AFGHAN JEWS AND THEIR CHILDREN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF ACCULTURATION ON FIRST AND SECOND GENERATION TRADITIONAL AFGHAN JEWISH IMMIGRANTS

A dissertation presented by

Esther Frogel

Submitted to
The Department of Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In the field of Counseling Psychology

Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts
May, 2015
ABSTRACT

Acculturation is the process of cultural adaptation that occurs as a result of contact between several cultures in which one accepts and adapts to the values of the culture held by the larger society. This study examined the acculturation experiences of Afghan Jewish immigrants living in the United States. Through the process of qualitative research inquiry a phenomenological approach was employed to examine the experiences of six male and female first generation and six male and female second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants currently residing in the United States. Through semi-structured interviews participants described their immigration experiences, acculturation process, and intergenerational differences and similarities between generations. Results indicated that Afghan Jews experienced similar acculturation processes as several other immigrant populations in the United States and endorsed acculturation strategies of traditionality, assimilation, and integration. Additionally Afghan Jews expressed varied types of cultural and ethnic identities, such as Jewish, Afghan, Israeli, American, Middle Eastern, and South East Asian, indicating that their connection to the United States may differ from other groups. The results also revealed intergenerational differences between the two generations with regard to their desire for autonomy and religious observance. The present study explored the experiences of Afghan Jewish immigrants from an ecological model perspective highlighting the systems level influence of acculturation and intergenerational experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This study contributes to the field of psychology by adding to the minimal literature about this small immigrant population, and providing helpful information for clinicians to increase multicultural awareness about immigrant populations in the U.S.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .......................................................................................................................... ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ........................................................................................................ iii

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................. viii

LIST OF FIGURES .............................................................................................................. ix

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..................................................................................................... x

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................... 1

   Background .................................................................................................................... 1

      The Afghan People .................................................................................................. 1

      History of the Afghan Jewish People .................................................................. 2

      Queens: A New Home for Afghan Jews ............................................................. 4

   Individualism vs. Collectivism ..................................................................................... 6

   Acculturation Strategies .............................................................................................. 8

   Theoretical Framework ............................................................................................... 9

   Rationale for Study .................................................................................................... 12

   Rationale for Qualitative Methods ............................................................................ 15

   The Role and Background of the Researchers ....................................................... 16

   Statement of the Problem ......................................................................................... 18

   Significance of Present Research Study ................................................................... 18

   Research Questions ................................................................................................... 19

      First Generation Afghan Jews ......................................................................... 19

      Second Generation Afghan Jews ...................................................................... 20

   Outline of Dissertation .............................................................................................. 20

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW .................................................................................. 22

   Immigration ................................................................................................................ 22
Data Analysis..................................................................................................................53
Ethical Considerations..................................................................................................54
Validation Strategies....................................................................................................55

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS....................................................................................................56

Overview of Data Analysis Procedure...........................................................................56
Research Questions.......................................................................................................57
First Generation Afghan Jews......................................................................................57
Second Generation Afghan Jews..................................................................................57
Immigration Experiences..............................................................................................70
Expecting Danger...........................................................................................................70
Nomadic..........................................................................................................................72
Home Country................................................................................................................74
Acculturation Struggle...................................................................................................79
School Challenge..........................................................................................................79
Overprotective Parents.................................................................................................81
Assimilation....................................................................................................................82
Identity Crisis................................................................................................................83
Freedom........................................................................................................................88
Cultural Values..............................................................................................................90
Strength and Pride.......................................................................................................92
Collectivism/Individualism............................................................................................94
Family Business.............................................................................................................94
Family Honor................................................................................................................96
Religion..........................................................................................................................98
Interrmarriage..............................................................................................................100
REFERENCES ................................................................................................................................. 155

APPENDICES

A. Interview Questions .................................................................................................................. 167

B. IRB Protocol, Recruitment Pamphlets, and Informed Consent Forms ......................... 170
LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1. Demographic Data and Presence of Themes Among Participants...............................65
Table 4.2. Glossary of Hebrew Terms and Concepts....................................................................69
Table 4.3. Cultural Identity Present Among Participants..............................................................85
Table 5.1 List of Themes and Their Subthemes........................................................................112
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1. Schematic drawing of the levels of the environment represented in Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model...........................................................................................................................................11

Figure 2.1. Lee’s Migration Model...........................................................................................................24

Figure 4.1. Themes among participant groups.........................................................................................63

Figure 5.1. System levels present in themes............................................................................................116
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Hodu leHashem ki tov; ki leolam chasdo.”, “Give thanks unto God for he is good; for his mercy endures forever.” - Psalm 107:1. It is with Hashem’s (God’s) guidance and support that I arrived at this milestone and without it I would be nowhere.

Thank you to my dissertation committee, Dr. Sanchez and Dr. Kornfeld-Jacobs, and my chair, advisor, and mentor Dr. Robinson-Wood, who helped make sense of this document and valued the work I put into this endeavor. Dr. Robinson-Wood, thank you for your continued support and encouragement that guided me to this point in my career. Thank you to the Afghan Jewish immigrants who graciously donated their stories to provide a beautiful picture of their life experiences. Thank you to Osnat Gad, for being my liaison to the Afghan Jewish community. To my mother, Imma, thank you for your encouragement to reach my potential and giving me the freedom to become who I want. To my father, Abba, because of you I stood up to the challenge of exploring the Afghan Jewish experience. Growing up with the culture showed me the passion you have for the traditions and inspired me to move forward in my life. I will never forget when you told me “Bshem Hashem Naaseh Vnatzliach.” “In the name of God we will do and we will succeed.” This helped me trust in Hashem that things will work out. To my sisters and close friends, thank you for being there and allowing me to depend on you for support throughout this journey. To my son Avrami, I love you more than anything, it is because of you that I had the strength to complete this milestone. Finally to my husband, Mutti, words cannot express what your support and encouragement has meant to me over these years. You stood by me throughout all the ups and downs of this arduous process and for that I am forever grateful. I dedicate this dissertation to you, because there is truly no way this could have been accomplished without you, and it is therefore yours as much as it is mine.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Afghan People

The United States is a nation comprised of immigrants with rich cultural backgrounds, special traditions, and valued customs. Like many of these groups, the Afghan immigrant population came to the United States with a distinctive culture and traditional values. Within the Afghan population several different ethnic and religious groups coexist as Afghan people. In Afghanistan the current three main populations are Pashtuns, the Tajiks, and the Hazaras. The Pashtuns and Tajiks are the two largest groups of Afghans, and together comprise 69% of the population, 42% being Pashtun, and 27% being Tajiks. Both Pashtuns and Tajiks identify religiously as Sunni Muslims. The Hazaras identify as Shiite Muslims and comprise approximately 9% of the population (The World Factbook, 2010).

Phenotypically Hazaras look different than other Afghan people. The Pashtuns, Tajik’s and other major Afghan populations have predominantly Middle Eastern features such as dark skin that are shared with many other countries in the surrounding area with large Muslim populations such as Iran. Hazaras, on the other hand, have predominantly Asian features, which suggest that they come from the Mongols region. This region refers to an area where a group of nomadic people conquered large parts of central Asia and the Middle East between the years of 1206 – 1338. These people primarily dwelled in Mongolia, a northern region of China, however during the reign of the Mongolian empire their rule spread across Southeast Asia and took over most of Northern Afghanistan (Szczepanski, 2013). Amongst these three large groups, there are many subdivisions of tribes and subcultures that are often based on blood relations. Tensions
arise both between the larger ethnic groups, as well as between the different tribes (Aharon, 2011).

The remaining 22% of the Afghan population is a combination of different ethnic groups that comprise a small number of people living in Afghanistan. This percentage is made up of 9% Uzbek, 4% Aimak, 3% Turken, 2% Balock, and 4% combines Pashai, Nuristani, Arab, Brahui, Pamiri, and Gujjar (The World Factbook, 2010). One group that is no longer included in this population is the Afghan Jewish community, which at present is non-existent as there appears to be only one person who publically identifies as a Jew currently living in Afghanistan (Aharon, 2011).

**History of the Afghan Jewish People**

Afghan Jews were historically considered a prominent group of people who had a unique cultural and religious background combining their experiences living in the broader Afghan culture, with their strong Jewish heritage tying them back to the land of Israel and their Zionistic roots (Aharon, 2011). There has been evidence of a Jewish presence in Afghanistan for many centuries. In 1080, there is record of 40,000 Jews residing in Afghanistan (Kashani, 1975). This number doubled to 80,000 Jews by the 12th century (Kashani, 2002). In the 13th Century, during the Mongolian invasion, much of the Jewish population was decimated, and for the next 600 years there was no known information regarding the Jewish population in Afghanistan (Aharon, 2011). There is a record that in 1840 there were approximately 1500 Jews residing in Afghanistan (Raz, 1992), and these numbers grew in the twentieth century as records indicated that there were over 5000 Jews in Afghanistan in 1931 (American Jewish Year Book, 1931).

Prior to the 1930’s Afghan Jews enjoyed congenial relations with the majority population of Sunni Muslims for centuries. The Pashtuns were bonded and positively inclined to the Afghan
Jews based on shared traditions since both were connected by an ancestral claim to being a part of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel (Aharon, 2011). With the rise of the Nazi regime in Eastern Europe and increasing European influence during modernization of Afghanistan in the early 20th century, these positive relations began to erode and Jews in Afghanistan were persecuted. The Afghan government began to create new legal policies to destroy Jewish businesses and prohibit Jews from travelling without permits (Aharon, 2011). This rise in anti-Semitism left Jews with no choice but to emigrate from Afghanistan and find a new home. Between 1935 and 1949 approximately 100 Jews left Afghanistan to flee to Palestine, which became the state of Israel in 1948 (Robinson, 1953). In 1949, 280 Jews were reported as refugees in India coming from the capital city of Kabul (Robinson, 1953). Over time the population of Jews in Afghanistan decreased from 5000 in 1948 to 800 in 1968. Most of the Afghan Jews immigrated to Israel, as they were attracted to the ideals of Zionism. The second largest group of Jewish immigrants went to the United States. By the mid-1960s most Jews had already left Afghanistan and the rest continued to leave up until 1977, which was the last record of a Jewish population in Afghanistan (American Jewish Year Book, 1982). Currently there is one known individual who identifies as a Jew that resides in Afghanistan in the city of Kabul (U.S. Department of State, 2010). There may be other Jews in Afghanistan, however at this time there has been no record of other people who identify as Jews.

Currently the Afghan Jewish community is dispersed as immigrant populations in three main areas of the world. The largest population is in Israel, with approximately 10,000 Afghan Jews. The United States is home to 1000 Jewish Afghan immigrants, and just over 100 reside in London, England. This indicates that the Afghan Jewish population in the U.S. is the second largest in the world, yet compared to other Jewish immigrant groups from Central Asia, Afghan
Jews are much smaller in numbers and as a result have different challenges when considering the preservation of their ethnic and religious identities (Aharon, 2011). Based on their combined Afghan and Jewish heritage as well as their connection to the land of Israel, they developed unique ethnic and religious practices, which have become a salient cultural and religious identity for Afghan Jews.

**Queens: A New Home for Afghan Jews**

Today most of the Afghan Jews in the U.S. live in the neighborhoods of Flushing, Forest Hills, and Jamaica Estates, in Queens, NY with approximately 200 families who identify as Afghan Jews (Krastev, 2007). Historically Queens was established as a borough of New York City in 1898 and became a part of Queens County in 1899. Queens County is the second most populated county in New York State and the fourth most densely populated country in the United States. Queens is also currently considered the most ethnically diverse urban area in the world with a population of 2.2 million (OneCampus NYC, 2013). The resident population in Queens is 49% foreign born from over 100 different nations and 138 different languages spoken (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The first settlements in the area occurred in 1635 when the area was colonized by Dutch and English Settlers (Ellis, 1997).

Historically Queens was a predominantly white area however as social and political climates changed, the area began to diversify. The African-American Civil Rights Movement which was active in the 1950’s, aimed to end racial segregation and discrimination against black Americans and enforce constitutional voting rights to them (Vox, 2013). During the 1950’s the predominantly white population in Queens began migrating to Long Island to purchase homes away from urban areas, as racial unrest became more evident. As a result, the Queens area began to diversify as the Civil Rights Movement made it possible for people of different backgrounds
to move into the area (Queens History, 2009). In the 1960’s and 1970’s many Greek immigrants came to the neighborhood of Astoria. In the 1970’s and 1980’s the neighborhood of Jamaica became predominantly African American and Jackson Heights became predominantly Indian, Pakistani, and Latin American. Sunnyside and Woodside, which used to be predominantly Irish, is now a racially mixed community (Queens History, 2009).

New York City is comprised of five separate districts known as the five boroughs of New York City. These boroughs are Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and Queens. Socioeconomically Queens has the most diversified economy of the five boroughs, with jobs evenly spread across health care, retail trade, manufacturing, construction, transportation, and film and television production. The median household income is $37,439 and the median family income is $42,608. Approximately 24.7% of the population lives below the poverty line, 18.8% of which are under 18 and 13% are over 65 (State of New York Comptroller, 2006). The diversity in Queens has led to some unique socioeconomic opportunities for minority groups living in the area. For example, in Queens the African American population earns more on average, than the White populations (Roberts, 2006). Although the area was predominantly white initially, as the area began to diversify the white population decreased as people migrated from the area and much of this population has been replaced with Asian American immigrant residents.

Residents of Queens often identify more with the neighborhood they live in rather than the borough. Queens has dozens of unique neighborhoods, each of which have their own distinct identity. Of these neighborhoods, Rego Park, Forest Hills, Kew Gardens, Kew Gardens Hills, Jamaica Estates, Hillcrest, Fresh Meadows and Hollis Hills, are areas in which traditionally large Jewish populations reside. Several of these communities are home to many Jewish immigrants.
mainly from Israel, Iran, and the former Soviet Union (Weir, 1998). The Afghan Jewish population is another smaller immigrant group that resides in these areas as this was a common place for Jewish immigrants to settle when coming to the United States. Because of the historical, political, and social variables discussed, Queens has become a place where many immigrant groups have experienced the immigration and naturalization process and struggled with issues surrounding acculturation and enculturation. Afghan Jews are no different than other immigrant groups in this respects, as they came to the U.S. looking for safety and opportunity, yet are still strongly tied to their cultural and religious roots.

**Individualism vs. Collectivism**

When considering the experiences of acculturation and intergenerational differences of first and second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants, it is important to highlight cultural differences that may be evident between one’s country of origin and the dominant culture of the host country. Generally speaking one can claim a different set of values which can be based on the cultural context in which they were raised, or one in which connections are felt. For the purpose of this study, it is important to recognize varied cultural differences and similarities to understand the experiences of the population that is being explored. Individualism refers to a culture is one where the person is regarded as discrete from other beings and is considered the essential cornerstone of society (Kagitcibasi, 1997). Western society is considered to take an individualistic cultural orientation and as a result individuals take the internal responsibilities of both success and failures (Robinson-Wood, 2013). Collectivism refers to a culture where individual goals are subordinated to the larger group, and where the group’s needs are considered more important than individual needs. In collectivistic cultures relationships are often more stable and can be involuntary since groups are often more close-knit (Robinson-Wood, 2013).
Collectivistic cultures place value on contributing to a group effort and express modesty when faced with success and are less likely to take personal responsibility to successes and failures (Robinson-Wood, 2013).

When considering the Afghan Jewish immigrant population in the United States, these cultural themes of individualism and collectivism are very relevant in coming to understand the processes that influence the intergenerational differences. Afghanistan is a culture that values collectivism as do many other eastern countries in the region. Afghan people value the betterment of their community over that of the individual and put a lot of emphasis on the family unit in both personal and public life. This is evident when considering the importance of family in business, religion, and cultural life. On an interpersonal level collectivism runs deep in the way Afghan people interact with one another. For example children learn to think in terms of what their parents think, whereas in Western society children learn to think in terms of “I”. Another example is that in the Afghan collectivist society people base their opinions by the elder married men in the family (patriarchs), and direct confrontation is to be avoided. In Western individualistic society, however, personal opinions are expected and speaking one’s mind is characteristic of an honest person (About-Afghanistan, 2011; Hofstede, 2001).

Considering the roots of collectivism in Afghan culture it is evident that the Afghan Jewish community in the United States was exposed to new cultural values and ideas upon their arrival. As stated above, Western cultures do promote an ideal of individualism, yet there are a diversity of cultures in the United States that hold both individualistic and collectivistic ideals. First generation Afghan Jews grew up in a culture where family and community values were the focal point of society and the experience of the acculturating to a culture where the focus shifts to the needs of the individual can be difficult and unsettling. Second generation Afghan Jews
may also have a different experience than their parents in this regard, as their experiences with acculturation and individualism may be more assimilated than those of their parents. Second-generation Afghan Jews may hold both the values of their parents as well as the values of the dominant American culture. The ability to be very much in both culture orientations is very common for many second generation immigrants, and for this reason the recognition of individualism and collectivism as a relevant factor influencing the acculturation and intergenerational phenomena of this study is warranted.

**Acculturation Strategies**

Acculturation can be understood as based on four types of strategies. These strategies are assimilation, traditionality, integration, and marginality (Berry & Sam, 1997). Assimilation is defined as seeking sustained interaction with other cultures for those people who do not desire to maintain cultural identities. People who are assimilated are viewed as having a low knowledge and appreciation for their own culture, and hold the dominant culture in higher esteem (Robinson-Wood, 2013). Traditionality denotes a strategy where people choose to maintain the connections with their culture and avoid interacting with other people. In this case people have knowledge and appreciation for their own culture and see the dominant culture as lower (Berry & Sam, 1997). Integration is illustrated as maintaining the culture of origin while also interacting and seeking connections with the dominant culture. Individuals using this acculturation strategy are often characterized as bicultural and are high in knowledge and appreciation for both their culture of origin and the dominant culture (Berry & Kim, 1988). Marginality can be described as a strategy where little interest in one’s culture of origin is combined with a low desire to interact with other cultures, which may occur when the traditional culture is not retained and the dominant culture is not accepted (Dana, 1993).
**Theoretical Framework**

This study seeks to consider Afghan Jewish Immigrants’ experiences within a theoretical framework that encapsulates the immigration experience within the context of the many systems an individual is involved in. Bronfenbrenner (1994) developed the Ecological Model which posits that there are several systems that impact a person’s life. A person’s development is therefore reflected by the influence of these environmental systems. This theory identifies five environmental systems: 1) the microsystem, 2) the mesosystem, 3) the exosystem, 4) macrosystem, and 5) the chronosystem. The microsystem is a system that includes the institutions and groups that most immediately and directly impact the child's development such as family, school, community, friends or religious institutions. The mesosystem is defined as the connections between contexts in the microsystem. For example the relation of family experiences to school experiences or school experiences to church experiences. The exosystem illustrates the links between a social setting in which the individual does not have an active role and the individual's immediate context. For example, a child's experience at home may be influenced by a mother's experiences at work. If the mother might receive a promotion that requires more travel it may change patterns of interaction with the child. The macrosystem denotes the culture in which individuals live. Cultural contexts include developing and industrialized countries, socioeconomic status, poverty, ethnicity etc. The chronosystem is the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the life course, as well as sociohistorical circumstances such as civil rights movements, war, or governmental changes. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994). The purpose of choosing this model as a theoretical framework is because in order to make meaning of the experiences of Afghan Jewish immigrants, it is important to understand
the many contexts that impact their lives. To better comprehend this model, figure 1.1 shows a schematic image that helps illustrate the different systems in the ecological model.
Figure 1.1. Schematic drawing of the levels of the environment represented in Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model. Circles represent the different levels of the environment, solid arrows represent the interaction between each level, and the dashed arrow represents the movement of time and historic influences evident in the chronosystem. Adapted from Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
This study will explore the lives Afghan Jewish immigrants in the United States with a consideration of the ecological model in hopes to identify and clarify the systems that influence acculturation processes and inform intergenerational similarities and differences among Afghan Jewish immigrant populations in the United States.

**Rationale for Study**

When considering the Afghan Jewish population in the United States, this small population may be at risk for experiencing similar intergenerational conflicts as are other immigrant groups (Wu & Chao, 2011). As in many immigrant groups, acculturation is often experienced differently between first and second generation Afghan Jews. Among first generation Afghan Jews the experience may be more focused on retention of the culture of origin (Aharon, 2011; Wu & Chao, 2011), and with second generation Afghan Jews, the experience may be more related to valuing experiences in the dominant culture.

In most of the research regarding acculturation the populations are surprisingly homogenous. For example, Yoon et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis summarizing acculturation studies and found that approximately 80% relied upon Latino/a or Asian American participants, whereas racial identity research tends to focus on African American or European Americans. Latino/a and Asian immigrants represent the bulk of the growing immigrant population in the United States and may therefore be an easier population to study than other immigrant groups. In the 2010 U.S. Census, the Hispanic or Latino population had a 43% increase, where Not Hispanic or Latino grew by only 4.9% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). “More than half of the growth in the total population of the United States between 2000 and 2010 was due to the increase in the Hispanic population” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, p. 3). Asian immigrants have also been growing in numbers as they had a 43.3% increase in population.
between 2000 and 2010 indicating an increase in Asian immigration. This data shows that immigration is especially high with Latino/a and Asian immigrants and for this reason a large amount of the acculturation research focuses on these groups. As a result this area of acculturation research often tends to lack in diversity with regard to different immigrant groups. Instead of focusing on varying immigrant populations, the focus is mainly on these two immigrant populations. Consequently more research is needed on acculturation and intergenerational differences. Furthermore, the Afghan Jewish population in particular may be at risk for experiencing hardships with regard to acculturation. The Afghan Jews are a people who cannot return home due to increasing political tensions, anti-Semitism, and the reality that the presence of the Jewish community is no longer existent in Afghanistan. In addition to this, Afghanistan is currently a war-torn country, where the United States and its allies continue to intervene in the Afghan Civil War to dismantle Al-Qaeda, the Islamic terrorist group, and to remove the power of the Taliban, an Islamic fundamentalist regime. The U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, which has been ongoing since 2001, as well as the continued fighting between Afghanistan and Al-Qaeda leadership, has led to a large military presence in Afghanistan creating a warzone, which makes it a dangerous place in which to travel (Vuliamy, Wintour, Traynor, & Ahmed, 2001, The Associated Press, 2014). For this reason, like other immigrants or refugees who come from a war-torn country, the need to hang on to the culture of origin as well as striving to acculturate may play a large role in the lives of Afghan Jewish immigrants and their children.

A study focusing on the Afghan Jewish population can broaden the scope of the existing acculturation data, and help shed light on acculturation experiences among a small sample of the Afghan Jewish population. Afghan Jewish immigrants, like other immigrant populations, have
experienced a process of immigrating and acculturating to the United States. This experience may have a strong impact on their lives. There has not yet been a study that looks at this impact and how it affects their lives. A study exploring the experiences of Afghan Jews will be able to provide understanding to readers about the specific implications of their experiences in the United States, as well as insight into how this specific population copes with the difficulties that may come with acculturation. The Afghan Jewish population in the United States represents a group of people who strive to maintain connection to their culture yet currently have no remnants of that culture in their home country. Acculturation can become a difficult task when one maybe hanging on to a culture that may no longer exist or easier because a culture of origin may no longer exist. Afghan Jewish immigrants may be undergoing a somewhat similar process to what other populations may experience, such as refugee immigrants. This research can explore the Afghan Jewish peoples’ perceptions of their host and birth countries which may be informed by the groups’ experiences of leaving their home country in a span of decades due to ongoing conflict within their host country.

In addition to exploring acculturation experiences among Afghan Jews, it may also be valuable to explore the intergenerational cultural dissonance that often exists when exploring the intergenerational gap among first and second generation immigrants (Wu & Chao, 2011). This gap may also be a result of differences between the parents’ born in Afghanistan’s connection to the Afghan Jewish culture that they grew up with and the more modern culture of the U.S. that their children were raised in. Intergenerational differences can create conflict between generations as the younger generation and older generation may not be adhering to the same values. Additionally intergenerational differences may have a psychological impact, such as anxiety, and/or depression, on the younger generations’ individual identities as they juggle two
worlds. This may also have a strong impact on the older generation as they work to maintain their traditional values and connect with their children all while navigating through a new and foreign experience living in the U.S. as evidenced by other immigrant groups (Wu & Chao, 2011).

The purpose of this study is to explore the acculturation experiences and the intergenerational similarities and differences impacting first and second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants. To date no research has been done with the Afghan Jewish population within the field of psychology. There is a deficiency in the literature regarding this population’s unique experiences with acculturation. As Afghan Jews undergo the process of acculturation, the presence of an intergenerational gap may exist between first and second generation Afghan Jews which may be similar to that of many other immigrant groups (Wu & Chao, 2011). The goal of this study on first and second Afghan Jewish immigrants in the United States is to contribute to the limited acculturation research on Afghan Jews living in the U.S., which may broaden awareness of immigrant populations in the United States. It is hoped that this study will provide mental health professionals with information that will contribute to their multicultural competence when working with Afghan Jewish immigrants.

**Rationale for Qualitative Methods**

Qualitative research is defined generally as specific methodological types of inquiry to explore a social or human issue. Researchers aim to build a holistic picture of by analyzing words, reporting the point of view of the participant with the aim of conducting the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative research is also particularly relevant for cultural research, such as the present study. There are a number of reasons why qualitative methodologies are critical for certain types of research investigations. One reason is that using a qualitative
research approach can help include the multicultural context of the people or place or culture at hand. Multiculturalism is defined as the proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity that demands remedies to economic and political disadvantages that people suffer due to their minority status (Song, 2014). Another justification for the use of qualitative research is that it can help address the researcher’s process and aid in their personal awareness and reflection in relation to the data collected. Qualitative research can also help with making meaning of the unique experiences of individual participants rather than assessing their experiences by a standardized measure. The purpose of this is to capture the richness of the participants’ responses that can often be missed with specific standardized questions in qualitative measures. Lastly, using qualitative methods in research helps provide a voice to people who have been marginalized and silenced in the research due to being incompatible with quantitative research (e.g., difficulty with taking measures due to cultural or language barriers) (Morrow, Rakhasha & Castaneda, 2001).

