political configurations that are constantly evolving and unfolding throughout an individual's life [4,6]. The lived experience of Jewishness also transforms in response to changing wider societal contexts, concerns and subjectivities in different settings; the way an American Jew conceptualizes their Jewishness is different to the way an Israeli Jew does [48]. The global migration history of various global Jewish communities also means that, e.g., an American Jew of Israeli descent will conceptualize their Jewishness differently to the way a German Jew of Israeli descent or an American Jew of Soviet descent might [49,50]. Nevertheless, shifting historical understand-

ings of Jewish identity—as race or ethnicity, as religion, as culture and as diaspora—are all featured, and debated, in contemporary views of Jewish identity internationally.

3.3. Jewish Identity in Australia

In the Australian context, Jewish life began with the arrival of European settlement in 1788, when Great Britain established a penal colony in Botany Bay, now the city of Sydney, including a small number of Jewish prisoners. After serving their sentences, many of them, and the families they built, developed an Anglo-Jewish community beginning in Sydney town, with houses of worship, shops and burial grounds for Jewish community life, free of the constraints on civic participation they had previously lived under in Britain [51]. This form of Jewish settlement continued up to 1868, in Sydney and other British penal colonies, when the policy of convict transportation was ceased. As more of the Australian continent opened up for free settlement through the 19th century, Jewish communities developed all over the colonies. In the burgeoning business capitals of Melbourne and Perth, rich from the wealth of the goldfields, and in Brisbane and Adelaide drawn by the wealth of the vast pastoral industries of the Queensland and South Australian colonies, new communities sprang up, as well as smaller enclaves in regional areas [52]. Jewish identity was primarily a religious identity from these early days of Australian communal life, when Jewish colonials, most of whom were British or from the German states, were socially British subjects, later Australian citizens, first and foremost, who privately practiced Judaism as a religion in a society dominated by the Anglican church [53].

From the 1890s to 1917, the persecution of Jewish communities in the Russian empire caused the mass emigration of millions of Jews. While the majority of these made their way to Western Europe and the United States of America, thousands chose to migrate to Australia, settling in many of the major cities where Anglo-Jewish communities also lived. These Eastern European Jewish immigrants practiced Jewish religion and culture very differently to the established Jewish communities and, while still considered "white" under government immigration policies, introduced a conceptualization of Jewish identity that was highly ethnicized and very different to the public–private divide of Jewish identity previously understood by Australian Jews [54]. After World War II, Australia took in masses of Holocaust refugees from Europe—more per capita than any nation with the exception of Israel [53]—and Jewish identity in Australia was revitalized, reshaped and "Europeanized" both by the presence of new arrivals and a new Holocaust consciousness [55]. The establishment of the state of Israel also injected a connection and fascination with the newborn state's developing culture, particularly among an Australian Jewish population where Zionist support had been strong since the early 20th century [56].

With the advent of multiculturalism as a governmental and social policy in the 1970s, Australian Jews and their communities played out a complex identity politics of Jewishness as simultaneously religious and ethnic. On the one hand, as Stratton [55] explains, Australian multiculturalism is predicated on ethnic grouping, requiring identification with a discrete country of origin and language. This has vitally shaped Australian Jewish communities' connection to Israel and the Hebrew language, and understandings of Jewishness as an ethnic culture. On the other hand, the multi-faith movement has long been a strong influence in Australian society and politics, and increasingly so since 11 September 2001 and the Australian Muslim community's increased activity in cosmopolitan peacebuilding [57]. In order to participate in these socio-political frameworks, Australian Jewish communities have made Jewish religion and its performance the centerpiece of Jewish public identity, regardless of Jewish individuals' own faith and practice [58].

Today, Jewish life in Australia is diverse, multifaceted and prominent in the multicultural landscape despite accounting for less than half a percent of the national population. Australia's Jewish community of approximately 100,000 is dominated by two major populations, in the cities of Sydney and Melbourne, where 90% of Australian Jews, and the majority and largest of the nation's Jewish institutions and leadership bodies are to be found [59]. Each of the eight state and territory capital cities, along with other large cities

and regions, has its own Jewish community. They are connected somewhat by institutional and familial networks, but each has its own distinct historical and demographic background influencing its development; this shapes both the cities' Jewish community narratives of identity and the experiences and expressions of identity among its residents.

