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# 17

# Religious Sense-Making, Purpose-Making, and Significance-Making Among Jewish, Druze, and Muslim Young Adults in Israel

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C17.S1

## Introduction

C17.P1

The "human effort after meaning" (Bartlett, 1932/1995), is a key distinctive feature of people and societies. Our basic conative need to know and understand our self and surroundings is neurologically hardwired (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Rolls, 2018), while the needs for being valued, belonging, and self-actualizing generate a search for purpose and significance throughout life (Batson & Stocks, 2004; Wong, 2013). With such powerful motivators for meaning-making, it is no wonder that engaging in meaning is as universal as culture itself, with some researchers using the terms "culture" and "meaning-making" interchangeably (e.g., Oyserman, 2011). Meaning-making plays an integral role in the development of one's sense of self and identity, which can explain why so much of it takes place during adolescence and emerging adulthood, as self and identity gain coherence (Kunnen & Bosma, 2000; McLean & Pratt, 2006). It has also been found to play a significant role in subjective well-being, leading to higher levels of psychological adjustment and happiness (George & Park, 2016; Hamby et al., 2017; Park, 2013) although this link is not uniformly agreed upon (e.g., Singer, 2004) or culturally consistent (e.g., Alea & Bluck, 2013).

C17.P2

"Meaning" is a noun. It refers to a system of explanations which individuals inherit, receive, internalize, or reject. "Meaning-*making*" is a verb: a highly personal, dynamic, and ongoing activity of the individual. While the former involves internalization and identification with an external system and implies a finite process, the latter involves ownership, discovery, and

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boundless construction, or, as Postman and Weingartner (1969, p. 91) put it: "The meaning maker . . . continues to create new meanings." People usually make use of external meaning systems such as religions, ideologies, and philosophies to inform and shape their meaning-making activity, but, over time, they tend to make these meaning systems uniquely their own, and, as a result, no two people adhering to the same external meaning system will interpret and understand it in fully the same way (Seitz & Angel, 2015). At the same time, culture plays a key role in meaning-making, so that meaning-making differences are apparent not only between individuals but also between groups. This can be boiled down to two related questions: Is meaning "discovered" or "constructed" (Baird, 1985; Baumeister, 1991)? And is it primarily a project of the individual or of their culture? We keep both broad questions in mind as we describe our study and return to them in the discussion.

C17.P3 We begin this chapter by delineating its theoretical framework. First, we locate the concept of meaning-making within the broader spectrum of meaning research. Then, we present a typology of meaning-making activities which will be used in this study, making a note of how it compares to related typologies. Last, we review findings on the relation between meaning-making, religiosity,[1] and culture.

C17.P4 In the empirical part of the chapter, we report a study of Israeli emerging adults who belong to three faith traditions, Jewish, Muslim, and Druze. We identify several socially recognized paths for pursuing meaning through religion and spirituality, one socially agreed-upon narrative of secularity, and a few less socially sanctioned narratives of religious meaninglessness. In the discussion, we analyze our findings in terms of meaning-making, subjective well-being, and Israeli subcultures. Finally, we discuss some of the implications of these findings for the study of meaning, religiosity, and culture.

[1] Throughout this chapter, unless otherwise noted, we use the term "religiosity" or "religious" to connote religiosity and/or spirituality.

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C17.S2

## The Place of Meaning-Making Within Meaning Research and Some of Its Subconstructs

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The broad field of meaning research spans several constructs ranging from *meaning in life*, *meaning-making*, and *meaning maintenance*, all of which directly address meaning, to broader related constructs such as goals, worldviews, identity, and existential anxiety (George & Park, 2016). Perhaps as a result of the ubiquity of meaning in psychological research, the field has suffered from definitional ambiguities and lack of integration (Heintzelman & King, 2014; Martela & Steger, 2016), leading in recent years to a concerted effort to define "meaning," partition it, and relate its subconstructs to one another. This section locates meaning-making in relation to other concepts and explores some of the ways in which it has been topologized.