The Role and Background of the Researcher

This study was developed as a result of factors that influenced my dissertation topic. The first factor was my interest in acculturation research and more specifically, research concerning the immigrant populations and their experiences with acculturation. On a personal level this was particularly relevant to me as I am a second generation immigrant to Canada. Both of my parents were first generation immigrants to Canada. Additionally, now that I am living in the United States, I am undergoing the naturalization process, and am experiencing some of the acculturation and intergenerational experiences of other immigrants that are described in the research. I am particularly interested in the lived experiences of the Afghan Jewish population, as I am a second generation Afghan Jew. My father was born in Afghanistan and emigrated from
there at the age of 10. For my whole life, my father has instilled his passion about the Afghan Jewish culture, and has dedicated much of his life restoring the connections with the Afghan Jewish community today and the rich cultural history of the past. He has spent many years gathering funds to restore the old synagogues and cemeteries that belonged to the Jewish people in Afghanistan, and has travelled there on numerous occasions to gather knowledge and insight into the cultural heritage that he has held so dear.

As a daughter of a passionate Afghan Jew, I recognize that there are many similarities and differences regarding acculturation evidenced by childhood experiences. I believe that, like many other immigrant groups, there is a large intergenerational gap between my generation and my father’s generation, which plays a role into our cultural identity development as well as our experiences with acculturation. I also believe that the differences and similarities between my generation and my father’s generation can have a significant impact my own personal values and experiences. As I experienced this process first hand, and as I wanted to further appreciate my father’s passionate connection to his country of origin and cultural traditions, I decided to embark on this journey to learn more about the Afghan Jewish people and explore this population’s experience with acculturation and intergenerational differences and similarities. I hope that by highlighting the experiences of both first and second generation Afghan Jews it can help increase connections between these two groups, as they may come to better appreciate one another. By having a stronger awareness of the factors impacting acculturation and intergenerational differences and similarities, Afghan Jews may be able to make meaning of their experiences as well as the experiences of their respective children or parents. I also hope that this can broaden the scope of research for other immigrant populations and also help them to come to better understand each other’s perspectives and find ways to relate to one another. It is important
to note that qualitative research places a large emphasis on narratives by exploring the stories of individuals. The personal involvement of the researchers’ life provides a unique lens to gathering the data as there is a personal meaning to the exploration. I believe this provides a richness to the research as it becomes more meaningful not only to me, but also to those I will interview. On the other hand, I understand that my position as a daughter of an Afghan Jew has influenced my choice of topic and could also affect how I may choose to hear the interviews of the research participants as well as how receptive or open I may be to their testimony. For this reason, I plan to consult with a qualitative researcher to review the themes that emerge from the data for their accountability and accuracy.

**Statement of the Problem**

The processes of acculturation may be experienced differently by first and second-generation Afghan immigrants. As a result the value systems of these two groups may differ indicating a potential intergenerational gap or difference. This gap or difference may contribute to conflict between the two groups that may have implications (emotional, physical, social, religious, cultural etc.) for both first and second generation Afghan Jews.

**Significance of Present Research Study**

The present study will be able to broaden the scope of research on acculturation and intergenerational differences among first and second generation immigrants. More specifically, this research will diversify the acculturation research by adding a new immigrant population to explore. This research will also provide a richness to the data by using qualitative methods to explore the experiences of acculturation on first and second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants. With regard to intergenerational research this study is significant in that it will inform the already existing body of research with recognizing the intergenerational experiences
of both first and second generation immigrants, rather than focusing solely on the experiences of second generation immigrants as many research studies discussed in the next chapter aim to do. Lastly this research will be able to identify intergenerational differences experienced with second generation immigrants who have completed their childhood and adolescent development, providing a new perspective of the intergenerational cultural differences that are excluded from literature that focuses primarily on the adolescent experience. This study will be able to provide awareness to Afghan Jews, mental health clinicians, and the general public about this particular population, their unique experiences with acculturation and intergenerational differences, and the ways in which these factors have affected their life.

Research Questions

First Generation Afghan Jews

1. What was the nature of first generation Afghan Jews’ acculturation experience?
2. What specific values do first generation Afghan Jews consider most important?
3. Do first generation Afghan Jews ascribe to collectivist or individualistic ideals? Or both?
4. Do first generation Afghan Jews share a worldview with their children? If not, how do they reconcile their differences?
5. Do first generation Afghan Jews feel a sense of an intergenerational gap between themselves and their children?
6. If an intergenerational gap exists, how does this affect first generation Afghan Jews with regard to their connection with their children?
7. Is maintaining culture of origin important for first generation Afghan Jews?
8. Does Afghanistan play a role in the lives of first generation Afghan Jews today?
9. How do first generation Afghan Jews feel about marrying other Jewish ethnic groups? How do they feel about marrying outside the faith?


Second Generation Afghan Jews

1. What specific values do second generation Afghan Jews consider most important?

2. Do second generation Afghan Jews ascribe to collectivist or individualistic ideals? Or both?

3. Do second generation Afghan Jews share a worldview with their parents? If not, how do they reconcile their differences?

4. Do second generation Afghan Jews feel a sense of an intergenerational gap from their parents?

5. If an intergenerational gap exists how does this affect second generation Afghan Jews with regard to their connection with their parents?

6. Have second generation Afghan Jews faced any struggles in the US with regard to culture and generational differences from their parents’ generation? If yes, what were these struggles, and how were they experienced?

Outline of Dissertation

There are five chapters in this dissertation. The first chapter will provide a brief introduction into the description and history of the Afghan people, an outline of their acculturation experiences, a theoretical framework utilizing the Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model, the rational for the study, as well as the use of qualitative research methods, statement of the problem, and the research questions. Chapter two will be a comprehensive
review of the literature, focusing on acculturation, immigration and generational status, refugee data, religious considerations, psychological implications, and acculturation effects on Afghan Jews in particular. Gaps in the literature will be identified and a rationale for this current study will be presented. The third chapter will describe the research methods including how the research participants were selected, the forms of data collection, how data was analyzed, the validation strategies used to increase validity, potential ethical issues, and the role and background of the researcher. The fourth chapter will present the results of the research as well as the analysis of the interviews. Chapter five will discuss the results of the study, the implications for practice and future research, the strengths and limitations of the study, a conclusion, as well as a references section. There will also be an appendix section that will include the areas of inquiry, and IRB protocols, including, IRB approval letter, recruitment pamphlet, and informed consent forms.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Immigration

Migration has been defined by social scientists as the movement of people across space. People emigrate out of one location and immigrate to a new setting (Petersen, 1968). There are many different reasons why people emigrate from their country of origin to immigrate to a new country. Lee (1996), developed the Push-Pull theory of immigration, which helped identify the nature of the reasons for immigration. Although the term “push-pull” was not originated by Lee, his analytical framework became commonly referred to as the “push-pull” model (Passaris, 1989). These reasons can be broadly attributed to push and pull factors. His theory posits that there are different motivations for immigration, which are balanced by considering how the relationship between the country of origin and the destination are affected by push and pull factors. Push factors refer to any variable that acts to drive people away from a place giving a reason to emigrate. Pull factors refer to any variable that acts to draw people to a new location, providing a reason to immigrate. Push factors take place in the country of origin and can include deficiencies in economic opportunities, religious or political persecutions, and poor environmental conditions. Pull factors are present in the destination country and may include, job opportunities, freedom of religion or politics, perceived safe environment. Push and pull factors work hand in hand, where the push factors can be solved by the pull factors. In Figure 2.1 below, the theory is clearly illustrated identifying the need for more pull factors (+) in the destination region, than in the origin region, and the push factors (-) need be more evident in the origin region than the destination region in order for immigration to take place. There are also
intervening obstacles identified in Figure 2.1, which refer to any barriers (i.e. physical, economic, cultural, or political), which could impede the immigration process (Lee, 1966).
Figure 2.1. Lee’s Migration Model. Adapted from Everett S. Lee in “A Theory of Migration.”

As identified in Figure 2.1, there are both push and pull factors in both the origin and destination countries making the process of immigration complicated and trying on people. Some countries have extreme push factors that motivate people to emigrate from their country of origin often without even considering the pull factors of the destination. The presence of such push factors is best illustrated when considering refugee populations. In his theory, Lee also posited that migration is selective with respect to the individual characteristics of migrants because people respond differently to “plus” and “minus” factors at both countries of origin and destinations and have different abilities to cope with the intervening obstacles (Reniers, 1999).

Although Lee’s theory was established in 1966, over the past decades the push-pull model has gained increasing popularity in migration literature (DeHaas, 2010). As a result, Lee’s model has become the dominant migration model in literature as well as academics when being taught geography and sociology in secondary and university education (DeHaas, 2010).

Kusow (1998) indicated that there is often a blurring between refugees and immigrants who come to the US. Berry and Sam (1997) identified the differences between refugees and immigrants by indicating that unlike refugees, immigrants voluntarily emigrate, they plan to live permanently in their host country, and they tend to live and participate as members of the institutions of the host country. Refugees, however, are identified as individuals who experience a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, in their country of origin and are living outside of their country of origin as they are unable to or have a fear of returning (Kusow, 1998). Clearly, one's status as a refugee or an immigrant contributes to the forces and factors that motivate a decision to leave one's location in pursuit of a different location. Refugees are often emigrating from their country of origin due to push factors (e.g. being forced to leave an area due to fear or
persecution as a function of war, corruption, and political instability.) Immigrants emigrate voluntarily as they may be motivated by pull factors which are identified as being attracted by opportunities offered in the host country (Kusow, 1998). As a result it has been suggested that acculturation may be an easier process for immigrants than for refugees (Berry & Sam, 1997). Although it may seem likely that refugees who are pushed out of their country would find relief in the new host country and may be prepared to assimilate, this process of acculturation is not typically the case (Berry & Sam, 1997). When distinguishing between immigrants and refugees, one can find that immigrants typically plan to live permanently in the host country, and plan to live and participate in the country’s institutions. Refugees do not always see the host country as their new home and often plan to return to their home. For example, many Somali refugee have made a conscious decision not to make U.S. their home (Jibril, 2008). Jibril (2008) conducted a qualitative study that examined eight Somali refugees between the ages of 20 and 40 living in the U.S. There were four males and four females. Their acculturation experiences were explored between 1990 and 2003. He found that refugees had expressed difficulties with the acculturation process, and although some were hopeful of a good life in America, there was a sense that their time in the U.S. was transitory. Many Somali refugees in the study were optimistic that the situation would improve and hoped to return to Somalia when there was peace (Jibril, 2008).

It is important to consider the refugee status of immigrants when thinking about the Afghan Jewish immigrant population in the United States. Although the Afghan Jews who immigrated to the United States do not identify themselves as refugees, the reasons they chose to immigrate to the U.S. were related to the rising tensions in Afghanistan as well as to increased anti-Semitism, as opposed to a desire to live in the U.S. (Aharon, 2011). Afghan Jews may be caught between being defined as immigrants or as refugees. Although they identify as
immigrants, the community in which they came from no longer exists and is not available to them. As indicated earlier (Aharon, 2011), Afghanistan may now have one remaining Afghan Jew, meaning the Afghan Jewish community is no longer in existence and thus not available to the world's Afghan Jewish immigrant population. Additionally, the rise of anti-Semitism, discussed earlier, was indeed a push-factor for many of the Afghan Jewish immigrants due, in part to an underlying sense that there was no longer a place for them within Afghan society. Thus, there are striking parallels between the Afghan Jewish immigrant population and those of other refugee groups, even though their status remains as immigrants and not as refugees. Berry and Sam (1997) also explained how the acculturation process differs when comparing refugees to immigrants, indicating that it may be more difficult for refugees as acculturation stress may be higher. This study highlights the significance of acculturation research conducted with Afghan Jews given similarities with refugee populations, which may put them at higher risks for experiencing acculturative stress compared to other immigrant groups.

Similar to other populations who have been driven out of their country, such as refugees, this research can help illuminate the unique struggles of the Afghan Jews. Immigrating to the US is difficult in and of itself, but contending with the hardship of losing your country of origin, and no longer having a community to which one may return, may exacerbate the difficulty of the immigration process. It is important to recognize the distinction between different types of immigration and whether there are push or pull factors that lead people to immigrate. With the Afghan Jewish community it may have been a combination of both push and pull factors. The push being the rising of anti-Semitism and political tensions in Afghanistan, and the pull being a chance to experience more opportunities for economic and social growth.
Cultural Characteristics

Prior to a discussion of acculturation, it is relevant to emphasize cultural characteristics among Afghan Jews. As mentioned earlier Afghan Jews share a combined heritage from both their religious and Zionist Jewish ancestry, as well as their cultural connection to the Afghan people. The Afghan people are similar to their neighboring countries in Southeast Asia. As discussed earlier Afghanistan is a multiethnic society with a number of different racial and ethnic groups that make up the population. Although many people from Afghanistan have different skin colors ranging from light to dark complexions, racially Afghan Jews identify as White or Caucasian while other groups in Afghanistan may identify racially in a different category. This may be the case because on most questionnaires there is not a clear category for South East-Asian people, so the closest category that reflects both the combination of Afghan and Jewish heritage, is white.

Many of the traditions, customs, and ways of life have been influenced by the culture of neighboring countries, while at the same time Afghan culture may also have influenced those countries as well. This is evident by the fact that many Afghan people are bilingual or trilingual, as they speak all major languages that are spoken in neighboring countries. The official languages are Dari and Pashto, both of which are Persian dialects coming from Iran. Although there is some variation in the language of Afghan people and Iranians, the languages are almost identical. Afghan people have been known to identify themselves in several different ways. In Afghanistan they identified geographically more with their towns and villages rather than the country as a whole. Afghanistan has never had a strongly unified national culture, and war has led to further fragmentation. The country's flag has been abandoned and currently there is no national anthem (Monsutti, 2013).
Within Afghan society there are class hierarchies. Some groups are egalitarian, but others have a hierarchical social organization based on great differences in wealth and social status, as well as religion and ethnicity. In Afghanistan local communities were dominated by the richest landlords, assisted by village headmen. Family elders were consulted on local matters, and many disputes were settled by local assemblies. This social stratification is expressed primarily through marriage patterns. The general tendency is for lower social groups to give their daughters in marriage to higher social groups. The lavishness of a wedding is an indicator of status and wealth. This process may apply in some cases within the Afghan Jewish community, however it is less evident as the population was smaller and less option of creating such distinctions (Monsutti, 2013).

Respect and obedience to elderly persons are important values to Afghan people but independence, individual initiative, and self-confidence also are praised. This is evidenced in the Afghan Jewish Immigrant community, which is known to be open to allowing children to explore their potential educationally. In Afghanistan, boys learn early the duties of hospitality and caring for guests as well as looking after the livestock or a shop, while girls begin helping their mothers with domestic duties. Men and women are taught the values of honor and shame and learn when it is appropriate to show pride and when to remain modest. As a result it is common to find that Afghan Jews may be somewhat reserved about sharing their thoughts and feelings as they hope to maintain honor to the family and do not want to tarnish it by speaking unwisely (Monsutti, 2013). The worldview of collectivism is evident here regarding the role of individual behavior, which has implications for the status, well-being, and reputation for the family and in some cases, for the entire community.
In Afghanistan, there are certain culturally relevant ways in which people interact with one another. For example, young people address elders not by name but by a title as a sign of respect. Another example is when meeting, two men shake hands and then place the right hand on the heart. If they have not seen each other for a long time, friends and relatives hug, kiss, and speak polite phrases. When someone enters a room, people stand and greet him at length and when they sit down, more greetings are exchanged. In Afghan culture it is considered rude to ask a factual question or inquire about anything specific early in the conversation. This custom is important to note when conducting research interviews with Afghan Jews. Respecting cultural styles of conversation is critical and includes sensitivity regarding the timing of an inquiry about life experiences (Monsutti, 2013).

Afghan Jews, like other people from Afghanistan, have had to struggle in their lifetime with many difficulties. Living in a country where there is political unrest, poverty, racial and gender discrimination, oppressive fundamentalist regimes, and an ongoing war, has led to people having to develop coping strategies that helped them manage these difficulties. Afghan people often cope by complaining about their daily difficulties to other friends and family members. Complaining is a method in which they have found they can relate to one another and cope with their difficulties (Monsutti, 2013). Afghan people have also been known to use humor as a way to cope with their difficulties. A sense of humor is particularly important in conflict countries because it is a way in which people can transcend and disengage from difficult times. The use of humor is a way in which people can invert the power in a powerless situation. Afghan people are aware of their difficulties, but are able to make light of them by using humor and laughter as ways of dealing with their painful experiences (Hartill, 2005).
Afghan Jews embody many of these cultural characteristics, yet they are altered somewhat by the fact that they were a separate community within Afghan society. When coming to the United States, Afghan Jews may have experienced the changes in their environment as being extremely different than back home and their identification with Afghan culture may have become more relevant in their lives. This being the case, although Afghan Jews are from Afghanistan and when asked about their identity, they are more likely to identify as Jewish than Afghan. This does not mean that their Afghan identity is not present, but rather that their Jewish identity is more strongly rooted to their sense of self.

**Acculturation**

Acculturation broadly refers to the cultural adaptation that occurs as a result of contact between several cultures (Miller, 2007). It is a process of socialization during which one accepts and adapts to the values of the culture held by the larger society (Berry & Sam, 1997). Enculturation denotes the retention or cultural socialization of a person’s culture of origin. For first generation immigrants, enculturation refers to retention, and for second or third generation it refers to cultural socialization (Berry, 1994). The cultural socialization that takes place both in acculturation and enculturation is transmitted explicitly or implicitly by messages about cultural values, beliefs, behaviors and customs (Arnett, 1995). Researchers have found that this definition of acculturation can be viewed either as unilinear or bilinear. Unilinear refers to when acculturation occurs on a continuum, as a person becomes more acculturated, they in turn become less enculturated. Bilinear, however, describes acculturation and enculturation as proceeding independently from each other and occurring simultaneously (Kim & Abreu, 2001). A bilinear understanding of acculturation and enculturation posits that individuals can develop
cultural identities to both the majority dominant culture, as well as the culture of origin and that these two orientations are independent of one another (Kim & Abreu, 2001).

Acculturation has also often been seen as taking place in two processes, psychological acculturation and adaptation. Psychological acculturation includes behavioral changes (changes in language, clothing styles, cultural identity, etc.), acculturative stress (anxiety, depression, etc.), and psychopathology. Adaptation consists of both psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation. Psychological adaptation affects a person’s sense of well-being and self-esteem, and sociocultural adaptation links the person to other people in the new society (Berry, 2003).

Mental health is often related to the changes in acculturation strategies among individuals. Mental health problems are often least intense with those utilizing integration and biculturality, and will increase in severity with assimilation, traditionality and marginality (Dana, 1993). When one acculturates there is risk of emotional and psychological stress, which is associated with seeking to become acculturated to a given culture (Robinson-Wood, 2013). For example in an article by Gloria and Peregoy (1996) exploring cultural considerations for counselors working with Latino alcohol and other substance users/abusers, they posit that alcohol and other drug abuse might be a result of acculturation stress within the Latino population. The note that acculturation creates a stressful experience where one is substituting one set of cultural practices with another set which can lead to coping mechanisms of self-medication using drugs and alcohol (Gloria & Peregoy, 1996).

Yoon et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis, which included 325 studies examining the relationships among the constructs of acculturation, enculturation, the four acculturation strategies, and mental health. They considered both negative mental health constructs, such as depression, anxiety, psychological distress, and negative affect, as well as positive mental health
constructs, such as self-esteem, satisfaction with life, and positive affect. The results indicated that acculturation was positively associated both with negative and positive mental health constructs, and enculturation was only related to positive mental health constructs. When looking specifically at the acculturation strategies, the results of the meta-analysis indicated that of the four strategies, marginalization was positively correlated to negative mental health constructs and integration was positively related to positive mental health constructs. By using mean comparisons in addition to correlation analyses, the results further showed that integration is the most beneficial strategy in relation to mental health (Yoon et al., 2013).

It is important to note that among the different studies discussed there is diversity in both the mental health benefits and costs. Each dimension of acculturation may serve a different purpose with regard to mental health and may often be either beneficial or harmful. For example, changing one's behavior as a result of acculturation through language skills may benefit the person’s mental health as they have the necessary tools to survive. Behavior that is due to enculturation, on the other hand may cause immigrants to be targeted for discrimination and as a result negatively affect their mental health (Yoon, Lee, Koo, & Yoo, 2010). Alternatively, ones enculturated identity may serve as a buffer from feeling distressed due to racial discrimination, as evidenced by a higher collective self-esteem (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007). The evidence of both costs and benefits for acculturation and enculturation may make it difficult to understand which process is more beneficial, however when looking at the many studies included in Yoon et al.’s (2013) meta-analysis, a trend emerges where acculturation influences mental health both positively and negatively, and enculturation mostly influences it positively.

Another important implication of this study was that although the meta-analysis showed that enculturation was correlated mainly with positive mental health constructs, it was evident
that with higher enculturation anxiety was present. This increased anxiety among immigrants may be as a result of external factors and perceptions, such as concerns about how one is viewed by members of either cultures, fear of rejection, or a sense of insecurity. For this reason it may be possible that a person who is highly enculturated may feel nervous outside of their ethnic environment, as a result of language barriers or limited knowledge of cultural tools to interact with others from the mainstream culture. The evidence of this anxiety, although relevant to note, does not change the strong position as noted in the study that the process of enculturation is very much associated with positive mental health constructs and as a result may be crucial for dealing with stress and anxiety in daily life, as well as a sense of security and support from community members (Yoon et al., 2013).

An important aspect of the acculturation process that is important to note is the experiences one has with colorism. Colorism refers to discrimination based on skin color (Walker, 1983; Okazawa-Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1987). Typically, colorism takes place when favoritism is demonstrated toward those of lighter complexions over those with darker complexions (Jackson-Lowman, 2013). This experience is evident among many racial groups, and has been experienced by Jews as well. Since many Jews have experienced anti-Semitism partially based on their physical appearance, they experience an ‘insider/outsider’ status within the United States. This difference in treatment from the larger society is in part due to phenotype. Many Jews are white since they have Western European backgrounds, and can utilize their white skin as a form of privilege. Conversely, many Jews are aware that they ‘look Jewish’ and are mindful of the socially constructed meanings associated with their phenotype (Blumenfeld, 2006). There are, however many Jews who are from areas such as Southern Europe and Islamic countries who in many social structures are assigned as persons of color within the United States
and as a result do not have the same sense of white privilege as those who are phenotypically lighter (Blumenfeld, 2006). Afghan Jews come from an Islamic country and are therefore often assigned the label of persons of color by white Americans, however this can vary from person to person. Some individuals have lighter skin tones partially because of the connections made between Russia and Afghanistan within the Jewish community, and some have darker skin tones often leading them to be categorized by others in this way once they arrive in the U.S. (Aharon, 2011).

In a qualitative study done by Blumenfeld (2006), he investigated the perceptions of race among 16 Ashkenazi Jews. There were eight males and eight females. These Jews were phenotypically white and experienced privilege in that regard. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, the findings revealed that the concept of race held little or no saliency for Orthodox Jews. They indicated that their overriding identity was Jewish, and any human division was not seen on racial terms but rather on religious terms. For Afghan Jews, who are predominantly traditional Orthodox, the relatively unimportant place of race in daily life may also be applicable since their identities may be so greatly linked with their religious affiliation (Aharon, 2011). Some Afghan Jews may be seen by others in U.S. society as persons of color and can experience less skin color privilege than Jews who are of Western European dissent.

**Generational Status of Immigrants**

An important factor to consider when thinking about immigrant populations such as the Afghan Jews in the United States, is the generational status of individuals. Intergenerational differences have always been evident when considering different generations within a family. In chapter one, Bronfenbrenner’s (1994) ecological model was introduced as a theoretical framework for understanding the intersectionality of systems that describe the lives of
individuals and the groups with which they affiliate. This model demonstrates that intergenerational differences have always been present in families by positing that development reflects the influence of several interacting environmental systems. Intergenerational differences may not always be based on the residential culture, rather intergenerational similarities and differences can be based on a variety of factors affecting people’s way of life as demonstrated in the ecological model. Intergenerational differences may occur with new culture vs. old culture, for example first generation immigrants may have always made their own bread from scratch in their old culture, however in the new culture it may be more common to buy bread from a bakery. Another example of intergenerational differences can exist between religious vs. secular culture where one generation may place more value on religious practices such as attending services, whereas the other generation may be more interested in secular pursuits that may conflict with attending religious services. Therefore even in a culturally syntonic environment, an intergenerational gap exists by the mere fact that coming from one generation is very different than another, as our interaction with the different systems changes over time. Since intergenerational differences exist in almost every type of family, such as two parent heterosexual families, single parent, adoptive families, and same sex families, it is even more-so the case when immigration is involved. The experiences one has acculturating to a new country can greatly influence how they interact with family members. Whether a person is considered a first or second generation immigrant, intergenerational differences can play a large role in how they navigate the acculturation process, as well as the type of acculturation strategy that may describe them, such as integrated or assimilated. Cross-cultural literature assumes that second generation immigrants acculturate easier and faster than their parents since they are more likely to endorse dominant cultural values such as primary language spoken, individualistic
worldviews, and styles of communications that are more consistent with the dominant culture. The parents are more likely to value the traditions of their culture of origin (Costigan & Dokis, 2006). In a study by Lalonde and Cameron (1993) 133 university students and 116 parents were given five measures on collective acculturation orientation, group identification, perception of group disadvantage, attitude towards multiculturalism, and attitude towards women. The results of each measure was analyzed quantitatively with a ANOVAs. The results indicated that parents, who immigrated to Canada from the Caribbean, China, Greece, and Italy, identified more with their country of origin and had maintained their collectivistic mentalities. Their adult children, however, who grew up in Canada had more liberal approaches with regard to cultural values such as gender equality and human rights, and maintained a more positive attitude toward multiculturalism (Lalonde & Cameron, 1993).