3.4. The South-East Queensland Jewish Community

Jewish communal life in South-East Queensland shares a similar origin story to Jewish life in other settler colonial states developed out of the European colonial expansion of the Enlightenment period, like South Africa and the Americas. While Jewish life in Australia generally dates back to the initial European settlement of the continent in 1788, the Queensland community dates back to the 1860s, when the British colony of Queensland was separated from the larger, former convict colony of New South Wales, and opened up to European settlement. A handful of families settled around the colonial capital city of Brisbane and gathered to observe key Jewish festivals and give their children religious instruction. In May 1865, they formally established themselves as the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation after a public meeting. From this small congregation, the community grew with increased migration, and a second congregation was set up on the south side of Brisbane in 1916 to serve the growing population of Russian Jewish immigrants who had migrated to the area. The community continued to grow through the 1930s, as Jewish migrants fled Germany and the rise of the Nazi party, and in the 1940s and 1950s took in hundreds of resettled Holocaust refugees. A second center of Jewish life developed in the region in the 1960s in the coastal town of the Gold Coast, just south of Brisbane, attracting Jews from Australia's southern states or refugees from Europe seeking a sunnier beachside climate. Since the 1960s, the community's population has continued to grow, embracing large groups of Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union, Israel and South Africa through the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s [60].

Today's South-East Queensland Jewish community, reflecting the global nature of the Jewish world, is home to an estimated 4000 Jewish individuals (incorporating predicted undercount [61]), both those born locally and those who have joined the community from other Australian Jewish communities and others like it on every continent of the globe. Like most international Jewish communities, South-East Queensland host Jewish religious congregations following various Jewish religious strands and interpretations, from strict Orthodoxy to more modern reinterpreted Liberal and Reform Judaism, along with social, political and charitable organizations and clubs, day schools that provide education in a Jewish tradition and ethos to pupils, and clubs or businesses serving cultural needs. In South-East Queensland, the community is served by six Jewish religious congregations and a dozen other Jewish cultural groups and institutions, offering various services and social connections to different sectors of the community [60]. It was in this setting that this case study of eliciting insights from community members into their own experiences and expressions of being Jewish was undertaken.

4. Materials and Methods

A modified version of the Twenty-Statement Test designed by Kuhn and McPartland [10] was devised for use with a cohort of Jewish individuals. In accordance with critiques of the original test, the modified test called for participants to provide ten statements, rather than twenty, similar to other studies using the test with discrete ethnic groups [25,27]. Participants were instructed to provide the first ten answers that came to mind when considering the prompt "as a Jew, who are you?" This approach is similar to that taken by Cousins [62], who adapted the test to frame participants in specific contexts within which to elicit their responses, finding participants had an easier time completing the test and used qualified, self-aware responses. The test guidance notes suggested the participant should think about "how you would describe yourself as a Jewish person; what other factors influence or expand that label?" While Kuhn and McPartland's test did not offer any suggested categories of thought or other stimuli, initial reviews of the

test by a small group of Jewish community contacts suggested the question might be too vague for participants as it was. The guidance notes were expanded with the suggestion that responses might be other aspects of the participants' identity (e.g., gender, national background), might narrow down the type of Jewishness they practiced (e.g., "religious" or even a specific strand of Jewish practice like "Progressive"), or might indicate their politics on a local party-political or broader philosophical basis (e.g., "conservative", "left-wing" or "Zionist"). Participants were told that "there are no 'rules', and just list up to ten statements which come into your head when you ponder 'As a Jew I am . . . '". The test instrument is included here as an Appendix A.

From 2017 to 2018, twenty-five self-identified Jewish adults completed the test instrument as part of a series of ethnographic interviews conducted prior to and during initial fieldwork in the Jewish community of South-East Queensland, Australia (see Table 1). These participants were initially drawn from a convenience sample of Jewish community members who I became familiar with during the early stages of fieldwork; further participants were purposively sampled through snowballing out to the contacts of initial participants. Purposive sampling aimed to find a range of participants of different ages, genders and birthplaces; while the sample is not representative, participants' demographic characteristics and behavioral patterns reflect broader trends among South-East Queensland Jews, and Australian Jews more generally. Ethical approval was sought from The University of Queensland School of Social Sciences Ethics Review Panel, and in addition to seeking fully informed consent from participants, I also ensured anonymity of responses during and after the study. Age is displayed in groups, and birthplace by region, to further anonymize participants.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants (*n* = 25).