C17.P6

There is a broad range of ways to study meaning in individuals' lives: we can examine to what extent people feel that their lives are meaningful (typically explored in *meaning in life* studies); we can explore people's meaning frameworks, or the relationships they perceive and expect in the world (Baumeister, 1991); and we can explore how these meaning systems are maintained, created, or modified in light of experiences and challenges in life through the *meaning maintenance model* (Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006) or using the *meaning-making* framework (Park, 2011). This last term refers to "the activity of composing a sense of the connections among things: a sense of pattern order, form, and significance" (Park, 2011, p. 19). We follow Korger (2004) in considering meaning-making to be the idiosyncratic and evolving way in which people actively organize their own experiences. It is often construed in the form of an insightful personal narrative (McLean & Pratt, 2006). A similar situation might have entirely different meanings for different people, or even for the same person at different points in their life (Kunnen & Bosma, 2000).

C17.P7

Meaning-making has been divided by scope (Janof-Bulman, 1992; Park, 2013) into *global meaning systems*, which make sense of life in general, and *situational meaning-making*, which relate to specific events and experiences. When an event threatens the integrity of individuals' global meaning, they engage in an appraisal of the discrepancy between the two. The more discrepant they are, the more stress is generated. To alleviate this stress, people make meaning-making efforts which result, through various coping strategies, in either "meaningfulness" or in "meaninglessness" (Park, 2013). Two major paths to restore meaning are *assimilative meaning-making*, which

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involves changing the situational appraisal that preserves global meaning intact, and *accommodative meaning-making*, which involves modifying global beliefs to reflect the situation. When global meaning is either restored or revised, a sense of well-being is expected to prevail, although empirical data are not fully conclusive, as we will show.

C17.P8 Recent studies on the related construct of *meaning in life* (MIL) have adopted Martela and Steger's (2016) tripartite model which partitions meaning in life into *coherence* (the degree to which individuals perceive a sense of coherence and understanding regarding their lives; also termed comprehension), *purpose* (the extent to which individuals experience life as being directed and motivated by goals which they value), and *significance* (the degree to which individuals feel that their existence is of importance and value in the world). This last component is also termed *mattering* (George & Park, 2014, 2016). Researchers of the Terror Management Theory point out that a sense of significance can involve deriving "symbolic immortality" from internalized cultural worldviews (Greenberg & Arndt, 2012). Living in light of a grander scope of meaning than that available to any single human mitigates the fear of death and provides a sense of equanimity in the face of its inevitability.

## C17.S3 A Typology of Three Meaning-Making Activities

C17.P9 While the MIL typology of coherence/comprehension, purpose and significance/mattering (Heintzelman & King, 2014; Martela & Steger, 2016) has been related to the construct of meaning-making (George & Park, 2016), it has not been directly applied to it. We suggest a modified version the MIL typology to connote three central psychological activities involved in meaning-making. Meaning making can involve any or all of the following three psychological activities: *sense-making* is the act of making sense of reality. Maslow (1954) highlighted people's "conative needs" as a basic need, running parallel to the needs for survival and safety. Questions such as how the world works, what happens after death, and why people suffer seek and gain answers in the process of sense-making. Sense-making paves the way to *purpose-making*, which involves crafting a sense of subjective purpose and agency in life. Here the meaning is not "of the world," but "in the person" as it is the individual as subject who is at the center of this meaning-making endeavor. For this activity, sense-making questions are turned inward: Why

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am *I* here? Why did this happen to *me*? What does *my* life mean? Finally, *significance-making* reflects an attempt to understand and feel that reality *matters beyond one's own monadic life*, an act which goes beyond conferring a purpose to individual life or making sense of reality. Significance, as opposed to importance, involves connecting with something larger than oneself and, in the process, losing one's self-boundaries. Examples include merging with a group (e.g., in war, Graham & Haidt, 2009) or serving an ideal or briefly assimilating with the ultimate in "unio-mystica" (James, 1902/2003).

C17.P10 The three meaning-making activities are interconnected. For example, the feeling of illumination arising from making sense of the world can be powerful enough to confer a sense of purpose or even of significance on the life of the person experiencing it. Similarly, experiences of significance can also make sense of the world, as they are often noetic (James, 1902/2003). Despite being interconnected, however, each meaning-making activity involves a different psychological activity: Sense-making implies turning one's gaze outward toward reality, purpose-making involves turning it inward toward the self, and significance-making dissolves the borders between inner and outer. Another distinction is that sense-making (similar to coherence) is primarily a contemplative, cognitively motivated activity which results in understanding, purpose-making is an experiential and affectively motivated activity which results in goals, while significance-making, which is not fully explainable by either emotion or cognition, results in connection. Thinking about meaning in this way can lead to some interesting hypotheses. We might speculate, for example, that the three aspects of meaning-making are developmentally sequential; sense-making precedes purpose-making which in turn precedes significance-making both within the development of individuals and in the cultural development of human societies.