In the traditional value systems of non-Western cultures, certain factors such as family obligation before individual interests and respect for parents and elders, tend to be considered as more important than individual autonomy and freedom to follow personal interests (Kwak & Berry, 2001). Within intergenerational families, immigration can act as a change in the balance between non-Western and Western values (Merz, Oort, Ozeke-Kocabas, & Schuengel, 2009). For example, family solidarity is relatively high in first generation individuals, which can act as a buffer from stress (Bengtson & Martin, 2001). However, when second generation children are involved there is evidence that such pressure for family solidarity can be a source of conflict between family members (Foner, 1997). This conflict between first and second generation immigrants may be explained by the interpersonal connections that second generation children form outside of the family. First generation immigrants are less likely to establish interpersonal
connections outside of their ethnic communities (Merz, Oort, Ozeke-Kocabas, & Schuengel, 2009).

When identifying differences between first generation immigrants and their offspring who are defined by second generation status, it is important to recognize the generational gap that exists, both with regard to age as well as with differences in acculturation. Wu and Chao (2011) conducted a study that investigated the generational cultural gaps between first generation Chinese parents and their adolescent children in comparison to European Americans who have lived in the US for generations. In the study, 249 Chinese American adolescents (95 first generation and 154 second generation) and 385 European American adolescents (primarily third-generation or later) were asked to complete measures of parental warmth, parent adolescent open communication, and psychological adjustment. The U.S.-born Chinese American adolescents had exceeded perceptions of parents’ warmth and open communication to a greater degree than it did for European American adolescents. Wu and Chao also defined intergenerational cultural dissonance as the cultural value discrepancies between adolescents and their immigrant parents. One example of a cultural value discrepancy described in the study was that cultural norms for parent-child relationships, especially how parents show warmth and communication to adolescents varies substantially across Chinese and European Americans. Therefore intergenerational cultural dissonance may have a negative impact on the well-being of youth from immigrant families (Wu & Chao, 2011). The negative impact may be due to the difficult task of reconciling the dissonance of the dominant culture and their culture of origin between themselves and their first generation parents (Qin, 2008). For example, the fact that adolescents from Chinese immigrant families have reported higher psychological problems in terms of internalizing symptoms which Achenbach (1991) described as symptoms such as withdrawal,
somatic complaints, anxiety, and/or depression, when they were less oriented to their Chinese culture and strongly endorsed western cultural values, while their parents were more connected to their Chinese cultural values (Bourne, 1975; Wu & Chao 2011).

As described earlier, Wu and Chao (2011) examined measures of parental warmth and parental devotion, and they found that there were greater degrees of cultural dissonance in the U.S. born Chinese American adolescents compared to European Americans. The cultural dissonance refers to the fact that the Chinese Americans would report higher levels of discrepancies in parent-adolescent relationships with regard to parental warmth and parent-adolescent communication. When compared to their European American counterparts, Chinese American adolescents experienced discrepancies with respect to parental warmth, parental devotion, and parent-adolescent communication with their parents. Although adolescents had a need for these variables, they did not experience them from their parents, whereas European Americans felt that their expectations of these variables were met. When considering parental warmth, this high level of cultural dissonance among Chinese American adolescents led to more behavioral problems than their European American counterparts. The construct of parental devotion, which denotes the amount of commitment parents had towards their children, had a protective effect where there was less dissonance among Chinese youth in relation to the European American youth (Wu & Chao, 2011). This study illustrated the evidence of this intergenerational gap and the impact it has on the second generation youth. It also highlights the importance of the integration strategy of acculturation and its relevance to second generation immigrants who may be vulnerable to intergenerational conflict and alienation from parents (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993).
Afghan Jews in America

Religious Identities

Jewish people may identify themselves differently depending on their subgroup. Geographically Jewish people have identified as either Ashkenazi or Sephardi. Ashkenazi Jews are people either from or descendants of Eastern Europe. The word Ashkenaz is a Hebrew word, which is used to refer to Germany. Sephardi Jews are Jews who are from or whose ancestors were from Spain, Portugal, North Africa, and the Middle East. The word Sepharad is a Hebrew word used to refer to Spain. Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews hold different specific Jewish customs and traditions. Although both Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews ascribe to the same religious beliefs, they differ somewhat in interpretation of Jewish law. In Ashkenazi Judaism, especially in the United States, there are formal, organized differentiation into different religious movements. For example within Ashkenazi Judaism, there are those who identify primarily as Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform. In Sephardi Judaism there is no such formal differentiation. Sephardi Jews tend to identify with Orthodoxy, however there is a variation with regard to observance. Historically Sephardi Jews had an easier time integrating into the dominant non-Jewish culture, than Ashkenazi Jews. For example, in Islamic lands where Sephardi Judaism existed, as indicated by the experiences of Jews in Afghanistan, there was less segregation between Jews and non-Jews. The Sephardic Jewish culture was influenced not only by Jewish tradition, but also Arabic and Greek philosophy and science. In Christian lands where Ashkenazi Judaism existed, there was tension between the different religious groups and Jews tended to be more isolated and less integrated in the larger society (Rich, 2011).

Another important differentiation between Ashkenazi and Sephardi culture is the way in which tradition and Jewish law was taught and understood by the people. In Ashkenazi cultures,
Jewish law and the Torah (The Jewish Bible), were often discussed and in some instances arguments erupted. Ashkenazi Judaism welcomes discourse and debate over Jewish law, and encourages people to question and learn. Sephardi Judaism is based more heavily on tradition, ritual, and a communal heritage (Rich, 2011). The idea being that the value of what one observes in their Judaism is motivated more-so by custom and tradition, rather than an understanding of why something is done. The focus on traditions rather than meaning may be influenced by the ideals of collectivistic and individualistic societies. Since Ashkenazi Jews come from western society the greater culture may ascribe more to individualistic values. When considering the way in which Ashkenazi Jews learn their religion, emphasis is placed on personal understanding and exploration of the religion. Sephardic Judaism is based in countries that hold collectivistic ideals and values. It may be that as a result Sephardic Jews put more of an emphasis on tradition and following the customs of previous generations simply because that is what is done. An emphasis on tradition highlights the importance of the collective community and upholding tradition for the sake of the community at large.

In many countries around the world Jewish people do not feel that they must identify themselves in a subgroup, but rather see themselves as simply Jewish. In Afghanistan this was the case, as the Jewish people there were a homogeneous group of people from Afghanistan. When the Afghan Jewish immigrants arrived to the United States they chose to affiliate themselves with the Sephardi community, as it most closely reflected the values of Afghan Jews. Additionally, the Afghan Jewish immigrants identified themselves as Orthodox even though when they arrived, many of them no longer observed all the specific Jewish laws. For this reason, it may be more suitable to identify Afghan Jews as strictly traditional, rather than
Orthodox, since they continued to keep all the traditions, yet were less focused on being observant (Aharon, 2011).

Prior to their arrival in the U.S., the Jews of Afghanistan were strictly religious, however after they arrived in the U.S. there was a large drop in observance. This may have been a result of certain aspects of life in Afghanistan, as well as educational considerations (Aharon, 2011). In Afghanistan the traditions were strong, however the Jewish education focused more on the details of practicing ritual rather than the underlying foundations of the traditions. Once the Afghan Jews immigrated to the United States observance was difficult to maintain since the underlying foundation was not stressed and therefore the practice was difficult to uphold. Additionally Afghan Jews were considerably open to assimilate as many Afghan immigrants sent their children to American public schools. However over time, since there was evidence in a decline in tradition and observance, Afghan Jewish immigrants saw a need to provide formal Jewish education and as a result many parents enrolled their children in Jewish Yeshiva day schools which were mainly Ashkenazi in both affiliation as well as student body (Aharon, 2011). Even though many children attended Yeshivas the assimilation was evident in the decrease in religious practices in Afghan Jewish homes. As a result, today most Afghan Jews would identify as traditional Jews (i.e. a focus on Jewish traditions and customs rather than religious obligation and laws) (Aharon, 2011).

Since Ashkenazi Judaism promotes dialogue and discussion as well as a forum to question ones traditions and find answers with regard to the how and why’s of Judaism, regular dialogue influenced the second generation Afghan Jews who attended Yeshiva’s to become more affiliated with Ashkenazi Judaism. However, when children of first generation Afghan Jews asked their parents why they keep certain traditions, it was often the case that they could not
answer the reasons why, but rather indicate that it was done because of tradition (Aharon, 2011). For those people that did not attend Yeshiva’s not receiving an answer why the traditions are done, made it difficult for them to find answers for their observance, and as a result observance decreased (Aharon, 2011). Second generation Afghan Jews may have begun to experience their Judaism, culture, and identity differently than their parents who grew up in Afghanistan due to the phenomenon of not finding support or justification for their observance as well as being exposed to an individualistic society by attending public schools, or Ashkenazi Jewish schools. Therefore the variations in how they relate and identify to their religion and culture may be one element that could have attributed to intergenerational differences and similarities between first and second generation Afghan Jews.

**Gaps in the Research**

The acculturation and intergenerational research discussed earlier reveal limitations and gaps, which support additional research. More specifically, ne weakness of acculturation research, is the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in samples. In the meta-analysis by Yoon et al. (2013), approximately 80% of the acculturation studies relied upon Latino/a or Asian American participants. The researchers noted that most of the acculturation research focuses on these two populations and as a result acculturation research tends to lack in ethnic diversity among immigrant groups.

Another weakness in the acculturation research is the emphasis on the use of quantitative methods as opposed to qualitative methods. In the meta-analysis discussed earlier, the studies used were all quantitative in nature (Yoon et al., 2013). The use of quantitative methodologies is very helpful in that it helps identifies variables in an organized manner for statistical analysis. However, by omitting qualitative studies, the richness of the data that can be found within
acculturation research may be compromised. Acculturation research benefits greatly from the use of qualitative research as it allows for the telling of a deeper story into the experiences of immigrants. It is important to note that acculturation may vary from person to person, and not all immigrants have the same experiences with acculturation. The amount of stress, reactions to the stress, and the long term impact of stress (i.e. adaptation or maladaptation) vary widely across different acculturation groups. In some cases, the acculturation process does not always lead to a debilitating or negative experience but may even be considered a strengthening and life affirming experience (Schmitz, 2001). This variation in acculturation experiences is important to consider when researching acculturation, as individual experiences are very unique and relevant and one's personal experiences with acculturation is the same as another. For this reason the acculturation literature is arguably limited, as it emphasizes quantitative methodologies and does not take into account the subtleties and intricacies that may emerge from a qualitative study.

When considering intergenerational research, there are several limitations that shed light on the need for more research in this area. First in the study by Wu and Chao (2011) there was a relatively small sample size (n = 249) of Chinese American adolescents which could have provided inadequate power to test for ethnic group differences. To make claims of reliability and validity, quantitative studies rely on power and sample sizes. Another limitation is that the research has mainly focused on the reports by adolescence regarding cultural dissonance with their parents yet parents’ experiences of cultural dissonance were not investigated in the study. Without looking at parents’ reactions, it is difficult to assess the parent-child relationships and the impact on intergenerational cultural dissonance. The current research is interested in both first and second generation experiences and explores both generations’ experiences (Wu & Chao, 2011). Another limitation of the intergenerational research is the need to be cautious about
drawing conclusions about how one may experience future intergenerational differences. There is little longitudinal research to experience the developmental changes that occur with intergenerational cultural dissonance. Adolescence specifically, is a particularly conflicted time for both parents and children as there are many tested boundaries. The research on intergenerational differences among immigrant populations is lacking in separating the specific experiences of intergenerational cultural dissonance from the experiences of most adolescents who also experience intergenerational dissonance from their parents. As noted earlier, many types of families experience intergenerational dissonance between generations and it is not clear from the research what is unique about immigrants’ experiences of intergenerational dissonance in relation to other groups. The benefit of the current is that second generation immigrants who are beyond adolescents are included. (Wu & Chao, 2011).
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Method

This chapter will describe the research methods that were used in this study to explore Jewish Afghan immigrants in the United States. The following sections will present the theoretical rationale for the research design, a description of the participants, the process of informed consent, data collection, and framework for data analysis.

Theoretical Rationale of Design

The research subjects chosen for this study were drawn from the population of first and second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants residing in the United States. The study seeks to identify the psychological impact of acculturation among first and second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants.

This study utilizes a Thematic Analysis research methods model. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It does so by organizing and describing the data set in rich detail and interprets it (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A theme is defined as capturing something important about the data as it relates to the research question, and can represent a patterned response that provides meaning to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic Analysis is conducted in six distinctive phases. Phase one refers to familiarizing yourself with your data, and is the process of transcribing data, reading and re-reading data, and writing down initial ideas. Phase two is the process of generating initial codes. A code refers to a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative and salient attribute that captures the essence of an idea for a portion of the transcribed data (Saldana, 2009). This phase entails coding interesting features of the data in a
systematic way across the entire data set, and collating the data relevant to each theme. Phase three is the process of searching for themes within the data once it has been coded and collated. The phase refocuses the analysis more broadly in themes rather than codes by the process of sorting the codes into potential themes. Phase four is the process of refining the set of candidate themes that have been developed in phase four. Some themes may be too broad, some may be joined together to form one theme, and some may be separated into separate themes. Sometimes subthemes emerge that can be embedded within the theme. A subtheme is a smaller theme that shares the same central organizing concept as the theme, however it pertains to only one aspect of that theme (Aronson, 1994). For example, in this study one theme that was discovered was Acculturation Struggle. Within that theme there were several subthemes, one of which was Overprotective Parents. This was a subtheme because it pertained to the overarching theme of Acculturation Struggle, but focused on only one aspect of that theme involving Overprotective Parents. The process in phase four is to ensure that data within themes should be coherent with one another. Phase five is the process of defining and naming themes which involves further refining the themes that will be include in the final analysis. Phase six is the final phase, which involves the final analysis and write-up of the analysis. The purpose of this phase is to tell the complicated story of the data in a way that is meant to convince the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

When considering a qualitative research methodology it is important to identify a method of inquiry that can inform the way in which a researcher approaches the research process. This study utilized a phenomenological approach to consider the experiences of participants, identify phenomena through the lens of those experiences, and make meaning from these phenomenon (Lester, 1999). A phenomenological approach aims to describe what all participants have in
common when experiencing a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The codes that emerged from the data were based on a number of research questions that were explored. A research question is a question posed that acts as the methodological point of departure that the researcher will hope to answer from the data that they collect (Booth, 1995).

Another factor that is important to identify is the ethnographic aspect of this study. Ethnography utilizes a qualitative process where the researcher can describe the social setting, actors, and events, and create a picture of the setting (Creswell, 2007; Chenail, 2011). Ethnography, allows for the researcher to explore different aspects of culture, such as power, and politics, and challenges them to represent the interactions of the different aspects to make meaning of them. In this study, ethnography was relevant for my choice of location of interviews. As noted in chapter two, the majority of Afghan Jewish immigrants lived, or grew up in Queens, New York. In order to sample from within this cultural framework, I chose to conduct my interviews in or near the homes of my participants who were centralized around the Queens area. This allowed me to gain a cultural focus and provided me with rich ethnographic data that enhanced the research inquiry experience.

Participants

This study included a sample of 12 individuals, six first generation Jewish Afghan immigrants, and six second generation Jewish Afghan immigrants. Three of each group were male, and three of each group were female. The individuals were recruited from the Afghan Jewish community in Flushing, Queens and through the members of the Congregation Anshei Shalom, the Afghan Jewish Synagogue. The first generation Afghan Jewish immigrants had a broad age range as many immigrated at different times in their life. The second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants were no younger than 18 years old, so they were able to speak to their
experiences growing up as a child and teenager with one or two first generation Afghan Jewish parent.

**Procedure**

Each individual participant was interviewed using a semi-structured interview format. The interview process took place in a few stages. First the researcher collected demographic and other background data. Next, the interviews were disaggregated into different themed categories. The first category explored participants’ relationship to dominant culture, triumphs, and struggles living in the United States, acculturation experiences, and what values were salient and not salient from the dominant culture. The second category explored participants’ relationship to their culture of origin, triumphs, and struggles with trying to adhere to culture of origin, and values that were salient and not salient from the culture of origin. The third category explored relationships between children and/or parents who were either first or second generation immigrants. This category explored the psychological experiences of being a parent of a second generation immigrant, or a child of a first generation immigrant. It identified the impact of this experience on the family and individual relationship within the family. Each interview was audio-tape recorded and later transcribed for data analysis. The recordings were authorized based on the informed consent of the participants and will be kept confidential.

**Informed Consent**

The study was conducted with the consent of each of the subjects. At the start of the interview the informed consent was read and explained to each participant to ensure they understand the purpose of the study and the specifics of the interviewing process. Participants were notified of their own right to refuse participation or withdraw from the study at any time.
Participants were asked to sign the authorization form, but were made aware that their names would be kept confidential.

**Sources of Data**

The data came primarily from the demographic variables that were collected as well as the interviews that were conducted. In addition, I kept a journal that documented my observations, ideas, and reactions, as well as feelings pertaining to each interview. My field notes were helpful in that my role in the study as the researcher was clarified.

**Demographic Variables**

The participants were asked to present information about demographic characteristics of themselves and their family. These variables included: age, sex, place of birth, date of arrival in the U.S. (if born elsewhere), marital status, whether married within the same culture, number of offspring, religious affiliation, immigration status, generational status, and employment status.

**Interviews**

Semi-Structured Interviews took place with the participants. This type of interview was chosen to provide some form of direction for participants to answer questions, but also allowed for room in the interview for participants to expound on certain topics. By having a semi-structured questionnaire, I was able to ask certain questions that I hoped to explore with participants, however I was not limiting participants to answer within a very narrow field. This open question format contributed to the richness of the data and the relevance of exploring their own experiences. The interviews differed in questions and content for first generation and second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants. The semi-structured interview questions were separated based on four distinct variables. These variables were: Acculturation experiences, mental health
experiences, cultural values, and intergenerational gap. Below are the semi-structured interview questions that were used in the study:

**First-generation Afghan Jews**

*Acculturation Experiences*

1. Tell me about what your immigration experience was like when you first arrived in the United States?
2. What was the reason you left Afghanistan?
3. Do you miss your home country? What about it do you miss? What about it do you not miss?
4. What do you like about living in the United States? What do you dislike?
5. Tell me about any challenges or hardships you may have faced after migration?
6. What factors contributed to these challenges? (prompt(s): children, family to support, language barriers, housing difficulties, employment issues, and cultural differences)

*Mental Health Experiences*

1. What happened to you when you were facing challenges and hardships? (prompt(s): emotional symptoms: feeling depression, sad, guilty why did you migrate, leave everything and go back; somatic symptoms: bodily pain, low energy level, headache, heart pain
2. How are you feeling now after facing challenges and hardships?

*Cultural Values*

1. If you have to identify yourself what would it be? Afghan, Jewish, American, Israeli, a mixture, or other?
2. How important is family honor and tradition to you? Is it more important than individual needs?
3. Do you share the same cultural values as your children?
4. How important is religion in your life? What role does it play in your life?
5. What are your views on marrying outside the Afghan culture?
6. What are your views on marrying outside the Jewish faith?

**Intergenerational Gap**

1. Tell me about any barriers to your ability to communicate with your children?
2. Did these barriers cause you any specific hardships? (prompt (s): emotional symptoms: feeling depress, sad, guilty why did you migrate, leave everything and go back; somatic symptoms: bodily pain, low energy level, headache, heart pain)?

**Second Generation Afghan Jews**

**Acculturation Experiences**

1. Tell me about what it was like to be a second generation Afghan Jew in the U.S.?
2. How do you identify with your heritage? How do you identify with U.S. Culture?
3. What meaning and relevance does Afghanistan have in your life?
4. What do you like about living in the United States? What do you dislike?
5. Tell me about any challenges or hardships you may have faced as a second generation Afghan Jewish Immigrant in the U.S.?
6. What factors contributed to these challenges? (prompt (s): parents, family to support, language barriers, housing difficulties, employment issues, and cultural differences)

**Mental Health Experiences**

1. What happened to you when you were facing challenges and hardships? (prompt (s): emotional symptoms: feeling depress, sad, guilty why did you migrate, leave everything and go back; somatic symptoms: bodily pain, low energy level, headache, heart pain)
2. How are you feeling now after facing challenges and hardships?

**Cultural Values**

1. If you have to identify yourself what would it be? Afghan, Jewish, American, Israeli, a mixture, or other?

2. How important is family honor and tradition to you? Is it more important than individual needs?

3. Do you share the same cultural values as your parents?

4. How important is religion in your life? What role does it play in your life? Is this role different than your parents?

5. What are your views on marrying outside the Afghan culture?

6. What are your views on marrying outside the Jewish faith?

**Intergenerational Gap**

1. Tell me about what it was like to grow up as a child of a first generation Afghan Jewish immigrant in the U.S.?

2. Did you feel you were able to relate to your parents? Were there any barriers to your ability to communicate with your parents? If yes please describe?

3. Did these barriers cause you any specific hardships? (Prompt(s): emotional symptoms: feeling depress, sad, guilty why did you migrate, leave everything and go back; somatic symptoms: bodily pain, low energy level, headache, heart pain)?

**Data Analysis**

Once interviews were conducted, I transcribed the audio-tapes of each of the interviews into separate written Microsoft Word files. I also create separate files that included observations of each of the interviews. All files were password protected, and saved both on my computer as
well as an external storage device. Once transcribed, I reviewed the data using the thematic analysis approach described earlier. I then coded the data into different categories and meanings. This method aided in the analysis process, where I was able to use the coded data to find relevant themes in the data.

**Ethical Considerations**

All of the participants were treated in accordance to the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA). In addition to the APA ethical guidelines, the participants were also treated in accordance with the guidelines of the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The risks for this study are minimal, however, there are a few considerations that are important to recognize when working with immigrant families. First, the cultural factors discussed in the interviews may potentially cause some discomfort for participants as it may make them feel vulnerable. Second, discussion of intergenerational differences and conflict may cause discomfort and bring up difficult emotions as the topic can be very intense. Third, although the interviews were conducted in English, some of the first generation participants may be used to speaking in their Afghan dialect and have difficulty understanding nuances of the questions asked. Fourth, since this study dealt with immigrant families, there was a potential that participants may have felt pressured to answer questions a certain way as they may have seen the researcher as holding a position of power. These considerations were taken into account while conducting interviews and every caution was taken to ensure that participants felt safe, and were aware of their freedom to withdraw from the study if they wanted to.
Validation Strategies

In order to establish and check validity, a triangulation method was used through analyses of the research questions from multiple perspectives. The goal of triangulation is to arrive at consistency across data sources or approaches (Gulon, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011). There are several types of triangulation that can help with the validity of the study. In this study, two forms of triangulation were used to help strengthen the validity of the research; these forms are known as data triangulation and investigator triangulation. Data triangulation involves using different sources of information to increase the validity of the study (Gulon, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011). Triangulation is a powerful method that enables validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). The second type of triangulation is known as investigator triangulation, which involves using several different investigators in the analysis process (Gulon, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011). In this study, I am the only research investigator, however, I employed another qualitative researcher who was unfamiliar with the data. She coded the data separately from my codes in order to establish reliability between her coding and mine. In addition, I shared my findings and analysis with colleagues and my adviser to gain their perspectives and strengthen the validity of the study.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

This chapter presents the data analysis of 12 transcribed interviews. Participants are male and female first and second generation Afghan Jews. Eight themes were identified from the data, which is an embodiment of statements, thoughts, and feelings. To preserve the richness of the data and illuminate the unique experiences that are best understood qualitatively, a phenomenological approach was chosen. In this chapter I will focus primarily on presenting the results, with some mention of related literature that will help contextualize the data. It will be in Chapter 5, however, that I will present a full interpretation of themes focusing primarily on the integration with research findings.

Overview of Data Analysis Procedure

The purpose of using a phenomenological approach was to consider the experiences of participants, identify phenomena through the lens of those experiences, and make meaning from these phenomenon (Lester, 1999). Data analysis began after the 12 hour-long interviews were completed. During the six months that data was collected from the interviews, there was no analysis done. Data were not coded during data collection because in order to allow for the interview questions and style of interview to be consistent between each interview, I did not want to add any biases that may sway the interview in one direction. For this reason, I waited until after data was collected and transcribed to begin the coding process. Once completed, I transcribed each of the audio recordings. The transcription was then reviewed twice with the recording to ensure no words were missed. I then began reviewing each interview document examining for codes that were common among participants using a thematic analysis approach, as described in detail earlier in chapter 3. The codes that emerged from the data were based on a
number of research questions that were explored. A research question is a question posed that acts as the methodological point of departure that the researcher will hope to answer from the data that they collect (Booth, 1995). As a result of the literature review in Chapter 2, several research questions emerged in this study and are as follows:

**Research Questions**

**First Generation Afghan Jews**

11. What was the nature of first generation Afghan Jews’ acculturation experience?
12. What specific values do first generation Afghan Jews consider most important?
13. Do first generation Afghan Jews ascribe to collectivist or individualistic ideals? Or both?
14. Do first generation Afghan Jews share a worldview with their children? If not, how do they reconcile their differences?
15. Do first generation Afghan Jews feel a sense of an intergenerational gap between themselves and their children?
16. If an intergenerational gap exists, how does this affect first generation Afghan Jews with regard to their connection with their children?
17. Is maintaining culture of origin important for first generation Afghan Jews?
18. Does Afghanistan play a role in the lives of first generation Afghan Jews today?
19. How do first generation Afghan Jews feel about marrying other Jewish ethnic groups? How do they feel about marrying outside the faith?