Participant #	Gender	Age Group	Birthplace
Participant 1	F	55–74	Africa
Participant 2	M	18–34	USA
Participant 3	F	35–54	Israel
Participant 4	F	35–54	Australia
Participant 5	F	18–34	Australia
Participant 6	F	75+	UK
Participant 7	M	55–74	Africa
Participant 8	F	55–74	UK
Participant 9	F	35–54	Israel
Participant 10	M	35–54	UK
Participant 11	M	18–34	Australia
Participant 12	M	18–34	Israel
Participant 13	M	55–74	Australia
Participant 14	F	18–34	Australia
Participant 15	F	75+	UK
Participant 16	M	55–74	Africa
Participant 17	M	55–74	Australia
Participant 18	M	18–34	Australia
Participant 19	M	35–54	UK
Participant 20	F	55–74	Africa
Participant 21	F	55–74	Australia
Participant 22	M	75+	UK
Participant 23	F	55–74	UK
Participant 24	M	75+	Europe
Participant 25	F	18–34	Australia

Nineteen filled out paper copies of the test instrument at the start of their interviews, two filled out the instrument electronically and returned it by email before the interviews were conducted by phone, and four dictated their responses to the interviewer who filled out the instrument for them. Between them, these 35 participants returned 174 responses

in total. The number of responses per participant varied from four to ten; the median number of responses was seven. The 174 responses were analyzed thematically, using an inductive approach where themes and sub-themes were drawn from the data [63]; this was considered to provide more meaning and context than the original frameworks used by the test designers [10,21]. These themes were grouped into six broader categories. It is through these six categories that an understanding of what 'makes up' Jewish identity among this cohort can be built.

5. Results

5.1. Religiosity

The most common theme within the responses (sixty-two of the 174 statements) was participants' nomination, description or interpretation of their practices or attitudes towards Judaism as a religion. Many described their branch or denomination of Judaism and worship style like "Modern Orthodox" (Participants 1 and 16), "Progressive" (Participants 14, 18 and 19), "Liberal" (Participants 8 and 15); others described their Jewishness in non-religious terms like "Cultural" (Participants 2, 5 and 20), "non-traditional" (Participant 24), "Secular" (Participants 11 and 25), "Atheist" (Participant 12). Some described what their religious identity meant in practical terms, like "attend synagogue regularly" (Participant 10), "dedicated to the Ten Commandments" (Participant 22), "learned my Bar Mitzvah [coming-of-age ritual] parsha [portion of scripture] at home" (Participant 12), "picky—choosing elements" (Participant 2). Others described how their own personal Jewishness varied from the norms of their affiliated denomination, like "Feel more modern than traditionally religious" (Participant 24), "Religion level Orthodox however more traditional" (Participant 4).

Some described their negotiation of their own Judaism within a wider communal Jewish identity, like "I respect other Jewish beliefs" (Participant 24) "mix mostly with progressive/liberal congregation" (Participant 10), "anti-Orthodox" (Participant 18), "keep kosher [religiously observant diet] if dining with others" (Participant 10). Three participants defined their Jewish identity by how ingrained this religiosity was—"late-blooming" (Participant 11), "a latecomer" (Participant 21), "recently discovered" (Participant 18). Some, including these self-identified 'latecomers', also defined themselves by negatively evaluating their religiosity—"I am not a practicing Jew" and "bad Jew" (Participant 18), "don't attend synagogue" (Participant 15), "uneducated" (Participant 11), "my beliefs do not define me" (Participant 20).

5.2. Values

Thirty-six statements described values, personality traits or outlooks on life they held that participants felt were intrinsically linked to their Jewishness. Most participants described particular values they identified in themselves informed by their Jewishness, like "ethics" (Participant 4), "the way I treat others" (Participant 17), "honest" (Participant 14), "social justice-driven person" (Participant 9). One participant nominated the specific Kabbalistic Jewish value of Tikkun Olam [social justice] (Participant 19). Some described particular values they identified in themselves which instead shaped their approach to their own Jewishness, and their relationship with Judaism and other Jews, like "feminist" (Participant 21), "respect elders" (Participant 23), "argumentative by nature and nurture" (Participant 12). Others described political and ideological values which both influenced and were inspired by their Jewishness—"align with radical politics" (Participant 19), "liberal-thinking left" (Participant 7), "against the norm as left leaning" (Participant 20). Some quantified the extent to which Jewish values shaped their lives—"my whole life revolves around it" and "never thought of myself as anything else" (Participant 15), "my Jewishness takes priority and dominates a lot of what I do" (Participant 1). A further group defined themselves by negatively associating their Jewishness with their personality or outlooks on life—"no different to any other person" (Participant 20), "doesn't define me" (Participant 2).