C17.P11 Two notes before turning to our own study. First, we offer this typology as an integration of previous studies since each of the three meaning-making activities has been discussed separately elsewhere (see Davis et al., 1998, on "sense making"; Park & Folkman, 1997, on the "search for significance" and Baumeister, 2002, on "personal purpose-seeking"). Second, the meaning-making typology does not fully map on to MIL typology, although the two share significant commonalities. Table 17.1 sums their shared aspects as well as their differences.

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C17.T1 **Table 17.1** The meaning-making typology in relation to the meaning in life (MIL) typology

| Meaning-making typology | Meaning in life typology | Shared aspects | Differences |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Sense making*: an activity aimed at making sense of reality by learning, exploring, and discovering the world. | *Coherence* (or comprehension): a perceived sense of coherence regarding one's life. | Both involve the conative aspect of meaning; both involve cognitive processes. | Sense making applies to the order of reality; coherence applies to one's life. Sense making is an activity; coherence is an index of how much sense one's life makes. |
| *Purpose making*: an activity aimed at identifying the purpose, goals and meaning of one's own life. | *Purpose*: experiencing life as goal and value-directed. | Both involve motivational aspects of meaning; relate to affect; are focused on the self. | These two constructs directly map onto each other in two spheres: having a sense of purpose and seeking or actively creating purpose. |
| *Significance making*: the act of forgoing the focus on the self in favor of merging with a larger cause, ideal, or entity. | *Significance* (or mattering): feeling that one's existence is of importance and value in the world. | Both address existential concerns. | Significance making is an activity which involves sacrificing self-boundaries; promotes humility. Significance assuages existential fears by assuring individuals of their everlasting importance. |

C17.S4

## Religion, Spirituality, and Meaning-Making

C17.P12 Meaning-making in all three subtypes is wide-ranging in scope. People can make sense of reality through science, myth, or philosophy. They can seek and find purpose to their lives through social activity, art, nature, work, or love (Hamby et al., 2017). They can attain significance through offspring, altruism, or nationalism. Without discounting the importance of these myriad sources of meaning, religion and spirituality (as well as their counterparts, secularism and atheism) have a special link to meaning-making.

C17.P13 Religion is construed as a "meaning system" above all its other attributes. It has been defined as a meaning structure within the human cognitive system which includes attitudes and beliefs, values, goals, self-definition, and some locus of ultimate concern (Paloutzian & Park, 2014). Batson and Stocks go so far as to define religion as "whatever a person does to deal with existential

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questions" (2004, p. 141), implying that the terms "religion" and "meaning-making" are synonymous.

C17.P14 Religion and spirituality are uniquely suited for the job of making meaning as they involve four important attributes which promote it. First, they are comprehensive, offering all-encompassing global meaning systems; second, they are culturally universal (Brown, 2000), so they are widely accessible; third, they make direct claims that translate meaning into actions; and finally, they involve the transcendent, which allows them to easily relate to "significance" and "ultimate meaning" (Hood, Hill, & Williamson, 2005; Park, 2013).

C17.P15 In terms of the above-suggested typology, religious sense-making would mean the use of religious cosmology and theology to make sense of the world; religious purpose-making would imply the use of religious practices, beliefs, and values to craft a sense of personal purpose in the world; and religious significance-making would mean using religious ideas, techniques, and experiences to transcend the boundaries of the self and connect with what lies beyond. While many other meaning systems can provide sense and purpose to life, "no other system of meaning is so bold in its proclaimed ability to provide a sense of significance" (Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009, p. 16).

## C17.S5 The Role of Culture and Social Norms in Meaning-Making

C17.P16 Although meaning-making and the use of religion and spirituality to guide it are universal, they are also culturally contingent (Tarakeshwar, Stanton, & Pargament, 2003). Culture affects meaning-making processes in several ways.

C17.P17 First, it shapes the content and range of acceptable options for making meaning. As Triandis (2007) put it, culturally appropriate situations seem right; culturally inappropriate situations seem wrong or off-key. Some societies offer multiple viable paths to meaning, others offer very few, raising more of a challenge for those who cannot identify with the accepted meaning systems.