**Second Generation Afghan Jews**

7. What specific values do second generation Afghan Jews consider most important?
8. Do second generation Afghan Jews ascribe to collectivist or individualistic ideals? Or both?

9. Do second generation Afghan Jews share a worldview with their parents? If not, how do they reconcile their differences?

10. Do second generation Afghan Jews feel a sense of an intergenerational gap from their parents?

11. If an intergenerational gap exists how does this affect second generation Afghan Jews with regard to their connection with their parents?

12. Have second generation Afghan Jews faced any struggles in the US with regard to culture and generational differences from their parents’ generation? If yes, what were these struggles, and how were they experienced?

Based on these research questions, analysis of the data identified several themes that were focused on answering these questions. This provided a sense of direction when analyzing the data, to identify codes that were relevant to the research questions that I had originally set out to answer. In addition to this, there were some codes that emerged independently from the data that were unrelated to the research questions. These independently emerging codes were prevalent enough to be considered themes, however were not included in the list of themes because they were not part of the initial inquiry that led to the development of the research questions. I chose to include them in this chapter under the title of ‘Independently Emerging Codes’ because it is qualitatively important not to limit the review of the data in a way that may ignore some codes that were present but unrelated to the specific research questions. This ensures the authenticity of the interviews and provides important data that could have otherwise been missed.
The research criteria utilized in a thematic analysis qualitative method can be varied depending on how researchers choose to measure prevalence (Braun & Clark, 2006). One could identify it based on the number of times the data item appeared anywhere in the data, the number of different participants who articulated that theme, or each individual occurrence of that theme across the data set. Braun and Clark (2006) indicated that there is no set rule regarding the prevalence of displayed themes for consideration as a theme. Instead, flexibility is required by the researcher to determine how to set prevalence (Braun & Clark, 2006). The purpose of a thematic analysis approach is to reliably and consistently sense the presence of the themes, develop codes that represent the themes, and once all themes are developed interpret the information and themes within the context of a theoretical framework that can contribute to the development of knowledge (Boyatzis, 1998). Once themes are identified, it is necessary to pinpoint a valid argument for choosing these themes. This is done by reflecting on related research that may support the presence of such themes. The findings are then discussed based on the related research, which creates an analysis that is based on merit (Aronson, 1994). In this study, based on the smaller number of participants and the richness of the data, I chose to include themes that occurred at least twice among two participants within at least one participant group. The participant groups consist of four distinct groups of people separated by generational status, and gender. These groups are first generation males, first generation females, second generation males, and second generation females. If a theme occurred among only one participant in a particular group, but occurred in other groups as well, that theme was also included.

The methodology used to analyze the data employed an ethnographic approach. Ethnography utilizes a process of the coding process where the researcher can describe the social setting, actors, and events, and create a picture of the setting. The data is then analyzed for
themes and patterned irregularities in order to interpret and make sense of the findings to understand how the culture works (Creswell, 2007; Chenail, 2011). Ethnography, in a sense, allows for the researcher to explore different aspects of culture, such as power, and politics, and challenges them to represent the interactions of the different aspects to make meaning of them. This cultural analysis is a tool for representing scholarly engagement, and a commitment to theory (Hamera, 2011). In this study, ethnography was relevant for my choice of location of interviews. As noted in Chapter 2 and 3, the majority of Afghan Jewish immigrants lived, or grew up in Queens, New York. In order to sample from within this cultural framework, I chose to conduct my interviews in or near the homes of my participants who were centralized around the Queens area. This allowed me to gain a cultural focus and provided me with rich ethnographic data that enhanced the research inquiry experience.

After reviewing each recording twice and transcribing each interview twice as well, there were 16 total coded themes that were found in the data. I then stepped away from the data for a month to focus on other aspects of the research and went back to it later with fresh eyes. At that point I read each interview transcript two more times with the research questions in mind, and was able to narrow the themes down to eight themes. I then hired an external qualitative researcher who has had extensive experience using thematic analysis to review the data. The purpose of this was to establish validity by the use of investigator triangulation (Gulon, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011). This external researcher read the first three chapters of the study and became well versed in the nature and research questions of the study. The external researcher was given raw and uncoded transcribed data and a document that contained the codebook that included the nine coded themes. This codebook contained a table with one column listing the nine themes, one column describing the themes in detail, and a column that provided an example of one quote
that I had coded as part of the theme in my own review of the data. This external researcher then reviewed the uncoded data using the codebook I had created. The external researcher searched for these themes in the data with no prior view or knowledge of the data using the transcriptions and the codebook simultaneously.

After this was completed I compared coded interviews with the interviews coded by the external researcher. Initially, of the 12 interviews, there were 47 parts of quotes that differed between the two researchers independent reviews of the data. This meant that on the majority of the quotes the researchers coded the themes identically, aside from these 47 parts of quotes. I then met with the external researcher to discuss each of these items, to decide which code fit these particular quotes. After reviewing each quote in question twice, the researchers came to an agreement on the correct coding. Once the final code list was compiled, I then created eight documents for each theme. Each document contained the quotes from each participant relevant to that particular theme organized by gender and generational status. Once the data analysis was completed, eight themes emerged from the data:

1. Immigration Experiences
2. Home Country
3. Acculturation Struggle
4. Cultural Values
5. Collectivism/Individualism
6. Religion
7. Intermarriage
8. Intergenerational Gap
These themes are described in this chapter in the above order to provide a sense of continuity and narrative to the unique and rich stories of the participants. For example, I begin with Immigration Experiences, so as to clarify the transitions and experiences among first generation Afghan Jews during the immigration process. I then focus on Home Country as feelings about one’s home are related to their experiences of immigration. Next, Acculturation Struggle is discussed, as it links the experiences of one’s home country and immigration process to their new experiences in the United States, by identifying their experiences of acculturation. The remaining five themes identify specific topics and issues that highlight differences and similarities among generations and their various experiences with these topics in relation to their acculturation process. This order helps solidify our understanding of this unique population and their experiences as immigrants in the United States. To help better understand the presence of these themes among participants groups, Figure 4.1 provides a visual that helps the reader comprehend which themes were present across participant groups.
Figure 4.1. Themes among participant groups. The boxes on the left represent the four participant groups. The boxes on the right represent the themes of the study. The arrows connecting the participant groups with the themes represent the presence of that theme among the participants. An arrow is indicated only when at least two participants within that participant group had the theme present. The top box on the right indicates a list of themes that were found in all four participant groups. The remaining box on the right indicates a theme that was found in only some of the participant groups. Arrow types differ to clarify variation between the groups.
Within each of the four participant groups, there was also variety among participants with regard to presence of themes. Table 4.1 provides identifying information about participants, such as pseudonyms, age, gender, generational status, marital status, and presence of themes.
### Table 4.1

**Demographic Data and Presence of Themes Among Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Generational Status</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Acculturation Struggle&lt;br&gt;Collectivism/Individualism&lt;br&gt;Cultural Values&lt;br&gt;Home Country&lt;br&gt;Immigration Experiences&lt;br&gt;Intergenerational Gap&lt;br&gt;Interracial Marriage&lt;br&gt;Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saul*</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Acculturation Struggle&lt;br&gt;Collectivism/Individualism&lt;br&gt;Home Country&lt;br&gt;Immigration Experiences&lt;br&gt;Intergenerational Gap&lt;br&gt;Interracial Marriage&lt;br&gt;Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Acculturation Struggle&lt;br&gt;Collectivism/Individualism&lt;br&gt;Cultural Values&lt;br&gt;Home Country&lt;br&gt;Immigration Experiences&lt;br&gt;Intergenerational Gap&lt;br&gt;Interracial Marriage&lt;br&gt;Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob*</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Acculturation Struggle&lt;br&gt;Collectivism/Individualism&lt;br&gt;Cultural Values&lt;br&gt;Home Country&lt;br&gt;Intergenerational Gap&lt;br&gt;Interracial Marriage&lt;br&gt;Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Acculturation Struggle&lt;br&gt;Collectivism/Individualism&lt;br&gt;Cultural Values&lt;br&gt;Home Country&lt;br&gt;Intergenerational Gap&lt;br&gt;Interracial Marriage&lt;br&gt;Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Acculturation Struggle</td>
<td>Collectivism/Individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara**</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniella</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shira</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen**</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates Father (First Generation) and Son (Second Generation)

** Indicates Mother (First Generation) and Daughter (Second Generation)
The data included different languages and terms that are often used among Afghan Jews and Hebrew speakers. Since I speak Hebrew and I disclosed to participants that I was Jewish and had Afghan and Israeli heritage, participants switched in and out of using particular Hebrew terms. Table 4.2 provides a glossary of terms that can help the reader make sense of these terms as they come up.
### Table 4.2

*Glossary of Hebrew Terms and Concepts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew Word</th>
<th>Definition / Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bar Mitzvah</td>
<td>The time in a Jewish boy’s life, where according to Jewish law, when he turns 13 years old, he becomes accountable for his actions and it is often commemorated with his first reading of the Torah and a party celebration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashem</td>
<td>The Hebrew word often used to refer to God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kibbutz</td>
<td>A collective community in Israel that was traditionally based on agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosher</td>
<td>Jewish dietary laws and restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lichvod</td>
<td>In honor of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medina Shel Chessed</td>
<td>A country of grace/ generosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikva</td>
<td>Ritual bath house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitzvah</td>
<td>Good deed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oleh Chadash</td>
<td>New Immigrant (Used to describe new immigrants of Israel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesach</td>
<td>Passover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharsi</td>
<td>Persian dialect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safta</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefer Torah</td>
<td>Torah scroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shomer Shabbat</td>
<td>One who religiously observes the Sabbath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shul / Beit Knesset</td>
<td>Synagogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torah</td>
<td>The Jewish Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarmulke</td>
<td>Jewish skull cap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeshiva</td>
<td>Religious schools for children where both religious and secular education is taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zionism</td>
<td>A movement founded by Theodor Herzl in 1896 whose goal is the return of Jews to Israel, or Zion, the Jewish synonym for Jerusalem and the Land of Israel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This chapter will discuss the eight themes in detail and how the results of the data reflected these ideas that emerged from the research. The themes will be discussed in the order listed above to help provide a narrative understanding of the process in which participants, in both first and second generation groups, experienced life both before and after migrating to the United States. I begin the discussion with an overview of the immigration process to better understand the lived experiences of the participants in the study. Some of the themes overlap and there are often themes embedded within these overarching eight themes. The themes that are embedded are called subthemes, which refer to a theme that exists underneath the context of a larger theme. It shares the same organizing idea as the theme, but focuses on one notable element within that theme (Aronson, 1994).

**Immigration Experiences**

The discussion of the results begins with an overview of the immigration experiences of the participants and how the immigration process impacted their lives. This theme was used to describe when first generation participants discussed their immigration experiences. This theme emerged when individuals discussed their travels out of Afghanistan and the experiences they took with them to the United States. Within this theme there were two subthemes embedded that described these immigration experiences.

**Expecting Danger**

The first subtheme that was embedded in this theme was the concept of expecting danger. This was expressed often when participants described their reasons for leaving Afghanistan, which was due to the dangerous climate for Jews there, or the expectation that it would become dangerous soon. This theme is relevant as it relates to the Lee’s Push-Pull theory of immigration, which helped identify the nature of the reasons for immigration. This model illustrates how the need for more pull factors (+) in the destination region and push factors (-) in the origin region is
important in the order for immigration to take place (Lee, 1966). This was the case among Afghan Jews who expected danger and began to experience more push factors leading to immigration. This sentiment was often deeply rooted in the attitudes of the first generation Afghan Jewish immigrants. Even after migrating to the United States, first generation participants expressed this same attitude and its impact on their immigration experiences. Of all six first generation participants two males and three females described this sense of danger experienced in their home country. Solomon described the reason they left Afghanistan in terms of the feelings of tensions between political parties in Afghanistan at the time.

We felt something going wrong. We didn’t have any problems, the Jewish people. No problems. All the times they had demonstrations in the university, they were talking about how there will be a revolution, and that this king is no good. We felt something…and after we left other families left also, because of the bad feeling we had. And it happened. Russia invaded Afghanistan, the king was overthrown, and over 25 years of war happened there.

Rachel reflected on her memories of leaving Afghanistan and the rushed secretive manner of which had to be done to prevent danger.

It wasn’t safe for Jews. There was nothing bad happening, but they felt it coming. I had five siblings, they all left to America and I was the baby and I stayed with my parents…But you can’t just get up and leave because you can’t bring your business or belongings with you so instead I was woken up at 3:00AM, put a blanket over my head and went in the car and drove to Pakistan and I was smuggled out. Ninety-nine percent of the Jews had to be smuggled out. They would send family members one by one and they would each take a little bit of stuff at a time. We didn’t come with more than a car full of
things. We also had no time to say good bye to my friends or to my cat. As a child those things are important to you.

Daniella indicated that others, even those outside the Jewish community, noticed this sense of fear. "My father was a very close friend with the head of the police, the commissioner. He used to say to him ‘take your daughters out of the country as soon as possible, something is happening. Just leave.”

**Nomadic**

The second subtheme within immigration experience was the nomadic nature of the Afghan Jewish population. Although they were not actually nomads, and did establish homes wherever they lived, they were known for moving around since the diaspora started. This theme is important as the idea of being nomadic relates to the discussion of differences between refugees and immigrants highlighted in chapter two. There are various factors that contribute to immigration decisions, including refugee status compared to voluntary immigrant status. Refugees are often emigrating from their country of origin due to push factors. Other immigrants emigrate voluntarily as they may be motivated by pull factors due to possible attractive opportunities offered in the country they immigrate to (Kusow, 1998). The latter type of immigrants may have experienced a reflection of privilege, in that they may have been more able to take advantage of these opportunities, which other immigrant groups may not have. Although Afghan Jews experienced push factors, they do not identify as refugees yet also do not fully match the criteria outlined for voluntary migration. For centuries Afghan Jews, like many others Jewish groups around the world, saw themselves as somewhat nomadic leaving their true homeland, Israel, whether they were born there, or even visited there or not. This sentiment was illustrated among participants when they described the different ways they left their home
country, often leaving behind things and the life they had established. For this reason the term nomadic is used to describe this theme as it somewhat displays the middle ground where Afghan Jews may lie between refugee and voluntary immigrant.

Saul, a first generation male described his immigration experience as one that had many different stops along the way.

I did not come to America right away, I went to England. I went to boarding school. I first went to Israel for three months and then I went to my father’s family in England to boarding school. After the Six-Day War, I came to America. My father came in 1966, and I didn’t go because of the Vietnam War and I would be drafted, so I went in 1968 or 1967 and then in 1979 I finally became a citizen.

Sara noted the way in which her family migrated was in stages where some family members went at different times, not having a settled home in either location.

First of all we didn’t come to America. We went from Afghanistan to Israel. I was 17 years old. We left in the 50’s to Israel…. My father stayed in Afghanistan because of business, so we all went to Israel and my mother was pregnant. We have aunts and grandparents on my father’s side and we were all divided up among them. My father sent some money and we bought an apartment close to my grandparents. I had seven sisters and one brother. It was a two bedroom apartment.

Daniella shared how her family was rushed out of the country and needed to leave many things behind for their safety.

I came from Afghanistan and went to Israel. I stayed there for six months and then got married and came here…I was only 18 when I came here. That Pesach the war started in Afghanistan, and my father said not to come back. We left everything there. Our
beautiful home. My father went back once to straighten out his business, but we left almost everything there. He came to Israel and he never went back. I got married in June and August I came here.

Nathan, as a second generation immigrant, was affected by hearing his father’s experience which he describes in his narrative. “My father, when he was young, he migrated out of Afghanistan and lived with his brother and then went to a kibbutz and then was a paratrooper in the army and then he ended up coming to America. He went to England for a bit and then came to the US.”

Karen, a second generation female, gathered an understanding of how the Afghan Jewish people function and identified them as nomadic. “Afghan Jews are nomadic, and my father didn’t live here six months of the year. They are travelers.”

Although this sense of not having a home and moving from one country to the next was apparent for many of these immigrants, their connections to the various countries are limited. They do identify as Afghan Jews but when thinking about their roots, most have emotional and historical feelings and connections to Israel even more than Afghanistan, which was what led to the emergence of the next theme.

Home Country

First generation Afghan Jews had different views of how Afghanistan, their home country, was relevant in their lives today and how they view it now. What was found in the study was that all first generation Afghan men looked at Afghanistan with nostalgia and viewed their childhood and upbringing as a utopia that they long for. They saw it as a place of freedom and felt they had a simple, yet fulfilling life there. Like in many other immigrant populations, nostalgia and longing for the home country is not uncommon with first generation immigrants.
(Graziano, 2013). Many of the women, on the other hand, did not see it in the same positive light as men did.

Solomon spoke of his memories of Afghanistan in a way that showed his love and longing for his home country.

I miss a lot. First of all the seasons were exactly the four seasons. Every season exists. In Afghanistan the winter is 10 times bigger than here. Then after the winter, the spring comes and all the flowers bloom. You see the water come down from the mountains to the center of the country. And the fruit, the dried fruits, the vegetables, the fish is so fresh! Everything is natural. We used to eat only natural, we ate the natural way. The water is so sweet so delicious, so natural so clean. Besides that, the people were so nice. Until today I meet the old timer friends, they say ‘when you Jews left Afghanistan everything was destroyed. Even the river was full of fish, after you left, everything was dry.’ Every week for Shabbat fish would come, the Jews knew where to buy the best foods. They knew that the Shabbat was coming and they would bring out all the good food. The ministers of import and export knew the Jews were very smart they could build Afghanistan…I don’t miss it. I guess I can’t remember. Everything was nice. I don’t have any bad memories.

Saul shared similar nostalgic feelings of his experiences in Afghanistan as a child. Although his experience was focused more on the simplicity of the life there, he endorsed positive thoughts about living a simple life there.

In Afghanistan there was a simple life, and I liked that. There were no activities like TV or disco. We watched a movie every once in a while. We had a bicycle and a car and that was our entertainment. Life was much simpler and I liked it, it was not too much
headache. The difference between here and Afghanistan is 1000 years different. They
don’t have coke or ice-cream. The simple food of Afghanistan was tea, sugar, bread and
rice. We had a good life, we had a private house, a maid and a car…In Afghanistan only
one person had to work hard, and life was much simpler… My father was the only one
who worked and he supported the whole family. We would import and export from all
over Europe and Asia.

The women, on the other hand, told a different story when describing their experiences of
their home country. Two out of the three first generation women had they opposite view. They
felt it was an oppressive, dark, and uncomfortable place to live and felt that once they left they
were finally free. The one woman who didn’t feel this was very wealthy and misses Afghanistan
and all that she had there. Unlike the male participants, Sara indicated the difficulty she had in
Afghanistan and her feelings towards the country. “No not at all. There is nothing to be missed.
We lived in a courtyard, we didn’t have activities, it was an old fashioned life, we had to make
flour, and we had to wash by hand. Cooking was at the other end of the courtyard.”

Rachel also did not feel a strong connection to Afghanistan and reflected on the
differences between herself and the Afghan Jewish men she knew.

I don’t call Afghanistan my home country, I call it where I was born. I am an American
Afghan Jew…I think Afghan men don’t want to give up control, ‘I am the man of the
family, it’s my way or the highway.’ In Afghanistan it was different, Jews were with
Jews, and here they fear they will lose control of them.

Daniella was the only female first generation participant who felt a strong connection to
the home country and shared more similar views to the men than the women. As noted above,
she came from a very wealthy home, which could have contributed, to her being more privileged
than others. She describes her experience there as having everything she wanted in life and truly enjoyed it there.

Life in Afghanistan, was different, we were very free. We had Chauffeurs, three different maids. We were wealthy. Most of the Jews were like that, not all but mostly all. Also everyone was Shomer Shabbat there. Only one person in the community was not…In Afghanistan everyone was the same. Everyone ate Kosher, was Shomer Shabbat, and went to the Mikva. Everyone was the same…When I grew up I was very educated. I learned in the American consulate, and I was very into being in the consulate. I was very free, I had my own car and so did my sisters. I learned how to drive with a shift at age 12. And to think I failed my test when I came here. I was a princess there, I had everything I needed. We had everything there. We had vacation homes in the summers. We went upstate to the mountains. We had beautiful parks. We had waiters that would serve us dinners, and we had musicians come to sing to us.

Although they never went to Afghanistan, all six second generation participants had thought about Afghanistan and had opinions about what it must have been like to live there like their parents did. The three male second generation participants shared similar views as first generation males. Jacob describes Afghanistan as being a special place, and wondering how it was to live in such a different place than the United States.

They are so proud of where they came from, they loved their life in Afghanistan, and they always talk about it. Not a Shabbat would go by with them saying ‘well in Afghanistan we had X or Y.’ Whatever it was they make you feel proud about it…You try to keep the traditions as much as possible. That is the link to the past…Sometimes you close your
eyes you try to think what it was like to live there, it’s very hard. They used to slaughter sheep in their backyard. I don’t understand that.

Simon spoke about a family tradition that he was told reminded many of his family members of life in Afghanistan. “In the summertime we would go out to the park where there is grass and water, which reminds them of Afghanistan, and we would make a barbeque.”

Like first generation women, the second generation women had more skeptical and negative views of what life was like there, especially for women. When asked what meaning Afghanistan had in her life, Karen answered:

Not a lot. It doesn’t have meaning and relevance to me. It feels very ancient. I feel like it’s my lineage but I don’t have a direct connection to it. Especially now because it is very tribal, nomadic, and primitive. They went backwards. My mother had nothing good to say about Afghanistan. Women had it very different. My mother was dying to leave…There was nothing for women there. They had to be covered, so obviously my mother is the one that passed it down to me. My father didn’t stay in Afghanistan long, he went to Pakistan, which was actually more advanced. I think the men love it so much. This is the difference, the women had to be sheltered and uneducated and kept safe because they had to or they may be raped or married off to a Muslim. Men didn’t have those issues. I think what they are stuck on is this regressive infantile way of being. I see this regressive state, where they could do what they want. I remember it with my father. When they did business in Thailand they would go live there for a few years and I went to visit them there and it was hell-hole there… it was almost like holding onto his past. I am sure it was regression, this childhood fantasy of your childhood.
Acculturation Struggle

This theme refers to the often trying experiences that Afghan Jews have, both as first and second generation immigrants when acculturating to the United States. First and Second generation immigrants have different experiences of acculturation, where the first generation immigrants may struggle with learning a new culture and working to maintain their old one. Second generation immigrants experience, on the other hand is related to worldview differences between themselves and their parents. Within this theme there were several codes embedded within it.

School Challenge

The first subtheme embedded within acculturation struggle was the challenges second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants had with regard to being in school in the United States. Often they felt like outsiders both by the way they looked and spoke. As discussed in the literature in chapter two, the experiences of acculturation can be impactful on people’s strategies of acculturation. Some may find it easier to assimilate, yet still feel discriminated against because of their immigration status. Where others may find strength and pride in remaining tied to their culture of origin (Yoon, Lee, Koo, & Yoo, 2010). This was the case among participants experiencing acculturation challenges at school. All three second generation male participants felt a struggle as a child growing up between themselves and their peers at school because of their immigration status. Some of them found solace in making friends in their synagogue with people who were Afghan too.

Jacob noted the difficulties he had in school and the resources he had within the community to get support.
I think I had frustration as a child, I would get bad marks on tests, with so many expectations. In the late 80’s teachers weren’t as soft as they were today. They said I was not trying, but I was trying…it didn’t even matter. It was just how it was. I had Shul friends that were Afghan and school friends that weren’t.

Simon shared similar views to Jacob in describing how different he felt and the cultural differences between groups of people. Simon too noted the support he got from the Afghan community.

So usually I would hang out with my Afghan cousins. In school it was different, I went to an Ashkenazi school and the kids around me were different. 20 years ago there was more of a culture clash. But when I was in the synagogue I was the same as all the other Afghans so I felt ok. But we would joke around, even today we would laugh about the Afghan curses, or make fun of how our mothers and fathers act, and how they would get mad.

Nathan also stated that he felt a cultural difference from his friends who would mock his culture. “Come to think of it, growing up, I guess when people didn’t fully understand. My friends didn’t understand certain traditions or the way we did things in our house. Kids being kids growing up, teasing…It was more kids and friends, not family.”

Two out of the three female second generation participants also noted the struggles they faced in school due to their cultural differences. Karen had a particularly difficult time attending a Hebrew day school that was predominantly attended by Ashkenazi Jews.

It wasn’t something I was conscious of but I knew I was different only because of the school I went to because of the Yeshiva I went to was predominantly Ashkenazi, predominantly Orthodox. They put the Sephardim, which is also a misnomer because we
are not Sephardi, in the C class which was for Oleh Chadash, and I was not Oleh Chadash. They assumed because I am dark that I don’t have a brain. It was not something I was conscious of until I went to the school that made me very aware of who I was.

**Overprotective Parents**

The second subtheme embedded in acculturation struggle was the notion of having overprotective parents. This code highlighted the idea that second generation immigrants felt that their parents were more overprotective than their peers in the United States. This may be due to the fact that in some immigrant populations first generation immigrants may have more strict and traditional beliefs whereas second generation may be relatively more liberal (Lalonde & Cameron, 1993). This was only the case with the female participants, two of which spoke out about what it was like to have overprotective parents. When asked about her upbringing with her parents and any conflict she may have had, Ruth noted:

> Yea a lot of resentment with that overprotectiveness. They did finally let me go to sleep away camp, but I was 16. I couldn’t go away to college. They never told me who I could date, so long as they were Orthodox, and now I let my kids go wherever they want…Well I let my kids do whatever; I was pretty lenient. I do have them stay in touch with me when they are out.