5.3. Kinship and Connectivity

Thirty-four statements described or qualified the participants' Jewishness through connection to other Jews. Sociality was central to the Jewish experience of many participants, who identified as "socially Jewish" (Participant 2), "connected to my community" (Participant 8), "welcoming" (Participant 23), "a community-minded person" (Participants 4 and 25), "Supported by my Jewish community" (Participant 6). Some described how they manifested this sociality through participation in local or international Jewish organizations and institutions—"socialize with Maccabi [Jewish sports organization] and Chabad [Jewish outreach program]" and "Attended Jewish secondary school" (Participant 10), "Like to be involved in community organizations" (Participant 1). For others, participation was further honed into community service—"service to my congregation" (Participant 16), "leader in a Jewish youth movement" (Participant 14), "enjoy organizing group and social events" (Participant 23).

Family and kinship also featured centrally in the Jewish experience of many participants. Some participants outlined their connection to Jewish family as key to their Jewish identity, like "involved in the Jewish traditions of my family" (Participant 14), "Reflective about family experiences as Jewish in a wider society" (Participant 13), "deep connection to family past and present" (Participant 17). Others nominated particular roles they played within the family as significant to their Jewish self, particularly as parents—, "a Jewish parent" (Participant 9), "It's very important for me to raise a Jewish kid" (Participant 3), "my children are important" (Participant 16). Only two responses (both from Participant 18) defined the participant by evaluating their Jewish connectivity negatively—"not community involved", "wasn't raised Jewish")—and these responses together suggest a key connection between community involvement and family upbringing within the community.

5.4. Israel and Zionism

Eighteen statements linked the participants' Jewishness to their attitudes towards the Jewish state of Israel and the Zionism movement. Seven participants (Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 11, 14 and 21) directly referred to themselves as "Zionist", and one as the Zionist term "Ivri", a Zionist adjective meaning "Hebrew" or "of the ancient Israelite people", to describe himself (Participant 22). Others described a general philosophical, intellectual or spiritual connection to Israel as part of their Jewishness—"Probably more aware and interested in the circumstances of Israel than non-Jewish people" (Participant 13), "Think it's important to visit Israel" (Participant 1). The three participants born in Israel (Participants 3, 9 and 12) each described themselves as "Israeli", all within the first few statements they made in response to the prompt; one (Participant 3) included a further statement "I love Israel with all my heart and always see it as home". This participant also drew a distinction between their Israeli identity and religious identity within their Jewishness ("I am an Israeli first, not religious at all") and qualified their Israeli identity with the fact of being an emigrant ("Since I left Israel my Jew identity got much stronger"). Three participants qualified or defined their Jewishness in opposition to Zionism—"anti-Zionist" (Participant 18), "A believer in a two-state solution" (Participant 25), "align with Israel as a country but not politically" (Participant 20).

5.5. History, Memory and Antisemitism

Fourteen statements described or qualified the participants' Jewishness through Jewish historical memory, particularly of the Holocaust, and to ongoing concerns or campaigns against antisemitism and racism. Five participants qualified their Jewishness with a connection to Jewish history, particularly personal ancestral and family history—"historical awareness" (Participant 19) and "interested in Jewish history" (Participant 13), "Jewish ancestry" (Participant 11), "aware of the history of my ancestors" (Participant 14). For one (Participant 17), ancestral persecution and trauma directly informed their Jewishness: "All too aware of the historical persecution of my family in previous generations". A further eight responses described the way participants' Jewishness was shaped by antisemitism.

One participant qualified their Jewishness in opposition to antisemitic stereotypes—"not the owner of any "Jew Gold" (Participant 25). Two participants drew a connection between their Jewishness and an awareness of antisemitism and racism more generally— "Appreciative of the implications of antisemitism" (Participant 13), "I dislike racism and antisemitism" (Participant 23). Five responses, three from the same participant, linked their Jewishness with a mission or responsibility to combat antisemitism and racism more generally—"Defend my Jewish identity" (Participant 15), "active in supporting/defending my religion when necessary" (Participant 14), and "not silent when others suffer", "stand up when others are oppressed", "tolerance" (Participant 19).