C17.P18 Second, cultures affect the frequency, style, and intensity of engaging in meaning-making. Although every society engages in meaning-making on a cultural level and promotes its meaning-systems, meaning-making as an individual activity may be encouraged or discouraged, depending on, among other factors, the importance ascribed in a given society to values of authority,

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traditionalism, autonomy, and openness. It may also be constrained by forms of social exclusion. Thus, we should not expect meaning-making to take place at similar levels of intensity among members of all groups and cultures.

C17.P19 Third, culture can affect the psychosocial outcomes of meaning-making. In societies where individuals are socialized to accept inherited meaning systems, a prolonged process of meaning-making may be associated with decreased well-being. In others, individuals may be encouraged to continually reinvent their meaning systems, leading to enhanced well-being for individuals who engage in ongoing meaning-making. For example, the robust finding that meaning-making activity that produces a restored or revised global meaning system leads to more subjective well-being (Barry & Abo-Zena, 2014) is more ambiguous and at times completely absent in non-Western societies (Alea & Bluck, 2013).

C17.P20 To sum, we have defined meaning-making and highlighted the importance of the spiritual-religious domain within it. We have subdivided meaning-making into sense-making, purpose-making, and significance-making and considered each in terms of religious-spiritual activity. We noted that although universal, meaning-making is also culturally contingent, such that its relation to well-being, identified in Western countries, is in need of further cross-cultural exploration.

C17.P21 This chapter presents a modest cross-cultural analysis of religious meaning-making using the sense-, purpose-, significance-making typology in a specific cultural context: that of Jewish, Muslim, and Druze Israeli emerging adults. The questions which guided our exploration are listed here.

C17.P22 1. To what degree and manner do emerging adults in Israel (ages 18–30) engage in religious-spiritual meaning-making?

C17.P23 2. How does this activity relate to their sense of emotional well-being?

C17.P24 3. To what degree do they engage differentially in religious sense-making, purpose-making, and significance-making?

C17.P25 4. Can we discern any differences in religious meaning-making by faith tradition (Judaism, Islam, and Druze) in this sample?

C17.S6

## Method

C17.P26 To explore these questions, we conducted an analysis of a subset of the data deriving from a large international study on the values and religiosity of

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young adults globally (the YARG study; Nynäs et al., 2019, http://www.abo.fi/fakultet/yarg). This international mixed-method study includes Israel as one of its 13 locations. A total of 4,964 participants were surveyed, and 546 of them were interviewed in depth as well. The interviews lasted for 1–3 hours and included a tool called the Faith-Q-Sort (FQS interview; Wulff, 2009).

C17.S7

## Participants

C17.P27

A total of 754 young Israeli adults ages 18–30 (329 Jewish, 199 Muslim, and 226 Druze) completed The YARG Survey which probed for values, beliefs, social attitudes, social belonging, subjective and social well-being, religiosity, and demographic information. The sample, which was not random but rather purposeful, was recruited by advertising at multiple colleges and universities throughout Israel. Participants were invited to complete the survey and then, if interested, apply to participate in the FQS interview. Of the Israeli survey participants, 42.7% of the respondents were male, 57.2% were female, and 0.1% self-defined as "other." Of the total, 24.1% were 18- to 20-year-olds, 54.0% were 21- to 25-year-olds, and 21.1% were 26- to 30-year-olds. 44.5% of the respondents reported belonging to some religious, spiritual, or philosophical community. The interview sample ($n = 90$) was purposefully chosen from among the willing survey participants to maximize demographic and value-profile diversity. It included 45 Jews, 22 Muslims, and 23 Druze of varying levels of religiosity.

C17.S8

## Tools

C17.S9

### The Faith Q-Sort

C17.P28

The YARG project implemented a Q-sort tool, the FQS (Wulff, 2019). Q-methodology in general provides a foundation for a systematic study of subjectivity and a person's viewpoints, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes (Watts et al., 2007; Watts & Stenner 2012). The FQS instruments was designed to account for diversity in religious subjectivities and explores religion in a way that allows for observing the complexity of contemporary religiosities. Participants are asked to sort 101 cards containing statements regarding religion, faith, praxis, and core values into groups according to their importance to them. These statements stem from a broad variety of sources in the