Shira shared similar feelings to Ruth and expanded on how she felt having overprotective parents.

> A lot of my friends went to summer camps in Israel or Europe, but my parents didn’t let them because they never did that. They also didn’t let me go to Israel for the year. They always want you to stay close to home, that’s very important to them. Up until a certain age I needed to tell them where I was going, I needed everything approved. I always felt
like a baby…Afghans are overprotective. That’s so annoying! I got a cellphone in 11th grade, I was literally embarrassed for half my life, because I couldn’t do stuff. They would say things like ‘I trust you, but I don’t trust people around you.’

**Assimilation**

The third subtheme embedded in the acculturation struggle theme was assimilation. As discussed in chapter one, assimilation refers to an acculturation strategy of seeking sustained interaction with other cultures for those people who do not desire to maintain cultural identities (Berry & Sam, 1997). The results of this study showed that second generation Afghan Jews were likely to assimilate into the American culture and began to identify with it more than their parents did. Some participants indicated that their parents who wanted them to fit in encouraged this.

Jacob discussed how he identifies more with American culture:

So I identify much more with American culture because we grew up here. My parents and other Afghan Jews tried to stuff America down our throats. ‘You are in America now you need to try to be American, you have to do little league, and you have to eat apple pie and hamburgers.’ I hated baseball growing up, I wanted to play soccer, not baseball. So they tried to force-feed us in a nice way, but they wanted us to be a staple in the society. They come with accents and a little less knowledge, and they joke around about how their knowledge of America is better than what it is. I’m more American now than I am Afghani, or Israeli or anything else unfortunately…You want to be Jewish first, but I don’t want to BS myself, I am a spoiled American…What I love about America is that we are spoiled American Jews and we get whatever we want. The fact that I can walk into Wassermann’s and get a gallon of milk at two AM. The fact that I have 8000
restaurants that I can eat from without a problem. That fact that I can wear my Yarmulke and feel like a normal person. America is the Medina Shel Chessed, you can do what you want here and there are no retributions, you have freedom. What I hate about America is the same stuff, the fact that we have all these things makes us lose sight about what really matters. The same things I love about it are the same things I despise about it.

Like Jacob, Shira also felt a stronger connection to her American culture than her Afghan roots:

Everyday life I’m American…When I was younger all my friends got to do things that I couldn’t do. My parents were stricter. Like because I was a girl, my dad wouldn’t let me do some things because they were so overprotective. I would yell at them. This isn’t Afghanistan. We don’t wear Burqas or anything…its better. More spoiled things. It’s America it’s the best country. Money wise it’s a powerful country. I wouldn’t live in Israel. I don’t dislike anything. I am not so into politics so if I was into that I guess it would bother me. America is familiar to me. I wouldn’t want to go anywhere else.

Identity Crisis

The fourth subtheme embedded within the acculturation struggle theme was identity crisis. This subtheme was relevant because it was apparent that all participants struggled with answering the demographic question about their ethnic and racial identity. In many countries around the world Jewish people do not feel that they necessarily identify with one subgroup, but rather see themselves as simply Jewish. In Afghanistan this was the case, as the Jewish people there were a homogeneous group of people (Aharon, 2011). However, when asked about their identities in this studies the answers varied greatly. Many noted they were always unsure what to fill out in a demographic questionnaire, since many of their identities were mixed, i.e. Jewish,
Middle Eastern, Caucasian, South East Asian, Arab etc. In the interviews participants were initially asked to state their race and/or ethnicity. Later on in the interview, participants were asked to expound on how they identify themselves. Participant responses varied tremendously and showed a range of responses for race and/or ethnicity as well as their own self-identified cultural identity. To clearly present the data, Table 4.3 was created below to show the variance in responses to the questions asked regarding this topic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Generational Status</th>
<th>Race and/or Ethnicity</th>
<th>Identification Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>White/Jewish/Argentinian/Half Romanian</td>
<td>Afghan Jewish American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saul</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Asian Sephardic</td>
<td>Afghan Jewish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Afghan/Asian</td>
<td>Afghan Jewish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I’m from Afghanistan, even my children will say they are Afghani. Because Afghan people are a very good name all over the world. Afghan Jewish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>How do you identify yourself? It depends who I speak to. If I’m among Americans I say I’m American. If I’m in a Jewish setting I say I’m an Afghan Jew, most cases I will say that, more so than American Jew. No shame in it, and usually people say “wow I didn’t know there were any Jews in Afghanistan.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>White/Other</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>White/Middle Eastern/ Other</td>
<td>Sometimes I play with it, I’ve put White, or Other, or Middle Eastern. When I was applying for College I went with my parents to a college and we were filling out the form and that section came up and I looked at my mom and asked her what to put down. In the end I put Middle Eastern…Afghan American Jew in that order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Jewish Afghan American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Russian/Afghan</td>
<td>When people ask me I tell them International. Actually I am born in Russia, grew up in Afghanistan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniella</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>White/Asian</td>
<td>Afghan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Sephardi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shira</td>
<td></td>
<td>Afghani/Israeli/White</td>
<td>If someone says what’s your nationality I say Afghan Israeli – because I am usually talking to Jews. But if it’s not a Jew then I say I’m also Jewish. I feel like America is implied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jewish/Central Asian/White</td>
<td>I say I am part Afghan part Bukharin, but I am Jewish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3 demonstrates the variability in identity among Afghan Jewish immigrants of both first and second generation and how this speaks to differences in the way that they managed the acculturation process.
The last subtheme that was embedded in the acculturation struggle theme was freedom. This was evident because the concept of United States being a place of freedom, helped people acculturate. Freedom, to many immigrants, may be synonymous with the concept of privilege. Privilege is the sociological idea that some groups have advantages relative to other groups. The term is commonly used in the context of social inequality, particularly with regards to race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability and social class (Twine, 2013). Although a person coming from a country such as the United States, where most people are awarded freedom, may not see this as a privilege, for those coming from places lacking freedom, this may seem like the only factor standing in the way of their success. The participants in this study recognized freedom as a privilege, in that by having freedom to do what they wanted, they felt they were awarded a privilege to reach their goals without the obstacles they had in Afghanistan. All six first generation participants noted that they recognized the United States had freedoms that were not awarded elsewhere. David was concerned that there was too much freedom available and this was not a good thing. He said:

I don’t like that people are so sexually free. They are giving free condoms for 11 year olds in school. What will be next, in ten years from now someone will say I want to marry my dog, so they can do it? How far can you debase social values before something happens and everything collapses? Most empires collapsed because they either restricted too much or became too free.

Relative to the more restrictive experiences she had in Afghanistan, Sara also had difficulties accepting a more liberal lifestyle in the United States.
I don’t like these days what’s going on. There is too much freedom, too much of different things happening. People from all over the world come to be here, there are a lot of crimes, and it’s uncomfortable. Anybody can do anything they want. What is happening among the people, how they reacting once against another. The young generation is free to do anything. Otherwise I think America is a great place.

Second generation participants also identified freedom as an important factor present in their life in the United States. Simon noted the way in which freedom affects him. “First of all I love that there is freedom of religion in the US. I like the sights; it’s a beautiful country. I feel respected for my culture and other people are too. The opportunity to find work is great. The opportunity to study in the colleges is great.”

Karen also shared a similar appreciation to the freedom in the United States to contrast the freedom in the United States with other places.

I am free; there are no walls. My husband is from South Africa, and there are walls everywhere. Even if you are in a beautiful Jewish community in South Africa, there are walls, and you can’t walk freely in the street…Where I live, it is beautiful, beautiful backyards. We have two major supermarkets; I feel very lucky where I live. I appreciate that we have a democracy. I appreciate I can practice my religion any way that I feel comfortable. I don’t live in an extreme community, it is a growing strong modern orthodox community and it doesn’t intimidate me.

Karen’s experience showed how her sense of freedom was imbued with personal restraint. This was done so with mention of class status, and the need for cultural acceptance, which in comparison to how she perceived her husband’s upbringing, was not a freedom
available to him in South Africa. In this case she considered her freedom with these underlying ideas in mind, although she herself never experienced a life without such liberties.

**Cultural Values**

The theme of cultural values denotes the importance of cultural values to the first and second generation participants. Cultural values in this study refer to the values participants had growing up in Afghanistan, or in a home with Afghan parents, influenced both from the Afghan culture, and also from a predominantly religious Jewish culture. Afghan Jews traditionally saw the maintenance of tradition and culture to be extremely important. However at times the importance of culture was attended to, yet not fully embraced. This may be due to the acculturation process where Afghan Jews were considerably open to assimilate as many Afghan immigrants sent their children to American public schools (Aharon, 2011). The persistence of maintaining the culture was expressed both by first and second generation Jews in the study. First and second generation men found that cultural maintenance was a strong value in their lives. First and second generation women tended to be less connected to the culture, and unsure of how it could be applied to their lives. This difference may, again, speak to the role of gender differences in the predominantly patriarchal Afghan Jewish culture, where although there was a role for women in the culture, the privilege and enjoyment of many of these traditions were more heavily impressed upon men within the culture.

Solomon indicated the richness of culture and how important it was for him to keep it after immigrating. He noted how difficult it was for him to try to assimilate when he first came to the United States and the pain involved with living without his cultural values. “I went with the flow, and saw it was no good. After when you want to build family and raise family, the best
way is to keep the tradition…First of all you feel very lonely and you don’t have so much to keep the old traditions.”

Simon spoke about his culture as being very important to his life and something he values from his parents and previous generations.

So a lot of it came from the house. Both my parents speak Pharsi. They are both Afghan, we love the culture, the music. They speak the language in the house, they love the music, and we always had it playing. As a child I had no connection, but as I got older I started liking it more…As a child I thought it was funny but also thought it was something unique. We are a few people and in 20 or 30 years it will be gone, so I want to hold on to it. There is a feel of longing to the culture that I connect to, the food, and the music. I was always surrounded by it and it matters to me.

Unlike Simon and other male participants, Rachel did not see the value of the Afghan culture the same way: “Afghans are not a specific way of life, the traditions are unique but there are many similarities with other communities. I think Jews from all over the world, we know they are all family oriented, similar mentalities.”

Ruth also indicated that she does not connect heavily to the culture but noted that there are times when she values it. “I really don’t identify with it. I don’t speak Afghani, maybe I will make some dishes once in a while around a holiday. I might buy it in Queens. Afghan customs I bring into the holidays.”

These examples, as well as many others found in the data illustrate the diversity among participants with regard to the importance given to cultural values. Even though many women did not endorse it as extremely important, all participants indicated how it affects them to be Afghan and come from these unique cultural values.
Strength and Pride

Contained in the theme of cultural values another subtheme emerged from the data and is embedded within it. This is the subtheme of strength and pride, which refers to the attitude often held by Afghan Jews of facing challenges head on, and persevering in the face of adversity. Afghan Jews often used different methods, such as humor, to provide themselves with strength and pride to help themselves better manage their lives both in Afghanistan and the United States. Afghans may use humor or lightheartedness as a way to cope with their difficulties. A sense of humor is particularly important in conflict countries because it is a way in which people can disengage from difficult times. Afghan people are aware of their difficulties, but are able to make light of them as a way of dealing with their painful experiences (Hartill, 2005). In four out of six first generation participants this theme was addressed as an important element to their cultural values.

David spoke a lot about his immigration experiences as well as his struggles with acculturation. In his discussion he often echoed this concept of strength and pride, which was a big part of his Afghan Jewish cultural value.

I overcame my challenges. In my experience a challenge is not a wall it is an opportunity to solve and you go up, and think where is this going to take me next? I never ran away from a challenge… Look, the challenges for me, they are not something that holds me back but an obstacle to overcome. I am now the most successful man in my industry. I love my industry, I give a lot to it. It gave a lot to me. I have the best reputation. I worked hard and have high principals.

Strength and pride was also demonstrated to be a theme among first generation women, particularly Rachel. Although she came as an early teen to the United States, she spoke about her
early experiences in Afghanistan as being very impactful and formative to her outlook on life. She too spoke in terms that resonated the cultural value of strength and pride.

I didn’t look back. If I had a difficulty with something I always looked at the light at the end of the tunnel. Any difficulty you had, there is a way to fix it. I was always like that, you surround yourself with good people. I surrounded myself with good friends and family in my life. Whenever I have ups and downs, that’s life you have to get up and move on.

Among second generation participants this theme appeared to have been passed on from the first generation as a cultural value that resonated with them. Although all six male and female second generation participants expressed the larger theme of cultural values, all of the males, but only one female described these feelings of strength and pride. One second generation male participant, Jacob, discussed the challenges he experienced with acculturation when he was growing up. He spoke of the experiences of being teased for being a second generation immigrant in school, and noted the importance of having a cultural value of strength and pride.

You would think that a child would hate his background, but I never saw it that way. Things happen and you need to adjust, and I actually think it made me into a much stronger person today because of that. I have no question that my background helped me get where I am today…It taught me how to persevere and tackle challenges that seem impossible. There is no doubt that that helped me.

Another second generation male, Nathan, who also experienced being teased in school and, shared similar views about having strength and pride: “My father used to tell me that the best thing to do when people make fun of you is to stand up for yourself.”
The one second generation female participant who shared similar feelings, Shira, indicated that she too felt a sense of strength in the face of adversity. “I’m a pretty relaxed person. I will be upset for five minutes and then get over it. It’s not in my hands; I don’t get depressed or anything.”

These examples indicate a prevailing attitude and strength that acted as a protective factor for many Afghan Jewish immigrants of both generations. When faced with adversity, this attitude was helpful to them in persevering and moving forward with their life. The hopefulness, humor, lightheartedness, and strength indicative of this attitude, helped them manage many hardships as well as personal struggles that were overcome by remaining strong in their positive attitude.

**Collectivism/Individualism**

Afghan Jewish culture, similar to that of the general Afghan culture is one that values collectivism. Afghan people value the betterment of their community and family over that of the individual needs (Hofstede, 2001). Although by coming to the United States and seeking out independence and opportunity, many Afghans appreciated the individualistic ideals, collectivism remained a core of their identity and cultural approach to life. This was evident with participants' reports of the importance of community and family as well as self-sacrifice for the greater good. All 12 participants saw their lives as being deeply rooted in collectivistic ideals and identified ways in which this is manifested. Within this theme, there are two codes embedded

**Family Business**

The first subtheme that was identified within collectivism is family business. Many Afghans came and started their own businesses when they immigrated to the United States, primarily working in the Jewelry industry. These business fostered a family business atmosphere
where many second generation immigrants stayed in the family business. Often this was the case back in Afghanistan for first generation immigrants as well. This may have been related to the idea that many first generation immigrants see family solidarity as relatively highly important which can act as a buffer from stresses involved with immigration (Bengtson & Martin, 2001). All of the three first generation men worked in family businesses. One of the second generation men, and one of the second generation women continue to work in family businesses. All other participants noted that they either have cousins or siblings that work in their family business as well. When describing, Solomon, a first generation male, noted:

I landed on Thursday and I started working with my father’s friends on Sunday in Jewelry. I worked for them for three years and then got my green card… My challenge was to go work and make money. My father had a friend he used to be partners with in Afghanistan. He went straight from Afghanistan to America and succeeded and imported gemstones and diamonds. I worked with him.

Nathan, who works in diamonds with his father stated:

I work in sales, I am a businessman and salesman…My father proved to me that you have to work hard and family comes before everything.

Sara, a first generation female, spoke about what business was like for her family and community when they went through the immigration process.

My brother in law did all the research and said America is for us, he looked to see where to buy a house, and analyzed all the neighborhoods, and we settled in Rego Park, Forest Hills. They opened the business, from then on more and more Afghans came. Because of us, people heard there was an Afghan family in America, so they all came.
Sara’s recollection of her immigration experience illustrates the value placed on having business connections within the family. Her story indicated that those with higher positions within the family business were seen as wise and often were looked to for guidance in making decisions such as purchasing a home, in the United States.

**Family Honor**

The second subtheme embedded within the collectivism theme is family honor. This refers to the importance of honoring and respecting one’s elders, bringing honor to one’s family and household, and bringing honor to the greater Afghan Jewish community. As discussed in chapter 2 there are some culturally relevant ways in which people interact with each other that denote a sense of honor for the family and for the community (Monsutti, 2013). As seen in many non-Western cultures, family solidarity and honor is high in first generation individuals (Bengtson & Martin, 2001). In this study, this ideal was found to be important to all participants regardless of generational status. All six first generation participants indicated that family honor and collectivistic needs come above the individual’s needs. Of the six second generation participants, two males and one female indicated that family honor comes above individual needs, one male and one female indicated that family honor does not come above individual needs, and one female indicated that her individual needs never came in conflict with the collective needs because they always aligned. When discussing his family, one first generation male, Solomon, noted: “It is more important than individual needs because it is respect. You have to respect your parents or older sibling and listen. It is very important.”

A first generation female, Rachel shared the same belief that one should provide honor to the family above their own needs:
My family is here, my home is here, my children and grandchildren. Home is where your family is. I don’t miss where I have lived, where I am is what matters. There is nothing I don’t like…I think because of my family values, my children and grandchildren come to me before anyone else. Everyone depends on everyone. Family honor is very important.

A second generation male, Simon, identified how he too valued this concept as it was embedded in messages taught to him by his parents during his upbringing:

So we were brought up respecting your parents and your elders and being close with the families. Especially my mom’s side, her brothers and sisters are all really close. Whenever we go on trips we respect our elders, we go together as a family with our uncles and our cousins. We care for each other, we have a big respect for our grandmother. She was someone that was very vibrant within the house. It was mainly connected to the values we have in Judaism…Yes it is more important than individual needs.

Karen, a second generation female did not share the same views as other participants, and resisted the idea of collectivism:

No, I don’t think it is more important. That is my conflict between the old world and the new world. I feel collectivism within the context of Jews, my family feels it within the context of the family. I have a conflict with that. I am part of it in one sense but I also resent that I am pushed in that direction. There is this imposition. That’s why I think a lot of the Afghan men don’t get married, because they are holding a flag to their family and they can’t commit to another family. Not one of my second generation boy cousins is married. That is weird. They are holding a flag. My parents don’t realize they are cultivating this tribal mentality.
Religion

Religion plays a large role in both the lives of first and second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants. This was not only strictly a religious value but one deeply rooted in culture. Many still hold it as a strong importance in their life, yet some less. Many felt that it became less important after immigration and slowly less salient for their children. In Afghanistan the traditions were strong, however the Jewish education focused more on the details of practicing ritual rather than the underlying foundations of the traditions. Once Afghan Jews immigrated to the United States observance was difficult to maintain since the underlying foundation was not stressed upon and therefore the practice was difficult to uphold. Even though many children attended yeshivas the assimilation was evident in the decrease in religious practices in Afghan Jewish homes as a result of acculturation and a desire to become more connected to American culture (Aharon, 2011). Participants spoke of this struggle to maintain religious values while also trying to assimilate to the greater American culture. All three first generation men saw religion as a vital part of their life both in Afghanistan and the United States. Saul, a first generation male, spoke about the choice to move to the United States, as very religiously driven.

America is the place where Judaism is strongest in the world. We came here we were not too religious but thank God after we got married we became religious. All Afghan Jews were keeping Shabbat… It made me realize that no matter where you are that you have to keep Shabbat…Very important. To live in America, if you are not religious you destroy your family. Everyone will be for yourself. The Torah and family bring people together, if you don’t have it everyone will go for themselves.

All three first generation women shared the belief that religion is at the core of their existence. Rachel, a first generation female, indicated:
Religion to me is like using directions in life. When you learn to drive a car you need to follow the directions. Some of the rules you break and some you don’t but you follow the same map. If you don’t you might be lost. I feel extremely connected to Hashem, I am very spiritual. As far as being very religious? I am pretty religious.

Afghan Jews felt more connected to the Jewish tradition than the actual Jewish law at times, and stressed the importance of the tradition over the law to the children. As discussed in chapter two, Afghan Jewish immigrants identified themselves as Orthodox even though when they arrived, many of them no longer observed all the specific Jewish laws. Therefore they are often better identified as traditional Jews rather than Orthodox Jews (Aharon, 2011). Often with trying to assimilate and become a part of American life, the Jewish law was too difficult to maintain so the importance of tradition remained and was internalized in the second generation. All three second generation men indicated that religion was important to them, but often the Jewish laws were not as valuable. One second generation male, Jacob indicated this when describing the culture in his family.

So growing up my mother’s friend would come, and you give them a kiss and a hug, and you get Bar Mitzvah and you still do it and you come home from Israel Yeshiva and you somehow keep on doing that, it was not a problem about touching women there. In Afghanistan they didn’t care about that. The importance is to keep faith in God and keep Mitzvahs.

Another second generation male, Nathan illustrated how important religion is in his life but highlighted the difference of value it has for him than for his father.

It’s important but I will be honest with you, it’s not my top priority. I’m not the most spiritual person. I don’t go to temple every day. My dad used to make me go until I was
13 and then it was my decision. My dad used to wake me up at 8:30 AM and rush me to go to the Shul. I realize I don’t see going every Saturday as important as it was back in the day.

All three second generation women saw the value of religion in their lives, but like Nathan demonstrated how it may differ from their parents’ generation. Shira, a second generation female, noted:

We went to Yeshiva, we are modern orthodox, we keep kosher, and there are some things that they keep more than me but as a whole I am orthodox…I think I am less religious than them, but more spiritual.

**Intermarriage**

Similar to religion is the theme of intermarriage, which is very much connected to religious values. In Afghanistan there was an almost complete absence of intermarriage between faiths, so first generation immigrants did not even consider this as an option when coming to the United States (Aharon, 2011). All of the participants from both generations felt that it was permissible, and at times even encouraged to marry from other Jewish cultures. They indicated how there were not many Afghan Jewish immigrants to pick from and it was often necessary to look outside the community. When asked about intermarriage between different religions the response from all participants was a resounding no. All participants spoke out against inter-faith marriages.

Saul, a first generation male was very clear about his distaste in marrying outside the faith:

It should not be allowed. You should marry a Jew. ‘The bird marries a bird, a donkey marries a donkey’ each species with their own kind. The best thing is to follow Torah no
matter where you go. These traditions bring the Jews together. To me religion is very important.

Second generation men, regardless of religious level, felt a strong affirmation that intermarriage among different religions was wrong. One second generation male, Saul simply stated: “It’s against my religion and I don’t agree to it.”

Another second generation male, Nathan, also did not endorse interfaith marriage, however he disclosed his personal experiences with this issue and what led him to his current beliefs.

There was a time I dated someone who was non-Jewish from a different culture and I was really considering it, but then I realized the way that my parents and family members, and some friends felt, it didn’t work out. Also I don’t think she could handle it marrying a Jewish guy, especially an Afghan Jew who is very close with his family, and extended family, who always see each other at parties. It made me think it is better for everybody to marry someone who understands your religion and values is important. So when it comes to the religion part, marrying someone from within the religion it is very important. I think that aside from the financials in a marriage, religion is very important because it’s the values in the culture and everything comes with it and you need to have the similarity and understanding of each other.

All women felt strongly that intermarriage between religions was forbidden, however only one first generation female, Rachel, spoke about the struggle of having a child who marries a non-Jew and how her approach may be more liberal than others. When asked what her views on marrying outside the faith are she noted:
It’s a hard question because I have to be concerned about my parents. Because one of my mother’s grandchildren married non-Jewish and it was very difficult for her and very uncomfortable. To have a relationship with my children is more important than anything else. It would make life difficult, but I would still support them. I had this conversation with my children. They were always brought up to marry Jewish, because that’s who we are. They said to me “If I were to marry a non-Jew I know you would be fine, but I could never do this to Safta.” My children’s choices are not mine to control, they make their choices. I don’t have the right to control them.

The second generation women agreed with the male participants that interfaith marriage is not acceptable in their eyes. One woman, Karen noted her opinion on the matter:

One-hundred percent against! Because I try to be a Torah observant Jew, and I have very little in common with non-Jews. I have many non-Jewish friends, but only those who can respect my culture. That is the problem I have with America and the melting pot. Incidentally, in America we are taught the value is ‘I need to over-prove and overextend I respect you by marrying you.’ Why can’t you be you and me be me? I don’t need this melting pot.

**Intergenerational Gap**

One of the main focuses for this study was to explore the idea of an intergenerational gap between first and second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants. As indicated in chapter two research has shown that second generation immigrants acculturate easier and faster than their parents. The parents are more likely to value the traditions of their culture of origin (Costigan & Dokis, 2006). Similar to previous research with other second generation immigrant groups (Lalonde & Cameron, 1993), second generation Afghan Jews believed they had more liberal
approaches with regard to cultural values than their parents’ generation. The results of the study show that some first generation immigrants felt they shared the same cultural values with their children and some did not. Second generation immigrants mostly felt they did not share the same values as their parents. Of the three first generation men two indicated they did not share the same cultural values as their children and one noted that they did. All three stated how they do not struggle with any intergenerational conflict with their children even if their cultures are different. One first generation male, David, noted the difference in culture from his children while highlighting their respect for his perspective. “No, they are proud but they never experienced what I did. I had to work long hours to get what I needed. I had to work, but my kids did not when they were in school. My three daughters, and son all went to college; I let them follow their dream.”

All of the first generation females indicated that they share cultural values with their children however one did say she often struggled to understand her daughter’s perspective. Daniella, a first generation female, described this struggle she faced at times with her daughter:

Yea. My children do everything I do. They don’t do different. But the only thing I see is that my daughter does more than me because she became more religious…My daughter who is so religious, says I don’t understand her sometimes. She says she feels so alone, and she feels I make fun of her, but I don’t. I experienced what she did so I do understand.