5.6. Cultural Practices

The final ten statements linked the participants' Jewishness to the undertaking or preferencing of particular Jewish cultural practices, as distinct from religious practices. Many of these revolved around Jewish cuisine and foods, though not kosher food practices specifically, like "like to indulge with delicacies like bagels, cakes" (Participant 10), "Enjoy providing food, especially Jewish cuisine" (Participant 23), "into the food" (Participant 21). One participant (Participant 10] also flagged their "favorite festival, Chanukah—donuts" [Hanukkah], emphasizing the fried foods traditionally eaten at that time as key to their experience of Jewishness. Other participants pointed to different cultural symbols or cultural traditions. One participant (Participant 3) qualified their Jewishness with the proud proclamation "I got a Magen David [Star of David] tattoo!"—notwithstanding the biblical prohibition and post-Holocaust cultural taboo against Jews tattooing their skin. Another identified a high regard for "continuity in Jewish education" (Participant 1), normally a mix of religious, cultural and ethical, school-based and home-based, at the heart of their Jewish identity.

6. Reflections

Use of the modified Twenty-Statement Test with this cohort of Jewish community participants proved an excellent tool for gathering contextual information about the community. The themes arising from this pilot study align with and shed light on some of the specific conditions and phenomena of Jewish life in contemporary Australia, though do not claim to be representative of Australian Jewish identity as a whole. This information was then useful in shaping the ethnographic research that followed, both in the selection of field encounters and in the analysis of data. It should be reiterated at this point that this paper does not set out to offer an in-depth analysis of Australian Jewish identity, but to comment on the methodological experiment of eliciting self-attitude statements on identity from the community members themselves before embarking on a larger ethnographic study. Therefore, these reflections do not aim to deeply analyze the findings of the case study to definitively propose what being Jewish means within this community, or to challenge what is known and theorized about Jewishness in Australia or internationally. Instead, they aim to show how some of the phenomena arising from the case study findings shaped further research approaches within this community which aimed to observe and understand broader group identity, and offer suggestions for further applications of this method for exploratory work on group identity.

6.1. Identity Insights for Ethnography Design

Firstly, the fact that the most common way of conceptualizing Jewishness among participants was in terms of religion (or lack of religion) speaks strongly to the way Jewishness is positioned as a religious identity primarily in the broader framework of understandings of Australian diversity. Historically, Jews in Australia emphasized themselves as British subjects, then Australian citizens, who practiced Judaism as a religion, and this distinction between the Australian public self and the Jewish private practitioner, though ostensibly negated by the advent of multiculturalism, remains today for many (Stratton, 2003). Much of Jewish life in Australia still revolves around religious institutions and

affiliations, particularly synagogues. This means that even Jews who are not individually deeply religious or spiritual people are often involved in Jewish religious institutions, in order to connect to the Jewish community [58]. Likewise, the fact that the least common way of conceptualizing Jewishness among participants was in terms of culture reflects this same religion-centeredness in communal activity, and a lack of "culturally Jewish" infrastructure in this community, like social and culinary opportunities, which are much more common in larger Jewish communities interstate and overseas [64]. In response to the strength of this theme of religiosity, even for self-proclaimed secular Jews, plans for ethnographic fieldwork were amended to incorporate more observation of religious and congregational activities than originally planned, particularly around the calendar of Jewish festivals scattered throughout the year and marked by congregational communal events. This change proved fruitful for later data collection across a broad range of themes, including culture, beyond just religion.

Other themes beyond the dominance of religion brought new understanding to the study of the community. The ethnographic study was not initially envisaged to address historical concepts like the Holocaust at all, to differentiate the work from other contemporary studies on Holocaust narratives in the Australian Jewish community [65,66]. However, responses around the centrality of the Holocaust to participants' sense of Jewish identity led to reframing the study to explore questions of communal memory among Jewish individuals on a private level, not just historical projects of commemoration on a community level, which have been well-documented in Australia [67,68]. The ethnographic fieldwork was redesigned to incorporate observation at Holocaust memorial events, including events not held by the Jewish community but attended by community representatives. Responses around awareness and concern about antisemitism and racism also produced a new narrative about this community, where rates of reported antisemitism are significantly lower than they are in other Australian Jewish communities [69]; despite these figures, a narrative of concern and vulnerability around antisemitism arose which had been previously invisible when considering the community's experiences. During ethnographic work in this community, specific notice was then paid to security presence, issues and responses, which otherwise would have largely gone unnoted and taken for granted. Similarly, responses around Jewish anti-Zionism, while only small in this sample, opened an avenue of inquiry into this phenomenon which had been previously invisible when initially planning the ethnographic study based on the outward-facing, heavily Zionist façade of the Australian community [56], as opposed to international Jewish communities like that in the United Kingdom [70]. Although no organized anti-Zionist activity was observed in the ethnographic fieldwork, a more nuanced line of questioning around Israel and Zionism in ethnographic interviews and informal chats was established.