Within the second generation participants, two of the three men felt they shared the same culture as their parents, where none of the female second generation participants did. One male, Jacob, described the differences between himself and his father:
It’s impossible for us to be equal in that because we had different lives. I am a college grad, he is not, he grew up in the dessert, and I grew up here. I had Sundays off, he didn’t… I’m sure there are some things that are in my father that are very primitive and different than me, but it’s more subconscious. Nothing major.

One female, Shira, described her frustration with her parents because she did not share their cultural values, which were often seen as imposed rules on her as a child. “They are definitely not American. Weird arguments in the house, we are Afghan this is what we do… Some yes, some no. I don’t think my mom would go clubbing, wearing bathing suits. They have more of a respect, but we are more American.”

Religion

One subtheme that was embedded within this theme was religion. Although this subtheme was described as its own theme earlier, it is reintroduced here as an embedded code as it became a predominant element of the experience participants had of the intergenerational gap. First generation Afghan Jewish immigrants experienced a uniformly religious life in their communities in Afghanistan, however when acculturating to American Jewish culture, as well as the greater American culture, they found that their ideas about religious observance often differed from their children (Aharon, 2011). For this reason it is discussed again here in the context of intergenerational differences and how religion played a role in the differences among the two generations. Some second generation immigrants did not feel they agreed with their parents about the degree to which religion played a role in their lives, which often acted as an intergenerational barrier among the two generations. These participants often felt misunderstood by their parents, however did not see it as a very significant barrier.
Shira described her experience of arguments with her parents revolving around religious issues, but noted that they were minor. “I mean some religion things there are arguments on, but it’s not such a big part, like showering on Shabbat and things like that.”

Some first generation participants felt they shared religious values with their parents. Jacob described an intergenerational gap of having different cultural values than his father, but feeling that they shared similar religious values.

It’s the core things like Shabbat. We were dressed and ready for Shabbat two hours before Shabbat, I do the same things with my kids. I take a lot of those things and bring them to my family. Like always reinforce kids, show them lots of support, respect my wife, try to do my best for her, women are crazy, but that’s ok. There are many things I try to instill in them that were instilled in me but it’s impossible to fully do that because our lives were so different.

**Language Barrier**

Another subtheme embedded within the theme of intergenerational gap, was the idea of having a language barrier. Second generation participants often felt they had some instances where it was difficult to convey exactly how they felt to their parents due to language barriers. These may have been present due to the acculturation vs. enculturation processes their parents were going through. Due to language barriers, a person who is enculturated may have a harder time interacting with others who are from the mainstream culture and outside of their ethnic environment (Yoon et al., 2013). Nathan illustrated this point by describing his experience with his parents.

Sometimes, with my mom it was a lot easier because English was her first language. My dad is less easy to understand. He learned five different languages and sometimes I
understand when he speaks, and sometimes I don’t understand what he is saying. I notice when my dad talks to his friends, he starts off by talking in Afghan Persian, then says a Hebrew word here, and an English sentence there, and he mixes it all together. But that’s just how he communicates.

Karen noted that she too had difficulty when discussing things with her parents. However, she noted that these were more related to specific topics, such as expressing emotions, and thus may not have been a direct language barrier but rather a factor that was somewhat affected by language.

Yes there were barriers. It's part and parcel. They are not expressive, and they don’t know how to express their true emotions and they are inhibited in that way because of how they were raised. In America you learn to say how you feel. There is no intellectual depth to Sephardi thinking. It is very surface.

Ruth, a second generation female, noted her feelings toward her mother with regard to her language abilities. “My mother couldn’t really write in English. It was a little embarrassing.”

All participants who were second generation immigrants did not find language to be a big barrier for them in their adult life, but rather felt this to be affecting them more in their youth.

**Independently Emergent Codes**

As mentioned earlier, the results of this study identified two emerging codes that developed independently from the research questions and were not led by the questions asked in the interview. What was discovered in the data analysis process was that even though there were no direct questions about these topics, they were spoken about often by multiple participants.
Gender Differences

In the theme of Home Country discussed above, many of the women denoted a negative experience in Afghanistan, which impacted their connection and memory of their home country. This identified a stark gender difference between male and female participants. Although no direct questions were asked about gender, this subtheme emerged as women continued to bring it up as a salient part of their experiences in Afghanistan. These gender differences highlight a broader issue of gender inequality within patriarchal societies. It is true that in Afghanistan’s history, both in 1964 and 1977, the Afghan Constitutions recognized men and women as equal and were given equal rights and privileges, however in practice, patriarchy and tribal social conduct was embedded in the culture and continued to determine gender norms (Zulfacar, 2006). Many of the government administrations that have come and gone since the formation of the state in the early 20th century have initiated gender policies without taking into account women’s opinions or participation in these policies (Zulfacar, 2006). Although Afghan Jews adhere to a more liberal and accepting set of gender norms due to their affiliation as religious Jews, they still experienced this gender inequality, which may explain the great disparity between genders with regard to their attitudes about their home country.

This emergent subtheme noted differences between the genders both in first generation and second generation, speaks to the traditional culture evident in Afghanistan, which may differ from the more modern culture in the United States. Although this concept was not an initial research question, it became evident that the glaring differences between men and women with regard to their connection to their home country illustrated a valuable exploration on gender issues that require further exploration. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5 when considering future directions for research.
Zionism

Another concept that emerged independently from the research was the concept of Zionism. Zionism refers to the political and nationalistic movement of Jews that supported the reestablishment of a Jewish Homeland in the territory where the historic Land of Israel was located (Herzl, 1896). The land of Israel and its historical, religious, and cultural importance played a tremendous role in the lives of Afghan Jews. Although this was not part of the initial research focus or questions, this code emerged nonetheless as a salient and relevant factor for many participants. All six first generation participants, and some second generation participants, throughout the interviews made mention of Israel in one form or another, even though Israel was not directly asked about.

David was very passionate about his connection to Israel and spoke of it often throughout the interview.

Zionism, we were brought up all the time to look to Zion. Israel became a state so that helped but also I had family that came before. My grandfather and his brother went to Israel in the 30’s and brought a Sefer Torah back to Afghanistan…My forefathers for 2600 years kept the religion. But with the state of Israel and the ability to live in Israel, this is the best time in our history. I appreciate my ancestors’ sacrifice, which allowed me to be here. The fact that I am Jewish, number one, and born in Afghanistan. I am an American Jew and am extremely Zionist. I have a home in Israel too. All my kids went to Yeshiva here and in Israel… My soul is in Israel, my body is here.

Saul indicated how Israel held a stronger place in his heart than Afghanistan: “I miss Israel more than Afghanistan. I was in Israel only a few months after Afghanistan.”
Daniella noted how the ideals of Zionism were quintessential to her upbringing in Afghanistan. “In Afghanistan everything was Lichvod Israel. We had a suitcase that had all the best things we had and said it was Lichvod Israel. We would put whatever beautiful things we had and said it was Lichvod Israel.”

Some second generation participants also felt a connection to Israel. Jacob described the few years he lived in Israel as a child as being very enjoyable.

Israel, you can go play with your friends and it’s nice and the street is our babysitter.

Ruth noted that her cultural identity is very much tied to her Zionistic roots:

I consider myself American/ Israeli, I do speak Hebrew. I have dual citizenship. I do understand Hebrew.

Although many of these Afghan Jews do not have immediate plans to move to Israel, their connection to the land and what it means to them as Jewish people maintains their passion for Zionism and connection to Jews around the globe. Like Gender Differences, this independently emergent theme was not asked about directly in any interviews, yet the participants continued to bring up this topic. The impact Zionism had appeared to be so relevant that it was brought up among many of the participants. As a result, this concept will also be discussed further in detail in chapter five to identify it as an important area for future research directions.
This study explored the lived experiences of two of the major groups within the Afghan Jewish immigrant population in the United States: First generation and second generation immigrants. This chapter will review the findings discussed in chapter 4 within the context of relevant existing literature by providing interpretations, justifications, and conclusions related to the eight themes that were developed through analysis of the data. Chapter five will describe the experiences of acculturation among Afghan Jewish immigrants living in the United States as well as the intergenerational differences and similarities that exist among first and second generation participants. In addition, chapter five will attempt to explain why knowledge about this population and their experiences are relevant to the already robust literature on acculturation. Chapter five will also aim to discuss the themes identified in the current study's research findings within the context of the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1994) and will also identify study limitations and offer future research directions. Lastly, this chapter will illustrate the major contributions of the study, both for the development of this and other immigrant groups, as well as for the field of counseling psychology.

**Interpretation of Findings**

This study utilized a phenomenological methodology of qualitative inquiry to promote an exploratory approach to understanding the lived experiences of first and second generation Afghan Jews. The exploration of phenomena through the lens of participants’ stories describes the phenomena and makes meaning of it (Lester, 1999). Thus, it was through a phenomenological framework, and the application of a thematic analysis research approach employing an ethnographic technique to looking at the data, that themes were detected and
categorized (Aronson, 1994; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clark, 2006; Chenail, 2011; Creswell, 2007). Below, I interpret research findings based on the presentation of eight research themes identified in chapter four. The eight research themes identified by their salience and prevalence among participants in the sample. For this reason, the interpretation will be based on the literature and research findings that support these themes. Themes will be discussed in the order in which they were presented in chapter four to preserve the structure of the narrative process that Afghan Jews experienced from pre-migration to their present experiences of acculturation in the United States. In Table 5.1 below is a list of the eight themes discussed in chapter four with subthemes included.
Table 5.1

List of Themes and their Subthemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Immigration Experiences</td>
<td>Expecting Danger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nomadic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Home Country</td>
<td>School Challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Acculturation Struggle</td>
<td>Overprotective Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assimilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identity Crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cultural Values</td>
<td>Strength and Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Collectivism / Individualism</td>
<td>Family Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family Honor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Religion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Intermarriage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Intergenerational Gap</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language Barrier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This story begins with first generation immigration experiences, and the process they went through to come to the U.S. Next the focus on home country, helps connect the reader to their perceptions of their home country and provide a somewhat nostalgic look into what life was like in Afghanistan for the Jewish people. The focus then shifts to their struggles with acculturation, which began when arriving in the United States, and continues throughout the following generation. After providing this narrative, themes related to unique characteristics and experiences relevant to the Afghan Jewish immigrant population are presented. For this reason I focus next on cultural values, collectivism / individualism, religion, and intermarriage. I chose intergenerational gap to be discussed lastly because it provides an understanding of the intersection between first and second generation Afghan Jewish experiences. The previous themes provide a foundation to the reader to understand who Afghan Jews are and the variation among first and second generation Jews with regard to attitudes toward those themes discussed. The theme of intergeneration gap is discussed last as it is only with the knowledge of the previous themes that one can make meaning of and integrate as well as interrogate the differences, similarities, and relationships between first and second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants. The intergenerational factors discussed are very much in relation to the previous themes, and so a basis in understanding these themes is necessary to embark on a discussion about the generational differences and similarities of first and second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants.

**Theoretical Framework**

In chapters one and two, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979, 1994), was discussed as a theoretical framework to capture the experiences of systems within the lives of immigrants. In this chapter, this model will be used to help guide the readers' understanding of the meaning
of the findings, as well as show how systems influence and shape the lives of first and second
generation Afghan Jewish immigrants. To summarize, the ecological model posits that in order
to understand human development one has to consider all of the various environmental systems
in which growth occurs. The ecological model postulates that there are five socially organized
systems that guide human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The five environmental systems
are: 1) the microsystem, 2) the mesosystem, 3) the exosystem, 4) the macrosystem, and 5) the
chronosystem. The microsystem denotes systems that one is directly affiliated with such as
family, school, religious institutions, etc. The mesosystem describes the overlap between factors
in the microsystem such as times when family life impacts school life and vice versa. The
exosystem is the system that links between systems in which the individual does not have an
active role and the individual's immediate context. For example, a child's experience at home
may be influenced by a mother's experiences at work. If the mother receives a promotion that
requires more travel it may change patterns of interaction with the child. The macrosystem
illustrates the culture one lives in, such as developing and industrialized countries,
socioeconomic status, poverty, ethnicity etc. The chronosystem is defined as the patterning of
environmental events and transitions over the life course, as well as sociohistorical
circumstances. For example, war and governmental shifts are elements of the chronosystem that
can have an influence on a person’s life (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The ecological model claims that having a context of the five system levels helps provide
a holistic conceptualization of people’s experiences in the world. Instead of seeing people from
one lens, this model allows one to recognize the different factors, both direct and indirect that
play a role in people’s lives providing a richer meaning and understanding of their experience
(Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In discussing each of the eight themes in the following paragraphs, I
will explore how they may be expressed from an ecological perspective, and which system levels influence that theme. Figure 5.1 provides a schematic that illustrates the five system levels and their effect within the different themes. Some themes appear more than once, as they may be influenced by a number of different system levels.
Figure 5.1. System levels present in themes. The boxes on the left represent the different system levels in Bronfenbrenner’s (1994) Ecological Model. The boxes on the right represent the themes that are affected by a particular system level. The arrows connecting the system levels with the themes represent the influence that system has on those themes. Arrow types differ to clarify variation between system levels.
Figure 5.1 demonstrates how the ecological model can be applied to the various factors described in the eight themes that emerged from the data analysis of this study. The ecological model will help provide a theoretical framework basis for making meaning of the different themes and how they are experienced in the lives of first and second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants in the U.S.

**Interpretation of Themes**

As noted above, the following sections will discuss each theme in depth providing an interpretation of their relevance. Within each theme I hope to relate this study’s findings to related literature, as well as provide a theoretical framework utilizing Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

**Immigration Experiences**

This study investigated the influence of immigration on the experiences of Afghan Jewish immigrants living in the United States. The factors leading people to leave Afghanistan to immigrate were a combination of push and pull factors (Lee, 1966). One of the push factors described in the findings was the idea that danger was looming, and it would soon not be safe to stay. Several participants noted that they were warned by other people in their country, both Jewish and non-Jewish, to expect some kind of danger. Although none of the participants reported being in any physical danger, some sensed a threat of this danger emotionally. For many of them it was imminently important to leave the country and move elsewhere. Similar to refugee populations, having a push factor of danger, can mobilize individuals to leave their homes and move on to another country (Kusow, 1998). Kusow (1998) conducted a qualitative study that looked at migration and identity processes among 30 male and female Somali refugees ages 20 – 49, living in Toronto. Using in-depth interviews, the study explored the social process aspects of
migration, and how identity and race are socially defined within a particular social structure. In his literature review, Kusow discusses Lee’s (1966) Push-Pull theory in his explanation of a distinction between refugees and immigrants. He noted that for refugees there are not only push factors, but also pull factors, where at times they do have a choice of where they will migrate to. Therefore, Kusow argues that defining refugees as a distinct group from immigrants may not be accurate as they share more similarities than differences. Nonetheless, Kusow confers that due to the distinctions made between refugees and immigrants, there has been an increase of research dedicated to studying refugee populations, providing more awareness to social and political issues relating this group of people (Kusow, 1998). In most cases, refugees leave their home country primarily because of push factors, however in this study the Afghan Jewish immigrants were not refugees, and their reason for leaving was a combination of both push and pull factors. This concept helps differentiate between immigrants and refugees with regard to the factors needed to take place when leaving one’s country (Berry & Sam, 1997). Although Afghan Jews were not identified as refugees, the similarities they shared with regard to push factors to refugee populations illustrates the somewhat difficult experiences they had endured living in Afghanistan and the need to leave the country due to the expectation of a possible danger that several participants noted. The expectation of danger and similarities and differences that Afghan Jews had with refugees is a relevant factor to note about the nature of the migration experiences of Afghan people and a recognition of the hardships they may have experienced during this process.

Another factor that effected immigration was the notion that Afghan Jews were nomadic. Kusow (1998) further notes that similar to refugees, nomads may have developed this migration style as a result of continuous push factors leading to their constant movement from place to place. Afghan Jews in this study endorsed being nomadic because their ancestral roots had
migrated for centuries before coming to Afghanistan. Many identified Israel as their home country and saw the places they went along the way as temporary and not as a real home. Afghan Jews, although nomadic in nature, moved partially because of push factors, but also because of pull factors, thus differentiating them from refugees. These pull factors included the promise of financial success and stability in the U.S., religious freedom, and autonomy to live life openly. Participants endorsed these factors when discussing the reasons why they moved. The manner in which participants left Afghanistan, also highlighted the variance in push and pull factors, as some of them were smuggled out of the country, while others left at their own pace.

From an ecological model perspective, the idea of expecting danger was directly impacted by factors present in the chronosystem. For many years the Jews of Afghanistan experienced peace and good tidings with the predominantly Muslim population in the country (Aharon, 2011). It was not until the early 20th century when the Nazi regime in Eastern Europe began to increase European influence on Afghanistan that political and religious shifts within the country’s government led the Jews to begin feeling marginalized and discriminated against (Aharon, 2011). On this level the chronosystem shows a direct effect on how Afghan Jews lives were impacted by governmental forces, and contributed to the push factors that led them to migrate away from the country (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Additionally the influence of the chronosystem helps explain how the subtheme of expecting danger, can still be present among first generation Afghan Jews even after they have left Afghanistan. When a person experiences a history of danger, trauma, or the expectation of danger, from a chronosystem level, it can influence their attitude towards trusting others and expectation of danger in other chronosystems present in new locations (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). For this reason the expectation of danger,
which will be seen in different aspects of the themes in this study, is understandably present among first generation Afghan Jews pre and post migration.

**Home Country**

Afghan Jewish immigrants’ experiences and reflections on their home country was a predominant theme in this study. The findings showed that many of the first generation participants looked towards their home country with nostalgia and longing. Graziano (2013) noted that this is common among many immigrant groups who live in a culture that is so different than their culture of origin. In this study, most of the men spoke of Afghanistan in a longing, positive light, whereas the women did not share the same sentiment or nostalgia. Gender differences will be discussed later in this chapter during the section on future research directions. That said, it is important to note the impact of gender on an individual's cultural attitudes and reflections of their country of birth. Historically, Afghanistan has been a predominantly patriarchal society. In more modern times, relative to other areas of the world, Afghanistan still maintains a strong patriarchal sentiment (Emadi, 2002). The presence of a patriarchal society may be due to the strong religious influence on governmental structures in Afghanistan. Some Islamic extremists, such as the Taliban, insist women stay at home and can only leave if they are fully covered and accompanied by a male relative. Since the 2001 fall of the Taliban regime some of the policies on women have been relaxed yet still hold strong patriarchal views. For example, in 2012, the Afghan government endorsed a code of conduct with rules stating that women should not travel without a male guardian and should not mingle in places such as schools and markets. These rules are in accordance with Islamic Law (Associated Press in Kabul, 2012). The privileges that men received as entrepreneurs, deciders, and leaders of families provided them with a rich, meaningful, and positive experience of their life in Afghanistan.
Afghan Jewish life was heavily influenced by the absorption of patriarchal values from the surrounding Muslim culture (Aharon, 2011). Patriarchy is also evident in the experiences of Afghan Jewish immigrants because it is a core part of Jewish religious life. For example, in Afghanistan, the Jewish community was organized in clans, that were similar to tribal systems that were divided based on familial affiliation. The male leaders of the ten most influential families formed the Hevra, a religious community government that handled the Jewish community’s private matters (Aharon, 2011). Perhaps due to the patriarchal society in Afghanistan, some first generation males in this study saw their time in Afghanistan as a utopia that they looked to with nostalgia and good feelings. The women, on the other hand, were not given such privileges and this is evidenced by the reports first generation women had of their experiences, memories, and feelings toward their home country. Often men, including brothers, fathers, and husbands, decided the roles women would have in the home which impacted their sense of freedom and autonomy while living in Afghanistan (Emadi, 2002). Afghan Jews, although somewhat separated from the greater Afghan culture, were influenced by the patriarchal values in Afghanistan, and as a result many of the women reported a less favorable experience and connection to Afghanistan than their male counterparts.

The ecological model is relevant when considering an immigrants' reflection on their home country. In this case it is evident on two levels of systems. The macrosystem applies here because of the influence that cultural values had on Afghan Jews. People living in the patriarchal Afghan culture identified with the privileges of either being a male or the drawbacks of being a female, therefore, this aspect of the macrosystem impacted their responses on how they reflected on their home country. Another effect of the macrosystem was that Afghanistan was a developing country, and so many individuals reflected on their experiences in Afghanistan as
being a more “simple, old-fashioned” culture. This awareness of the difference in cultures between US and Afghanistan highlighted further the influence of the macrosystem on people’s perceptions of their home country (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Another system level was the chronosystem, which played a large role in the patriarchal nature of society. Afghan governments had set up specific laws and rules that differ for men and women in the country (Keddie, 2007). Such differences in gender policies may have been influenced by the patriarchal culture, however, it also illustrated a difference in human rights and freedoms based on gender from a higher governmental level. For this reason, men and women were directly affected by the chronosystem, referring to the larger governmental leadership of the country. As a result, the effects of the chronosystem, had implications in how gender was addressed within all other systems in the model that impacted people in private, personal, and interpersonal ways (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The gender differences in the theme of home country highlight an important point regarding expectations of how life may be like in the United States. Since men were treated better than women in Afghanistan due to the patriarchal nature of society, first generation Afghan Jewish men grew up with an understanding where they were given whatever they wanted and had the freedom to live their lives as they saw fit. When coming to the United States, the men may have experienced the new country as one that is less supportive of the more strict patriarchal ideals of Afghanistan, and for this reason their experience of acculturation may have been effected. In the following paragraph, acculturation experiences will be discussed, and the first generation male experience of acculturation will be addressed with an awareness of the patriarchal culture that they grew up in and how it my influence their acculturation experiences.
Acculturation Struggle

The acculturation experiences of Afghan Jews was discovered as a theme in this study for both first and second generation participants. When a person immigrates to a new country, a cultural adaptation occurs which impacts their experience and relation to the new host country in a process known as acculturation (Miller, 2007). For immigrants, acculturation is often seen as a cultural socialization to the majority culture (Berry, 1994; Kim & Abreu, 2001; Kim, Atkinson, & Umemoto, 2001). In an article by Kim, Atkinson and Umemoto (2001), they described the relationship between Asian cultural values and the counseling process in the context of acculturation and enculturation. They note that a lot of the research on acculturation / enculturation focuses on behavioral measures missing out on the influence cultural values have on the acculturation process. For example Kim et al. (1999) conducted a study that showed there was a significant difference between three generations of Asian Americans of scores on a behavioral measure of acculturation / enculturation, but no difference between the scores on cultural values measure, indicating that cultural values and behavioral features are not synonymous and need to be explored separately. Therefore, this illustrates, the significance of exploring cultural values to add to a more contextualized explanation of acculturation / enculturation (Kim, Atkinson, & Umemoto, 2001). Kim and Abreu (2001) explored cultural values in relation to acculturation / enculturation further, positing that cultural identity and cultural knowledge are two additional dimensions of the acculturation process. Therefore, they note that it is important for ethnic minorities and immigrants to recognize all four dimensions (cultural values, cultural behavior, cultural identity, and cultural knowledge) when considering their influence on the acculturation process (Kim & Abreu, 2001).
Different groups will experience this process of acculturation in various ways based on several factors including the reason they chose to immigrate. Those who voluntarily immigrate because of their choice of having employment or educational improvement may experience it differently than those forced to move, such as refugees or prisoners. Those who moved voluntarily may be more likely to have an easier time with accepting the values of the mainstream culture, and may experience more success academically and economically than those who moved involuntarily (Ogbu, 1978). There are different ways in which people acculturate which can be impacted by a number of factors including reason for immigration, generational status, connection to home country, and psychological stressors that one may have. Acculturation can be experienced in two ways, psychological acculturation, and adaptation. Psychological acculturation includes behavioral changes such as dress and language, and acculturative stress such as anxiety and depression. Adaptation is both psychological and sociocultural (Berry, 2003). The cultural socialization that takes place during this time is conveyed explicitly or implicitly by messages about cultural values, beliefs, behaviors and customs (Arnett, 1995). Psychological adaptation can impact a person’s sense of well-being and self-esteem, and sociocultural adaptation connects people to the host culture (Berry, 2003).

In this study, first and second generation immigrants experienced acculturation in different ways that were impacted both by psychological acculturation and adaptation. This theme was identified through a number of subthemes that specifically outlined certain issues that were evident for this population. The first sub-theme identified challenges that the children of first generation immigrants experienced with school in the United States. The majority of second generation participants noted that they struggled with being “different” in school and not fitting in because their parents were born in Afghanistan. Some participants noted that as children they
found comfort in having school friends, who were different from them, and Afghan synagogue friends with whom they could relate to culturally. When explored further participants described this “difference” as misunderstanding between themselves and other students and teachers in their school who were not Afghan. Some participants described this misunderstanding as one related to cultural values and traditions, noting that people did not fully understand why the Afghan Jewish traditions were unlike their own traditions. One participant endorsed feeling different and misunderstood because her skin color was darker. The presence of colorism was not predominant among other participants in this study but introduces skin color discrimination as a form of stigma and personal struggle. Colorism refers to discrimination based on skin color (Walker, 1983; Okazawa-Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1987). Typically, colorism takes place when favoritism is demonstrated toward those of lighter complexions over those with darker complexions (Jackson-Lowman, 2013). For this study participant, she experienced discrimination from her teachers and classmates, who assumed that because her skin was darker she was less intelligent and would need to be placed in a “lower” class. This example highlights the role of colorism to provide privilege to those who are of lighter skin tones due to socially constructed notions that lighter skin is more desirable. Colorism was may be an area for future directions of research with the Afghan Jewish population in the United States as well as with other immigrant groups.

Many of the second generation participants found it easy to relate to the dominant culture, but still found they were discriminated against, making the acculturation process a struggle when faced with peers, teachers, and administrators at school (Yoon, Lee, Koo, & Yoo, 2010). The host country's acceptance of certain differences among immigrant groups, and their willingness to allow others to assimilate while, at times, rejecting other differences for the
purpose of preserving the status quo, had an influence on whether second generation participants
felt different or welcomed in school. The cultural differences that are accepted are generally ones
that were culturally syntonc with U.S. culture, such as pursuit of education, interest in sports and
popular culture, and ethnic foods related to that culture. The differences that are often rejected
are ones that are culturally dystonic to U.S. culture, such as attitudes about safety, the emphasis
on collectivism, patriarchy, strong family influence on preserving traditional pursuits. Yoon, Lee,
Koo, and Yoo (2010), conducted a qualitative study exploring the acculturation expirees of 10
Korean immigrant women in the U.S. Similar to Afghan Jewish immigrants, these women
reported feeling that they lacked a sense of belongingness in the mainstream society but expected
their children to succeed and have voices in the mainstream society. However, all participants
experienced racism and developed coping strategies such as verbal confrontation to manage that
experience and still move forward in their new life in the U.S. (Yoon, Lee, Koo, and Yoo, 2010).

The subtheme of school challenges highlights an important aspect of the ecological
model embedded within the microsystem. School is a system within a child’s life that a child is
directly involved in and influenced by on a regular basis. Since school life is such an integral part
of a child’s upbringing, and is a close system for a child, it can show a direct effect on their
acculturation experiences and how they make sense of their world (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).
Although all of the second generation participants were over 18 and have long since been out of
school, their experiences in school resonated with them as a critical part of their acculturation
experiences. The influence of other youth and school systems on children can remain salient with
children through adulthood. Many of the participants shared these experiences, and indicated that
to this day they think about their time in school as a challenge that they had to overcome to be
successful in the United States.
Another sub-theme of the acculturation struggle was the presence of overprotective parents. Female second generation participants indicated feeling that their parents were overprotective of them in comparison to their American peers. Several participants expressed that having overprotective parents was a struggle when trying to claim autonomy and independence in the host-country culture. Berry and Sam (1997), highlight four strategies of acculturation that explain how different people experience this phenomenon. Of these strategies, five out of six first generation participants in this study utilized the strategy of traditionality, which is where people choose to maintain connections with their culture and avoid interaction with other people. In this strategy individuals often see their culture as superior and higher than the dominant culture but are aware of their need to experience and be somewhat engaged in the dominant culture (Berry & Sam, 1997). People who used this strategy have the fewest behavioral and attitudinal changes in comparison to all other strategies (Berry, 2003). First generation Afghan Jewish immigrants used the strategy of traditionality because this was a clear way in which they can ensure the preservation of their culture. Since Afghan Jews were earlier described as nomadic, being in their home country was not always a constant possibility. Afghan Jews needed to find a way to adhere to their cultural traditions that they feared would otherwise be lost or ethnically cleansed. A strategy of traditionality would allow a person to maintain their traditions and behaviors no matter where the location, which explains why the first generation participants endorsed this strategy.

Second generation participants who stated that their parents were overprotective, used the strategy of assimilation. The assimilation strategy denotes seeking sustained interaction with other cultures and a decreased desire to maintain cultural identities (Robinson-Wood, 2013). The second generation participants who sought to mirror the values of the dominant culture reported
having little connection to the behaviors and traditions of the parents’ generation and felt bound by some rules and traditions that they were expected to keep in their home. Other second generation participants who did not endorse overprotective parents were also more open to accepting their Afghan culture and may have used the acculturation strategy of integration. Integration refers to maintaining a connection to the culture of origin while also interacting and partaking in the dominant culture (Berry & Kim, 1988). Participants who used this strategy were proud and excited about their Afghan heritage and traditions, but felt no pressure from parents. They chose to integrate themselves in American society while actively choosing to reconnect and learn more about their Afghan culture. They spoke of their identity as Afghan Jews as though they saw it as a badge of honor and wanted to instill that in their children as well. Whether utilizing assimilation, or integration, second generation participants recognized that overprotective parenting greatly affected their experiences growing up in the United States. Female participants in particular noted feeling resentful and frustrated with their parents that they did not have as much autonomy growing up as their non-Afghan peers.

With an understanding of acculturation strategies it is important to explain why first generation Afghan Jewish immigrants were overprotective of their children. As discussed earlier first generation Afghan Jews described a sense of expecting danger in their lives. Although no one participant said that they were ever faced with actual physical danger, they were often warned by others, that Afghanistan was a dangerous place for Jews and that soon it would not be safe for them anymore. Most first generation participants grew up with a message of impending danger that resonated with them as adults and may have manifested in their overprotectiveness as parents. Often when one lives a life with the expectation or actuality of danger, the subsequent generation may be influenced by a parent's perception that one is not safe or secure even if
children did not directly experience this same feeling. For example during the holocaust European Jews suffered mass genocide at the hands of the Nazi regime. The children of those survivors grew up with parents who experienced severe trauma that was transmitted to them through messages about safety and trust (Kellerman, 2001). The intergenerational transmission of trauma can be so strong that Holocaust-related influences can even be seen in the subsequent third and fourth generations of holocaust survivors. Yehuda et al. (2014) saw this evident in genetic components of families of Holocaust survivors establishing that survivors of the Holocaust have lower levels of cortisol, a hormone that helps the body return to normal after trauma, as well as low levels of an enzyme that helps break down cortisol. The study examined the blood levels of 80 children of Holocaust survivors in comparison to 15 participants of the same age who were not children of Holocausts survivors. The results showed that children of Holocaust survivors also have low levels of cortisol when compared to a control group, which is theorized to be a genetic adaptation that occurs in utero (Yehuda et al., 2014).

Although Afghan Jews were not holocaust survivors, the experience of growing up with the expectation of danger may have been transmitted to their children’s generation and manifested with a situation where parents become fearful and overprotective due to their history of anticipating danger. Although in the United States, this danger was not apparent, the history of their attitude about safety and trust, may still influence how first generation Afghan Jews behave in the United States and as a result second generation Afghan Jews may experience this through the overprotectiveness and guarded nature of their parents.

The subtheme of overprotective parents relates to the ecological model both on a microsystem and mesosystem level. On the microsystem level, second generation participants speak about how their parents’ overprotectiveness prevented them from experiencing the
opportunities they saw their non-Afghan peers engaging in such as dating, going out with friends, attending school trips, and having later curfews. The concept of overprotective parents is not unique to only Afghan immigrant groups, but other groups' experience it as well. For example, Cordova et al. (2014), conducted a study exploring familial stressors among Latino adolescents who were primarily second generation immigrants. Adolescents in the study indicated that they perceived their parents as overprotective. They found this aspect of their parents' parenting to be stressful and would create arguments in the family (Cordova, Ciofu, & Cervantes 2014). This kind of interaction of the family system had a direct influence on how second generation Afghan participants in this study experienced their upbringing, indicating that the family system is an integral part of the microsystem. This sub-theme is also indicative of an interaction on a mesosystem level. The interaction of family norms, school, and friends shows how having overprotective parents did not only influence how children felt within their own home, but also in how they experienced school and other social settings. Some participants spoke about not being allowed to go on certain trips with school or friends because of their parents’ overprotectiveness. The concept of overprotective parents within the Afghan Jewish immigrant population highlighted the importance of recognizing the mesosystem level interaction of the phenomena (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Another sub-theme embedded in the theme of acculturation is assimilation. As described above, assimilation refers to the acculturation strategy where one is interested in adopting the dominant culture and is less interested in maintaining the culture of origin (Berry & Sam, 1997). Second generation participants indicated that they related more to the dominant culture, and were less likely to try to maintain their parents culture of origin. This strategy of acculturation became apparent in second generation participants, and a worry for first generation participants. Some
second generation participants noted that their parents wanted them to assimilate as they believed integrating into American society was important for their social economic success. Parents’ desire for children to assimilate may have been confusing for many participants since on the one hand, parents wanted their children to assimilate and become a part of the dominant culture, yet on the other hand they were overprotective and distrusting of others, thus shielding their children from the dominant culture. Participants spoke of this confusion, and highlighted their constant push towards assimilation. Assimilation is impacted by several factors that can either slow down, or speed up the process, such as education, length of time in the US, age of arrival in the US, generational status, socioeconomic status, religion, cultural values, and connection to family (Myers & Pitkin, 2010). The longer that immigrants live in the U.S., the more assimilated they become, regardless of whether they came from Mexico and Central America or from other countries. For example, education is seen as a relevant factor impacting assimilation because immigrant children are placed in schools as soon as they arrive. As a result, second generation immigrants, or child immigrants may be more prepared for a variety of occupations than first generation immigrants, or adult immigrants due to their educational background, whereas first generation immigrants need to look to find work shortly after their arrival in the U.S. As a result, second generation immigrants exceed the education and occupational ability than their parents’ generation (Myers & Pitkin, 2010).

Assimilation is an important subtheme to recognize because it is one that both first and second generation participants were aware of and experienced in some form or another. First generation participants were hopeful for both themselves and their children’s success so they wanted to be immersed in the American culture in hopes that it would help them become more prosperous. Several first generation participants said that assimilation was dangerous to their
maintenance of cultural values, religious values, and traditions, and for this reason also rejected
the notion of assimilating. As described earlier the nomadic nature of the Afghan Jews, made
them fiercely hold on to traditions in fear that they may be lost. As a result, first generation
participants took some steps towards assimilation, and took some steps away from it depending
on whether they felt it threatened their cultural values and traditions. Second generation
participants noted this confusion, and felt assimilation to be a conflict for them of not knowing
how much their parents want them to connect to U.S. culture, and how much they wanted them
to pull back. A psychological conflict and vulnerability existed for both generations, who
respected yet feared the idea of assimilating.

This concept of assimilation speaks to the ecological model framework by highlighting
the experiences of both first and second generation participants and the influences the various
systems had on them. On the one hand second generation participants were drawn to the
dominant culture portrayed on a microsystem level, with peers, school, and siblings. On the other
hand, first generation participants experienced this underlying fear and hesitation with regard to
other people, which may have stemmed from their experience with impending danger in
Afghanistan, thus incorporating a chronosystem level of impact. Second generation participants,
although never experiencing a sense of danger personally, they were, nonetheless, influenced by
their parents' fears, which changed how their parents interacted with them as they were pushed
toward and pulled back from assimilation.

Another sub-theme of acculturation struggles was identity crisis. Identity crisis was
apparent as all participants described having difficulty adequately identifying themselves to
others. Since they did have a nomadic type of structure, and also paid great homage to the land of
Israel, it was unclear to many participants how to define themselves with regard to cultural,
ethnic, and even racial identity. This variance in identity may have contributed to the struggle
participants described when acculturating to the United States. Such a difference in identity made
it hard for participants to know what groups they were a part of and what to tell people during
initial contact. The lack of clarity about identity may be due to the multiple influences that
Afghan Jews had in their lives, as well as the relatively small size of their immigrant population
in the United States. Participants included identities, such as Israeli, Afghan, Asian, Caucasian,
Middle Eastern, Jewish, and American. Each participant had their own reason why they
identified in their specific way, which could be explained by the acculturation strategy they used.
For those who were more assimilated, they may have included American as a part of their
identity, whereas others who were more traditional may have seen Afghan as a dominant part of
their identity. As a result one’s identity can be linked to their pattern of acculturation and the
strategies they use to acculturate in a new country (Berry & Sam, 1997). Other researchers have
maintained that identity is linked to acculturation strategies. For example research with ethnic
minorities revealed that ethnic identity declined from the first to the second generation, but was
slower in subsequent generations, whereas cultural knowledge, practice, or behaviors typically
had a prominent continuous decline throughout generations (Phinney, 2003). As a result, it
appears that cultural identity is a very salient aspect of one’s acculturation experiences, and often
remains as an important factor in one’s life than other aspects such as behaviors, traditions, or
language which tend to become less important over time (Yoon, Langreher, & Ong, 2011). For
Afghan Jews, the notion of settling on a specific identity was not simple and often led
participants to indicate their confusion concerning who they were. Their experiences of
acculturation were impacted by this confusion as they did not know how salient their identity
was with different social groups they belonged to and often felt like outsiders from the many
affiliations they had. As a result the process of acculturation from the aspect of identity development was confusing for many participants, who still felt a current uncertainty about what to call themselves and who they are. This confusion can be painful for Afghan Jews, who are looking for a place where they feel they belong, and can explain why some of their acculturation experiences were seen as struggles.

The last subtheme of acculturation struggle was freedom. Participants saw the United States as a country of freedom, which helped them identify and acculturate with the dominant culture. All participants saw freedom as an important value of the United States, and were happy to be a part of a country that endorses liberties and rights to its inhabitants. It is important to note, Afghan Jews, although discriminated against in some ways, may have identified freedom as a type of privilege awarded to them (Lundstrom & Twine, 2011). In a qualitative study by Lundstrom and Twine (2011), they explored racial privileges as well as gender vulnerabilities among 33 Swedish immigrant women in the United States. While the Swedish women benefitted from their racial and social privileges in the U.S. they may have seen these privileges as American freedoms that are allotted to all people living in the United States, indicating that they may have considered freedom to be synonymous with universal privilege. Lundstrom and Twine’s study showed that these women often received some privileges due to having lighter skin, yet due to gender vulnerabilities, they had to adjust their expectations for success, since they came from a more gender egalitarian background (Lundstrom & Twine, 2011). This study illustrates that due to privilege, freedom is not allotted equally to all immigrants in the U.S. For this reason, freedom can be seen as a privilege for some rather than a right extended to all members of a society. When coming to the United States, Afghan Jewish immigrants faced some hardships due to acculturation adjustment, however their socioeconomic status and race may
have allowed them to receive more opportunities than other minority populations, such as Black and Latino/a immigrant groups. Additional opportunities associated with dominant U.S. values, such as white skin and socioeconomic status may explain their overwhelming notion of freedom. For this reason, unearned privilege in the context of Afghan Jewish immigrants was considered a freedom that they were able to experience in the United States, largely as a result of their racial and ethnic background.

The subtheme of freedom can be explained within the framework of the ecological model when considering the effect of the chronosystem. Afghan Jews who immigrated to the United States joined a society that allowed them to experience freedoms and privileges that they otherwise may not have received within a different chronosystem, such as Afghanistan. Being in a country that allowed for their success and freedom, showed the influence a country’s government and laws has on its people, and explains the way in which the chronosystem impacted their experiences in America (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

**Cultural Values**

The maintenance of cultural values from the Afghan Jewish traditions was considered important to the majority of participants in both generations. Many participants indicated the need to maintain connection to the traditions and culture because the population of Afghan Jews is so small, and without the continuance of traditions they fear the culture will be lost. When comparing male to female participants in both generations, men stressed the importance of maintaining tradition more than women, which speaks again to the patriarchal nature of Afghan Jewish culture. For first generation Afghan Jewish immigrants, the desire to maintain connected to the culture may have been related to the acculturation process that participants went through and the fear of assimilation. When coming from a traditional acculturation strategy, it can be
hard to integrate one's culture with the dominant culture when there is fear that it will be lost. This fear was not unfounded, as many second generation participants do note the value of connecting to the culture, but in many ways do not practice any traditions. Therefore, as stated earlier, many first generation Afghan Jews, especially men, held on to their cultural traditions and values with an extreme intensity because they feared that if they did not do so, the culture would be lost and no longer exist in later generations. The threat of losing one’s culture in subsequent generations can effect a person’s identity and their existential thoughts about whether the culture will even be remembered once they leave. Holding on to a culture and trying to pass it on to the next generation, is an attempt to resist the loss of the culture and a hope of preserving it for future generations.

A subtheme evident in the theme of cultural values was strength and pride. This recognized the way in which Afghan Jews utilized aspects of strength and pride in their daily outlook on life, and helped them cope with the challenges of their lived experiences. Strength and pride is one of several ways in which they coped with difficulties, as they also often used humor in difficult times as a way of managing stress (Hartill, 2005). This cultural value was endorsed both by first and second generation participants, as a message passed down between generations. Several second generation participants spoke about hardships they experienced as children in school, and learning from their fathers to “be strong and persevere.” The idea of passing on knowledge and lessons between fathers and sons, or seeking wisdom from elders, was an important cultural value for Afghan Jews, and even second generation participants indicated these messages as being monumental in their lives (Aharon, 2011). This message acted as a resilience factor to help Afghan Jews “get through” the tough times, and move on to better things. Afghan Jewish immigrants, regardless of generational states, are a relatively small group
of people with varied identities and acculturation experiences, showed strength and pride as a variable that helped them move from place to place as nomads and still be proud of who they are. Having feelings and thoughts about strength and pride propelled many Afghan Jews to succeed, and persevere throughout any difficulties they may face in life.

From the perspective of an ecological model, cultural values can influence individuals from a macrosystem level. On the one hand, Afghan Jews have a strong rich culture that is embedded in their understanding of the world, however they are also faced with the dominant culture in the United States. The combining of Afghan Jewish culture with US culture for some participants may be due to influences of the macrosystem level of the overarching American culture, as well as the microsystem level of their own individual culture from their family or community. This idea illustrates how the two systems are at work impacting the experiences of individuals who come from varying cultural backgrounds. (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

**Collectivism/Individualism**

The theme of collectivism/individualism was very relevant to the understanding of Afghan Jewish immigrants’ experiences in the United States. Afghans often saw the greater collective need to be more important than individual needs (Hofstede, 2001). Like other collectivistic societies Afghan culture sees success and failures as external and the responsibility of the community. This is unlike individualistic cultures where individuals take the internal responsibilities of both success and failures (Robinson-Wood, 2013). As a result immigration took place in groups, and once one family was settled in the United States, they made room to prepare for others to follow suit and provide them with the support needed. This ideal may have helped build a sense of unity among individuals within the community and provided them with the same desire to give to others who were in the same situation. Most participants saw
collectivism as a value that they identified with, however some second-generation participants indicated a desire to have their own goals and values that are individualistic and separate from the community’s needs, for example having separate educational and career goals from what the community or family ascribes as an ideal educational and career path. Most cross-cultural research focuses on the cultural majority, however people of various ethnic groups may be socialized differently than those in the dominant culture and as a consequence, may have different cultural norms and ideas than other people (Gaines et al., 1997; Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman & Markus, 1993). For this reason second generation participants often shared both the collective ideals of their culture of origin, yet also had some interest in pursuing individualistic values and goals. This idea may reflect the phenomenon experienced by second generation immigrants, of feeling torn between following families’ wishes and following their own dreams. Second generation participants described this phenomenon as one that was often painful as they wanted to simultaneously please their families yet meet their own individual needs.

One important sub-theme of this theme was family business, where many participants noted that they shared businesses with other relatives or close members of the community. Some noted that jobs were already available for them before immigrating, which was a clear indication of the influence family and community values had on this population (Bengtson & Martin, 2001). Some participants did not think or see another way of making a living, since family was so important to them, and maintaining the family business was an obvious choice when choosing a career path. The emphasis on family business in the data highlights the influence collectivism had on the acculturation process and experiences of Afghan Jewish immigrants. If a person is a part of a family business, their personal family life and career goals become intertwined, making
autonomy or reaching one’s individualistic goals difficult or even irrelevant. Participants who were currently working in family businesses, expressed pleasure in being able to be part of the collective ideal and contribute to the family business. Those who were not working in family businesses, and experienced pressure to do so, described feeling certain in their decision to seek employment elsewhere, but felt doing so distanced them from their family and community. Therefore the influence of family businesses is relevant to note when considering collectivism and individualism with regard to Afghan Jewish immigrant populations.

Another sub-theme of collectivism/individualism was family honor. Among Afghan Jews, the idea of maintaining family honor was an important value and sharing one's thoughts and feelings was done carefully. If one had feelings that were contrary to the family or culture, they may have censored them so as not to dishonor the family by speaking foolishly (Monsutti, 2013). This value was seen as important to all participants regardless of generational status, indicating that there is a message of unity and support embedded in all generations that can act as a resiliency factor when faced with hardships. Having strong feelings and motivations pertaining to the maintenance of family honor within a collectivistic culture can also bring up the issue of control. For example, in collectivism women are trained to be modest sexually and to defer to and be obedient towards their husbands. Women are expected to control themselves sexually and look to their male counterparts for wisdom and guidance on all issues (Thornhill & Fincher, 2014).

In a qualitative study by Chang (2015), 27 Latino American and 31 Asian American undergraduate students ages 18 to 22 years old were compared with regard to social support as a means of coping with stressors. The study also explored how support-seeking behaviors relate to cultural factors. The results of the study indicated that participants in both groups believed that
support seeking behaviors would make matters worse for the self and the group, rather than decrease their stress because they felt they would be burdening others with their problem. However, Asian American participants in particular anticipated that if they did seek support from parents they would receive advice to exercise emotional restrain which implies a value of control. They further anticipated that their parents’ reactions would not be useful or helpful. When compared with their Latino American counterparts, Asian American participants more frequently noted the importance of upholding family honor which as a result lessened their use of family support (Chang, 2015). This study illustrates how family honor within collectivistic societies may denote a sense of control that could limit one from speaking freely or expressing their thoughts about certain issues.

In this study some Afghan Jewish participants spoke of their need to respect and honor the family, and issued a modicum of control with regard to their own needs to protect the honor of the family. For example some second generation participants spoke of their need to protect family customs when they were critiqued by others, so as to preserve and honor the family. Participants spoke of the need to have each other’s backs and support one another in the hope of honoring family and community. Yet simultaneously such restraint and control can at times lead people to hold back from seeking support so as not to burden others (Chang, 2015). For Afghan Jews this notion was evident as participants shared concerns that they worried how their words would be reflected in the study, and if it would respect their family honor. It may be the case that some Afghan Jews refrained from sharing certain aspects of their lives, such as psychological stressors or difficulties between generations, because they worried about how that may reflect on or cast their family in an unfavorable light. For this reason, Afghan Jews may have been
exercising the concept of control when discussing certain topics that pertain to maintaining the honor of their family and community.

This theme, like others, speaks to a macrosystem level of influence that was evident within the Afghan culture. This cultural norm, to connect with and protect ones family and community, maintain a collective ideal, and support one another through business illustrated how the culture one lives in impacts their experience in the world (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

**Religion**

For Afghan Jews religion was embedded deep within the culture as a part of the traditions and customs that they would partake in. When coming to the United States, the strict observance of religion that was once held in Afghanistan began to decrease, and people were more flexible with their religious affiliation (Aharon, 2011). The decrease in religious observance was due primarily to experiences of assimilation of both first and second generation participants who wanted to connect to the dominant culture and succeed. Additionally, little to no explanation of the Jewish laws that are a part of the religion was given in Afghanistan. Afghan Jews often followed the Jewish laws because that is what their father did, and their father’s father did. In the United States, the concept of following a law simply because one’s ancestors kept that law, did not appeal to second generation immigrants because they became used to questioning the law and gathering knowledge before blindly following a religious path (Aharon, 2011). This scrutiny of tradition may be due to the differences in identification with collectivism or individualism. As stated earlier both first and second generation Jews endorsed some collectivistic ideals, however, some second generation participants also wanted some individual goals. From a collectivistic perspective, engaging in traditions and religious rituals has more to do with the needs and ways of the community rather than personal faith. From an individualistic perspective religion can be
seen as very personal based on one’s own level of faith and understanding of rituals and traditions. Second generation Afghan Jewish participants who were not observant grew frustrated with the notion of engaging in religion because that is what is and has always been done, and were looking for more personal connection to it. If they were not able to connect personally to the religion, their observance level may have decreased from what their parents’ generation would have hoped. However, even with a decrease of observance, religion still maintained a core value for most participants indicating the deep roots of religion as a part of their identity.

From an ecological model perspective religion informs an Afghan immigrants’ experience from both a microsystem and macrosystem level. On the microsystem level a structured religion can impact how one’s personal religious beliefs and their communal affiliation to that religion, such as a synagogue, can influence how they view the world. From a macrosystem level, religion in the case of Afghan Jews, is deeply embedded as a part of the culture, indicating a cultural influence as well as a religious one (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

**Interrmarriage**

Interrmarriage was also discussed as a theme that emerged from the data. When asked about intermarriage between faiths, all participants stated they were against it, however when discussing marrying from other sects of Judaism, all participants indicated such a marriage would be permissible. The attitude about inter-faith marriages may have been in part because in Afghanistan intermarriage was almost non-existent within the community, so when faced with this question in America, many participants indicated that it was not even a consideration for them (Aharon, 2011). Interrmarriage rates among immigrants in the U.S. are typically low, though can differ by ethnicity (Chiswick & Houseworth, 2008). There is, however a positive correlation among immigrant generations and intermarriage, indicating that intermarriage rates
increase with generational status (Alba & Golden, 1986). Intermarriage is even more prevalent with immigrant populations that have mixed ancestry, for example second generation Hispanic immigrants with mixed ancestry were more likely to intermarry than second generation Hispanic immigrants with a single Hispanic ancestry (Gilbertson, Fitzpatrick, & Yang, 1996). Different variables can impact whether an ethnic or immigrant group will intermarry, one of which is education. Highly educated people from a specific ethnic group are more likely to intermarry than those less educated (Lieberson and Waters, 1988; Schoen and Wooldredge, 1989; Sandefur and McKinnell, 1986; Meng and Gregory, 2005; Lichter and Qian, 2001). However research also indicates that highly educated people may be less attached to their family since they had to leave their family and ethnic community to get a higher education, which could lead to more openness to intermarriage (Kalmijn, 1998). Chiswick and Houseworth (1998) looked at different racial and ethnic groups in the US and found that Black, Asian, Asian Indian and Hispanic immigrants are less likely to intermarry than Whites. It was argued that since Whites are the majority population, even if intermarriage took place among white immigrant groups, it was still more likely than them intermarriage across racial or ethnic backgrounds (Chiswick & Houseworth, 1998).