6.2. The Use of the Self-Attitudes Test in Ethnographic Interviews

As well as being of interest to ethnographers in the design and analysis of fieldwork, the use of such a tool may be particularly handy for augmenting qualitative interviews as part of anthropological research. First, the tests proved a useful "ice-breaker" with which to commence interviews; they gave participants a focus task that prompted them to begin considering their own identities in a reflective way, and to establish themselves as the central focus of the interview. This empowerment of participants is a crucial element of the feminist anthropological epistemology [71,72]. Participants who commenced their interviews by completing the ten-statement test were also deeply reflective of their own identity and practices, and often directed the interviewer back to their responses to the test instrument to further reflect, qualify or critically examine their interview comments. This was particularly true of responses that fell into the "values" category, where participants pointed back to particular values they had stated they possessed when asked interview questions on specific themes. Person-centered interviewing theory suggests that eliciting self-attitudes in this way helps "the individual to be located in his or her current life" [73]. Indeed, Levy and Hollan reflect that "in our experience, the direct question 'What would you answer if

I asked 'Who are you?" addressed to someone who knows that you already know who he or she is, in some sense, produces very informative discussions" [73]. Use of the test instruments in this study sparked informative and important discussions, often outside the frameworks of the standard interview structure, like further exploring and extrapolating in their interview on why they conceived of themselves in particular ways, and what that said about their family history, upbringing, politics and broader experiences. Although straying somewhat from the principles of person-centered interviewing, useful insights also emerged when participants reflected on what they believed other local Jews of their acquaintance would put down on the test, and how that might reflect their relationships and connections with others (important given the prominence of kinship and family themes) and the broader profile of the community. This was useful for further developing the scope of ethnographic observation and fieldwork.

The test itself did pose some challenges within the research, many of which are similar to challenges discussed by other scholars who have employed the Twenty-Statement Test or variations [25,62]. Some participants were daunted by the vague nature of the test, despite the suggested examples and verbal re-exploration of the question. One participant, in their eighties, declared themselves unable to take the written test at all due to health conditions limiting their ability to write, though volunteered verbal answers that were transcribed. Another participant, whose interview was conducted via telephone, also completed verbally and did not engage with the written instructional prompts of the instrument. Many participants were unable to complete all ten statements; in hindsight, a further-reduced Five-Statement Test may have been less overwhelming at first glance to participants, and may have been more easily achieved whilst still providing rich data. Additionally, with no control group of interview participants who did not complete the instrument, it is not possible to state that use of the instrument had a significant effect on the quality of interviews. Nevertheless, the rich data obtained through the test was crucial in the design and completion of the ethnography, and the tests were effective as ice-breakers and a way to help participants feel like their interview was centered on them and their own experiences and views.

7. Conclusions

The question of what constitutes identity is deeply complex, and can be highly individual. However, the shared conceptualizations of who community members are, within the context of identifying as part of the community, can shed light on what is expected, accepted and pushed back against both within the community and as an individual in mainstream society. In turn, this understanding can help an ethnographer frame and expand their focus, with a greater understanding of what life and activity in the community entail. The case study detailed in this paper examined the self-attitudes of Jewish community members in South-East Queensland, Australia, and informed further ethnographic fieldwork within that community. Although formalized test instruments like the Twenty-Statement Test as originally designed can be unwieldy and confusing for community members to participate in, based on the findings of this pilot, a carefully amended and contextualized test can be useful as an icebreaker and conversational reference tool, as well as providing the researcher with useful insights into community norms, values and ideologies. Therefore, while analysis here by a single coder does not promise replicability across coders or samples, this approach might be trialed elsewhere with customization to suit the specific natures of other communities and research settings, and may be useful to other cultural ethnographers or scholars of social psychology and conceptualizations of self in subcultural groups.

Appendix A

Jewish Identity Ten-Statement Test Instrument

This task asks you to consider the following question: As a Jew, who are you? Think about how you would describe yourself as a Jewish person; what other factors influence or expand that label? They might be other aspects of your identity (e.g., your gender, your national background, your job), they might narrow down the type of Jewishness you practice (e.g., "religious" or even a specific strand of Jewish practice like "Progressive"), they might indicate your politics (either local, e.g., a particular political party or alignment, or even global, e.g., "Zionist") or just things about being Jewish that stand out as special to you. There are no "rules", just list up to ten statements which come into your head when you ponder "As a Jew I am . . . ".

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

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