For Afghan Jews, the value of religion as well as their immigrant status influence attitudes about intermarriage. The difference between marrying a non-Jew vs. marrying a non-Afghan Jew indicated the impact of assimilation on this population and the limitations that were set as to how much assimilation is permissible. One the one hand, assimilating among other Jewish groups was permissible among all participants in both generations, and mainly explained by the fact that there are not enough Afghan Jews to marry. On the other hand assimilating among non-Jews was a strict violation of cultural and religious values, and completely unacceptable across gender, and generational status. Some may see the rejection of inter-faith
marriage as a resilience factor that maintained the Jewish Afghan population from being assimilated and losing the faith altogether, however others might find the attitude about intermarriage to be a rigid approach that is “old-fashioned” and may not fit with the dominant culture in America. Either way, this pattern of Jewish intermarriage showed that Afghan Jews would not falter in their resolve against intermarriage, as it is a value that was made clear to many of the participants as children, and one that they pass on from generation to generation. To Afghan Jews, religious values trump all other cultural values, indicating that even if one marries outside of the specific Afghan culture, it is permissible so long as the person they marry is Jewish.

From an ecological perspective, this concept was seen from a macrosystem level in that it is a part of the Afghan Jewish culture. This attitude that was so pervasive in Afghanistan, still resonates with both generations to this day indicating its importance and emphasis in the community. Particularly because there was little or no intermarriage in Afghanistan, it is evident that the macrosystem is reflected here to highlight how a culture can influence one's opinions and experiences in the world (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Intergenerational Gap

The final theme found in the data explored the possible existence of an intergeneration gap between first and second generation Afghan Jewish immigrants. This gap can exists regardless of immigration status, as generational differences are typically present between two different generations. Among immigrants, however, this gap can be even more defined as their experiences of acculturation can differ greatly, potentially widening the generational gap. Some second generation immigrants acculturate using different acculturation strategies than their
parents because parents are more likely to value their culture of origin over the dominant culture of the host country (Costigan & Dokis, 2006).

Within this theme the sub-theme of religion emerged with regard to its effect on an intergenerational gap. Aharon (2011), indicated that Afghan Jews living in the United States differed amongst generations in their religious observance and importance placed on religion. For some participants this represented a source of conflict with parents, since they did not share the same religious values as them and at times felt misunderstood. As described earlier, differences in religious observance may have been due to differences with regard to how one conceptualizes religion. First generation participants saw it as a tradition to be passed on from generation to generation, irrespective of personal connection and individual beliefs. Second generation participants may have seen religion as something to be understood, explored, and personalized from a more individualistic perspective. Differences in religious observance between generations may have caused some tension between parents and children, where parents did not understand why children did not want to follow the traditions, and children did not understand why parents did. Many immigrant groups experience second generation immigrants to be more liberal and open to change than first generation immigrants (Lalonde & Cameron, 1993). This difference in liberality and openness to change often can act as a barrier in the connection between first and second generation immigrants. This barrier was evident as some second generation participants felt that when it came to some religious topics, they could not consult with their parents and share their thought and feelings with them because they feared their parents would be upset with them. This apprehension to vocalize one's religious opinions led to some second generation participants not sharing their feelings with their parents, thus creating a barrier in communication and connection between generations.
Another sub-theme within this theme is language barrier, which was described as a language difference between first and second generation participants that may have contributed to difficulties in communication. Since second generation participants were born in the United States and went to school here, they may have had an easier time speaking the English language. As discussed earlier, second generation participants, in addition to traditionality, relied upon the acculturation strategies of either assimilation of integration, which may have led them to be more active in acquiring English language proficiency. A person characterized by an acculturation strategies such as traditionality or marginality may be less likely to be active in acquiring language proficiency. As a result, language barriers may make it more difficult to interact with people from the dominant culture (Yoon et al., 2013). First generation participants utilized the acculturation strategy of traditionality and may have not acquired the same fluency as their children with regard to language. The variation in language ability manifested in a subtle language barrier between generations where some second generation participants noted this language barrier with their parents, and often felt uncertain about their communication. Some second generation participants felt that sometimes they could not provide clear explanations to their parents increasing the communication barrier between them and their parents.

From an ecological model perspective the theme of intergenerational differences is relevant on the microsystem level. Intergenerational differences are important because it pertains to ones interactions with their own family, which is one of the direct factors effecting people from within the microsystem. The presence of family as part of the microsystem illustrates the influence family has on an individual’s view of the world, and the way in which a difficulty of relating or miscommunicating can lead to a gap in understanding one another (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).
Further Research Directions

As discussed in the results, a few themes emerged independently from within the data. These themes were noted, but not included in the themes of the study because they were not directly explored. Nonetheless these themes were predominant enough to make note of them and hope to see them as a possibility for future research. Although this study used ethnographic methods, a grounded theory approach could be utilized as a way to make room for emerging data. This data could inform overlooked areas of research that emerged naturally albeit unexpectedly. A grounded theory approach implies an intertwining of the process of research and outcomes. This way the process involves a more flexible examination of unstructured data combined with the analytical outcomes in order to identify emergent themes and ways in which the data speaks for itself (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2004). This process takes place when data is analyzed with a description of open coding categories and provides a procedure for developing categories of information, connecting those categories, and then creating a narrative that makes sense of the connections between categories (Creswell, 2007; Charmaz, 2011). Grounded theory tells us that it is important to bring the participant voice to light when analyzing qualitative data. This helps counteract the biases and blinders of the researcher who may have an agenda when analyzing data (Creswell, 2007). For this reason the following two concepts will be noted as important for future directions of research.

Zionism

As noted in the emergent codes section discussed in the results, Zionism was discussed often when participants spoke about different aspects of their experiences. Their identification with the Jewish homeland resonated even beyond their experiences, and made an impression on their cultural, and ethnic identity (Aharon, 2011). This area may need to be explored further to
better understand this important value among Afghan Jews, and how their connection to their ancestral homeland may have played a role in their resilience against adversity.

**Gender Differences**

Another code that emerged from the data initially was the concept of gender differences, as it applied to first generation participants’ reflections on their home country. This theme was not asked about directly, yet it was predominantly highlighted among women who did not share the same passion and nostalgia to Afghanistan, as their male counterparts. This gender difference may have emerged due to the patriarchal nature of Afghan society (Emadi, 2002), which can influence greatly the differences in how man and women see their home country. Since this code was so prevalent when it was not even asked about, it appears to be a very important area to explore in future research studies to better understand the impact that gender differences had on this population and their experiences immigrating and acculturating to the United States.

**Colorism**

Colorism refers to discrimination based on skin color (Walker, 1983; Okazawa-Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1987). Typically, colorism takes place when favoritism is demonstrated toward those of lighter complexions over those with darker complexions (Jackson-Lowman, 2013). In this study, one participant experienced this discrimination from her teachers and classmates, who assumed that because her skin was darker she was less intelligent and would need to be placed in a “lower” class. The discrimination this participant experienced highlights the idea that colorism provides privilege to those who are of lighter skin tones due to socially constructed notions that lighter skin is more desirable. Colorism was not an emergent theme of this study since only one participant endorsed experiences related to it, however it is an area that has not been explored with this particular population and could possibly have played a role in
their experiences in the United States. Additionally, as described earlier, Afghan Jews struggle with choosing a salient racial identity due to their varied cultural, ethnic, and racial identity influences. As a result, it would be interesting to explore this further to see if colorism plays a role in their identification with certain races, and how those factors may affect their experiences of acculturation in the United States.

**Study Limitations**

This study had several limitations that are important to note that can inform the reader of its relevance, as well as help with changes for future research directions. First, the sample size in this study was small with an \( n = 12 \). The sample size was small because of time constraints as well as the length of each interview. Since each interview was approximately one hour long, it was difficult to find participants willing to join. The 12 participants who were chosen were believed to be able to shed some light on this population, however more interviews would have been helpful to gather a more varied outlook on their experiences.

Another limitation of this study was that it focused only on Afghan Jews who immigrated to the United States. As indicated earlier, Afghan Jews live in other places, such as Israel, Canada, and the United Kingdom. It would have been helpful to explore these areas as well, to get a stronger cross-cultural understanding of the immigration process, and how each country differs with regard to their treatment of Afghan Jews.

Lastly, it would have been helpful to ask more research questions geared at identifying the impact of privilege and gender. These are two areas that are very relevant, both for the purposes of multicultural research and to the field of counseling psychology. The research questions did not adequately address these issues, which created a lack of depth in the data,
missing out on an opportunity to raise some very poignant issues related to class, gender, and race privilege.

**Study Contributions**

The present study exploring Afghan Jewish immigrants’ experiences of acculturation and intergenerational differences provided several contributions that are important to note. As discussed earlier, very little research has been done exploring the Afghan Jewish immigrant population in the United States. This study offered a look into the lives of this population and the factors influencing their experiences in the United States. This population is an important example of an immigrant group that shares both strong cultural ties to Afghanistan, as well as a push to integrate and become a part of American society. Afghan Jews displayed a number of different acculturation strategies (traditionality, assimilation, and integration) that varied among participant groups, indicating that the acculturation process was ongoing and a relevant part of their lived experience. The ability to hold both strong cultural values and a desire to integrate and succeed in American culture shows that Afghan Jews are challenged to make informed choices about the way they live their lives that benefit them both on an individual and collective level.

Afghan Jews also show strength and resiliency when faced with hardship, by expressing thoughts and feelings of strength and pride and a commitment to community needs and benefitting the collective. Afghan Jews have a mixture of cultural identities, which highlight ways in which their culture, religion, and identities influenced their experiences in the United States.

Some factors in this study illustrated a distancing between first and second generation Afghan Jews with regard to how they experienced the world and related to one another. Second generation Afghan Jews experience of having overprotective parents, highlighted the
transmission of attitudes about the expectation of danger from generation to generation. Similar to the experience of children of holocaust survivors who grew up with the expectation of danger from their parents’ generation, so too was that message transmitted to subsequent generation (Yehuda et al. 2014). Afghan Jews experienced the expectation of danger, and as a result were mistrustful and overprotective of their children. This created a distancing from children, where second generation participants felt frustrated that their parents were overprotective, and parents worried for their children’s safety. Such a factor is a contribution to the literature because it highlights the relevance of the expectation of danger that Afghan Jews experienced in Afghanistan and how it can still influence second generation immigrants' experiences in America.

Another contribution of this study was the focus on religious identities. Differences in religious identities created connection as well as discord between generations, as first and second generation Afghan Jews do not always share the same values with regard to religious observance. Awareness of religious differences illustrates intergenerational gaps that exists between first and second generation immigrant Jews and how that gap creates a distance in connection between generations. Regardless of the factors creating the intergenerational gap, participants showed a strong connection to family ties and honor, indicating that regardless of differences, family systems remain close and supportive of one another. This exploration into the lives of Afghan Jews provides the reader with a rich awareness of this small, yet powerful group of people, who have been maintaining their culture as well as expanding their roots in the United States for several decades.

The focus on this population also highlights challenges experienced by this group due to the hardships they face as an immigrant population. The present study therefore can be compared to
other immigrant studies (Bourne, 1975; Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Gloria & Peregoy, 2006; Jibril, 2008; Kusow, 1998; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Lundstrom & Twine, 2011; Miller, 2007; Wu & Chao, 2011; Yoon et al., 2013; Yoon, Lee, Koo, & Yoo, 2010), which explored the experiences of immigrants in the United States and can help further the knowledge about immigrant groups, the intersectionality of acculturation strategies, and the ways in which immigrants, according to their multiple identities, are received in America.

**Qualitative Researcher Observations**

A critical part of this study was the qualitative nature of this study. From an ethnographic perspective, it is important to note the observations I made and the feelings I had from interviewing participants within the context of their community. One aspect that was noted upon entering the homes of participants was the presence of religious symbols in artwork and artifacts around the home. All participant homes included Mezuzah’s, Jewish artifacts with written scripture embedded on them that are on every doorpost of Jewish homes. Participants had bookshelves lined with religious texts and artwork depicting bible images and Zionistic ideals. For me, this was a comforting and well known environment since my home looked and felt the same. At times, I barely noticed these elements, because they came so naturally to me, illustrating how my closeness and membership to this population impacted the study. When entering their homes, participants had prepared a spread of cookies, fruit, and drinks for me to enjoy while engaging in their home, and insisted that no matter how full I was, I should eat from their food. This too felt familiar to me, as my parents’ home and the homes of my relatives offered the same spread to guests who came, regardless of the reason of visit.

Another important aspect that I wanted to highlight was the evidence of the acculturation strategy of traditionality described in this study was very much evident in my upbringing. My
father expressed intense passion for his roots as an Afghan Jew, at times valuing Afghan cultural values as more important than integrating into the dominant culture. The subtheme of overprotective parents resonated with me as well since my father’s use of traditionality and his experience of expecting danger influenced his sense of safety and mistrust of others. Personally this was two-fold for me, as my mother was a second generation Holocaust survivor, and knew too well of the horrors that her parents endured during the Holocaust. As discussed earlier such an influence of trauma can be transmitted between generations imbuing a sense of overproctiveness that is informed by one's earlier experiences of danger. I believe having this perspective helped me relate to and understand what my participants spoke of, and illustrated how closely aligned I was to this research. For this reason, triangulation was helpful and necessary in order to safeguard my study from possible bias.

Relevant to Counseling Psychology, a study about the Afghan Jewish immigrant population in the United States could help inform a clinical understanding of this and other immigrant populations. As a clinician it is important to be multiculturally competent in practice, and increasing one's awareness of other cultures helps engage people from varying multicultural backgrounds. This study identifies a group of immigrants that have rarely been studied yet highlights factors, such as identity variables, acculturation processes, and intergenerational differences, that can help a clinician become more multiculturally aware, competent, and culturally sensitivity. For example, an understanding of overprotective parents across family types, can help a clinician working with a second generation immigrant become aware of the struggles (e.g., risk aversion, resentment towards parents) they face with coming from a family that is overprotective. Such an awareness, can help a clinician develop empathy and build a strong therapeutic alliance with the client that can help them manage their experiences by feeling
supported and understood. Feeling understood is paramount to experiences in counseling, such as a sense of universalization. For this reason, the present study can be very beneficial.

Lastly this study utilizes the ecological model to help facilitate an understanding of the multiple systems influencing one's experience in the world. In this study, the focus on Afghan Jewish immigrants helped provide a deeper knowledge of this ecological model framework, and delivers an example of how an ecological approach can greatly inform one's knowledge of people’s lived experiences in the context of the many and interlocking systems that influence a person’s life.
REFERENCES


Bengtson, V. L., & Martin, P. (2001). Families and intergenerational relationships in
aging societies: Comparing the United States with German-speaking countries.


Validity of Qualitative Studies. *Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences*, University of Florida. Retrieved July 18, 2013, from https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy394


Adolescent Relationships Among Chinese and European Americans.


APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

**First Generation Afghan Jews**

*Acculturation Experiences.*

1. Tell me about what your immigration experience was like when you first arrived in the United States?
2. What was the reason you left Afghanistan?
3. Do you miss your home country? What about it do you miss? What about it do you not miss?
4. What do you like about living in the United States? What do you dislike?
5. Tell me about any challenges or hardships you may have faced after migration?
6. What factors contributed to these challenges? (prompt(s): children, family to support, language barriers, housing difficulties, employment issues, and cultural differences)

*Mental Health Experiences*

1. What happened to you when you were facing challenges and hardships? (prompt(s): emotional symptoms: feeling depress, sad, guilty why did you migrate, leave everything and go back; somatic symptoms: bodily pain, low energy level, headache, heart pain)
2. How are you feeling now after facing challenges and hardships?

*Cultural Values*

1. If you have to identify yourself what would it be? Afghan, Jewish, American, Israeli, a mixture, or other?
2. How important is family honor and tradition to you? Is it more important than individual needs?
3. Do you share the same cultural values as your children?
4. How important is religion in your life? What role does it play in your life?
5. What are your views on marrying outside the Afghan culture?
6. What are your views on marrying outside the Jewish faith?

**Intergenerational Gap**

1. Tell me about any barriers to your ability to communicate with your children?
2. Did these barriers cause you any specific hardships? (prompt (s): emotional symptoms: feeling depress, sad, guilty why did you migrate, leave everything and go back; somatic symptoms: bodily pain, low energy level, headache, heart pain)?

**Second Generation Afghan Jews**

**Acculturation Experiences**

1. Tell me about what it was like to be a second generation Afghan Jew in the U.S.?
2. How do you identify with your heritage? How do you identify with U.S. Culture?
3. What meaning and relevance does Afghanistan have in your life?
4. What do you like about living in the United States? What do you dislike?
5. Tell me about any challenges or hardships you may have faced as a second generation Afghan Jewish Immigrant in the U.S.?
6. What factors contributed to these challenges? (prompt (s): parents, family to support, language barriers, housing difficulties, employment issues, and cultural differences)

**Mental Health Experiences**
1. What happened to you when you were facing challenges and hardships? (prompt(s):

   emotional symptoms: feeling depress, sad, guilty why did you migrate, leave everything and go back;
   somatic symptoms: bodily pain, low energy level, headache, heart pain)

2. How are you feeling now after facing challenges and hardships?

*Cultural Values*

1. If you have to identify yourself what would it be? Afghan, Jewish, American, Israeli, a mixture, or other?

2. How important is family honor and tradition to you? Is it more important than individual needs?

3. Do you share the same cultural values as your parents?

4. How important is religion in your life? What role does it play in your life? Is this role different than your parents?

5. What are your views on marrying outside the Afghan culture?

6. What are your views on marrying outside the Jewish faith?

*Intergenerational Gap*

1. Tell me about what it was like to grow up as a child of a first generation Afghan Jewish immigrant in the U.S.?

2. Did you feel you were able to relate to your parents? Were there any barriers to your ability to communicate with your parents? If yes please describe?

3. Did these barriers cause you any specific hardships? (Prompt(s): emotional symptoms: feeling depress, sad, guilty why did you migrate, leave everything and go back; somatic symptoms: bodily pain, low energy level, headache, heart pain)
APPENDIX B

IRB Protocol, Recruitment Pamphlets, and Informed Consent Forms

NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION

Date: February 6, 2014  IRB #: 14-01-07
Principal Investigator(s): Tracy Robinson-Wood
                        Esther Frogel
Department: Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology
            Bouvé College of Health Sciences
Address: 404 International Village
         Northeastern University
Title of Project: Afghani Jews and Their Children: A Qualitative Study
                Exploring the Lived Experiences and Psychological
                Impact of Acculturation on First and Second Generation
                Traditional Afghani Jewish Immigrants
Participating Sites: N/A
DHHS Review Category: Expedited #6, #7
Informed Consents: One (1) signed consent form
Monitoring Interval: 12 months

APPROVAL EXPIRATION DATE: FEBRUARY 5, 2015

Investigator's Responsibilities:
1. The informed consent form bearing the IRB approval stamp must be used when recruiting
   participants into the study.
2. The investigator must notify IRB immediately of unexpected adverse reactions, or new
   information that may alter our perception of the benefit-risk ratio.
3. Study procedures and files are subject to audit any time.
4. Any modifications of the protocol or the informed consent as the study progresses must be
   reviewed and approved by this committee prior to being instituted.
5. Continuing Review Approval for the proposal should be requested at least one month prior
   to the expiration date above.
6. This approval applies to the protection of human subjects only. It does not apply to any
   other university approvals that may be necessary.

C. Randall Colvin, Ph.D., Chair
Northeastern University Institutional Review Board

Nan C. Regina, Director
Human Subject Research Protection

Northeastern University FWA #4630
**Participant Recruitment Phone Script**

**Researcher:** Hello may I please speak to ______?  

**Participant:** Yes.  

**Researcher:** Hi My name is Esther Frogel, and I am a Northeastern University graduate student doing a research study exploring intergenerational differences and psychological factors impacting first and second generation Afghani Jewish immigrants. I got your number from Osnat Gad who mentioned that you may be interested in participating in this study and sharing your unique experiences. *(OR, if a potential subject contacted you directly in response to your pamphlet you can say something like “Thank you very much for contacting me to learn more about my study.”)*  

To date, no research is known to exist in counseling psychology with the Afghan Jewish population. I will be exploring the unique experiences of Afghani Jews with regard to acculturation and enculturation process, intergenerational differences, and other psychological factors.  

At this time I am looking for participants who are first or second generation Afghani Jewish immigrants living in the United States. Would you be interested in participating?  

**Participant:** Maybe I have some questions first.  

**Researcher:** No problem, you can ask anything you would like.  

**Participant:** What will I be asked to do?  

**Researcher:** If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to answer a number of questions in the form of a semi-structured interview. The questions will be broad and allow you to openly describe your experiences in a way that is comfortable and meaningful to you. The interviews will be audio-recorded and will be heard only by me. All audio-recordings will be destroyed following transcription and analysis.  

**Participant:** Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?  

**Researcher:** There is no direct identifiable risk to participating in this study. There may be a possibility of some slight psychological risk as a result of describing old memories about your experiences. In order to minimize this risk, I will take precaution to be sensitive and aware of asking difficult questions and ensure that you are comfortable discussing a specific topic.  

**Participant:** Can I stop my participation in the study if I want to?  

**Researcher:** Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. If you do not participate or if you decide to quit, you will not lose any rights, benefits, or services that you would otherwise have.  

**Participant:** Ok it sounds interesting. I would be happy to participate.  

**Researcher:** Wonderful. Thank you! I will be in touch with you shortly with details for setting up an interview session. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have about the study. My number is 917-526-0319, or you can email me at esther.frogel@gmail.com.  

**Participants:** Sounds good. Good-bye.  

**Researcher:** Good-bye.
This is your chance to share your experiences and pass on your legacy to your children. Let your stories be heard and help preserve our unique Afghan community.

If you are interested in participating in this study or have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me by phone at 917 526 0319 or by email at esther.frogel@gmail.com.

Department of Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology
Northeastern University
360 Huntington Avenue
Boston MA 02115
NU IRB#14-02-07

Give back to your heritage.
A Research Participation Opportunity for Afghani Jews
Share Your Story

Very little research has been done about the Afghan Jewish immigrant population in the United States. This unique population has many experiences and stories to share that can help people understand more about the culture and lives of Afghan Jews. This is a chance to share your story and express how you feel. This is a chance to enlighten the next generation about what it means to be an Afghan Jew in America.

Who?
First Generation Afghan Jewish Immigrants born in Afghanistan and have immigrated to the United States.
Second Generation Afghan Jews born in the United States with one or more parents born in Afghanistan.
You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

What?
Participation in this study includes taking part in a one-hour semi-structured interview exploring your experiences as an Afghan Jew living in the United States.

When?
Interviews will be scheduled with you at your earliest convenience.

Where?
Interviews will take place in your home or at another location of your choosing.
Northeastern University, Department of Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology
Name of Investigator(s): Tracy Robinson-Wood, Ed.D, Esther Frogl, M.A.
Title of Project: Afghani Jews and Their Children: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Lived Experiences and Psychological Impact of Acculturation on First and Second Generation Traditional Afghani Jewish Immigrants.

1. Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study
We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study and the researcher will explain it to you as well. You may ask the researcher any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

2. Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
We are asking you to be in this study because you are either a first generation Afghani Jewish Immigrant (i.e. born in Afghanistan and immigrated to the United States) or a second generation Afghani Jewish Immigrant over 18 years old (i.e. born in the United States with parents born in Afghanistan).

3. Why is this research study being done?
The purpose of this study is to explore intergenerational differences and psychological factors impacting first and second generation Afghani Jewish immigrants. To date, no research is known to exist in counseling psychology with the Afghan Jewish population. The researcher is exploring the unique experiences of Afghani Jews with regard to acculturation and enculturation process, intergenerational differences, and other psychological factors.

4. What will I be asked to do?
If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to answer a number of questions in the form of a semi-structured interview. The questions will be broad and allow you to openly describe your experiences in a way that is comfortable and meaningful to you. The interviews will be audio-recorded and will be heard only by the researcher.

5. Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?
You will be interviewed in your own home or at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will take about an hour. After this, you may ask the researcher any questions you may have.

6. Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?
The possible risks or discomforts of the study are minimal. You may feel a sad or uncomfortable as a result of describing old memories about your experiences. In order to minimize this risk, the researcher will take precaution to be sensitive and aware of asking difficult questions and ensure that you are comfortable discussing a specific topic. At any time during the interview, you may discontinue. Please let the researcher know if you experience any discomfort.

7. Will I benefit by being in this research?
There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in the study. However, the information learned from this study may help the Afghani Jewish community in spreading awareness about the unique culture and experiences of this population and may help counseling psychologists to develop greater multicultural competence with ethnically diverse people.

APPROVED
8. Who will see the information about me?
Your part in this study will be confidential. Only the researcher will see the information about you. No reports or publications will use information that can identify you in any way or any individual as being of this project.

To maintain confidentiality, participants will be assigned numbers. These numbers will correspond to participants' names that will be written down on a list and kept in a secure location by the researcher. The data will be collected by audiotapes by the researcher. Along with these tapes the researcher may also take some notes during the interviews and these notes will be kept together with the audiotapes. Only the researcher will have access to the data. Once all the data has been analyzed and the research study is complete, all of the audiotapes and data will be destroyed.

9. Can I stop my participation in this study?
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. If you do not participate or if you decide to quit, you will not lose any rights, benefits, or services that you would otherwise have.

10. Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?
If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Esther Frogel at esther.frogel@gmail.com or 917-526-0119, the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Dr. Tracy Robinson-Wood at tr.robinson@neu.edu the Principal Investigator.

11. Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?
If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

12. Will it cost me anything to participate?
There is no cost for you to participate.

13. Is there anything else I need to know?
You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

14. I agree to take part in this research.

Signature of person agreeing to take part

Date

Printed name of person above

Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent

Date

Printed name of person above