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history of religion, psychology, and sociology of religion in order to account for different religious traditions and forms of religiosities (Wulff, 2019).[2] During the session, participants are asked to arrange their card-sorting along a normal distribution ranging from +4 for the 5 most representative cards to −4 for the 5 least representative cards, with all the others falling in a normalized curve in between. This array of statements makes up a participant's *Q-sort*. Each Q-sort is unique, but it is possible to discern shared patterns in the sorts, known as *prototypes*. Each prototype reflects a socially shared viewpoint about religion and spirituality. It important to stress that prototypes are not groups of people, but rather coherent and culturally sanctioned worldviews or states of mind. For this sort of analysis, the robustness of the pattern is not a function of the number of participants who express it but rather of the coalescence of items in each perspective. To generate prototypes from the individual Q-sorts, each national/ethnic set of Q-sorts is factor-analyzed separately. Thus, in our study, all Jewish Q-sorts were analyzed separately, as were Muslim and Druze ones. Factor analysis of Q-sorts (known as *Q-methodology*) differs from standard factor-analysis (R-method) in that R-method involves correlating variables across subjects, while the Q-method involves clustering subjects across variables and reducing many individual viewpoints to a few shared ways of thinking.

C17.S10

### The Meaning-Making in Religion Scale

C17.P29

We created a Meaning-Making in Religion scale (MMR) scale using 24 of the 101 FQS items. We chose these items by identifying statements which attest to (1) the use of religious or spiritual frameworks to make sense of the world (the sense-making subscale, 8 items, Cronbach's alpha = .74); (2) statements which refer to the use of religion or spirituality to guide one's personal purpose in life (the purpose-making subscale, 8 items, Cronbach's alpha = .78), and (3) statements which attest to attempts to transcend the self and connect to the beyond (the significance-making subscale, 8 items, Cronbach's alpha = .75). Reliability of the full 24-item MMR scale was .90. The three subscales were intercorrelated (.74 to .75), indicating a shared underlying construct. As a sort of validity test, each subscale distinguished those belonging to a religious or spiritual group from those who didn't ($p < .00$).

[2] For all full list of the 101 statements in English, Hebrew, or Arabic, please contact the authors.

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Here are examples of items (i.e., FQS statement cards) which contributed to each index of meaning-making[3]:

C17.P30 Religious sense-making:

- C17.P31 Spends much time reading or talking about his or her convictions.
- C17.P32 Has a thorough knowledge of religious scriptures or texts
- C17.P33 Views all events in this world within a religious or spiritual framework.

C17.P34 Religious purpose-making:

- C17.P35 Centers his or her life on a religious or spiritual quest.
- C17.P36 Actively works toward making the world a better place to live.
- C17.P37 Feels adrift, without direction, purpose, or goal (reverse-coded)

C17.P38 Significance-making:

- C17.P39 Seeks to intensify his or her experience of the divine or some other-worldly reality.
- C17.P40 Has experienced moments of intense divine, mysterious, or supernatural presence.
- C17.P41 Willingly gives up worldly or bodily pleasures for religious or spiritual reasons.

C17.P42 Additional tools in this part of the YARG study included the Positive Affect Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) and the Subjective Well-Being Scale (SWBS), which were distributed to all survey participants.

## C17.S11 Procedure and Analytic Plan

C17.P43 After individually completing the FQS with a trained researcher (40 minutes to 1 hour), each participant was interviewed in depth (a further 1–2 hours) about their sorting and the background to this in terms of, for example, their religious identity and development.

C17.P44 We first analyzed the correlations between the MMR scale and subscales, and various demographic and well-being information for each of the 90 participants. Next, we used the 12 FQS prototypes which were generated by

[3] For a full list of the 24 items comprising the Meaning-Making in Religion (MMR) scale, please contact the authors.

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the Q-analysis and compared the average scores on each meaning-making subscale for each prototype. Then, we used data from in-depth interviews with participants who loaded strongly on a specific prototype ("defining sorts") to explore cultural aspects of the narratives referring to meaning-making activities.

C17.S12

# Findings

C17.S13

## General Findings

C17.P45 One-way ANOVA tests between the three religious groups revealed that the Jewish sample was significantly less religious than the Muslim and Druze ($p < .00$) and that the Druze were significantly less religious than the Muslims ($p < .01$.) Scores on the scale measuring subjective well-being (SWBS) were modestly but significantly higher for Muslims and for Druze than for Jews ($p < .05$ and $p < .01$, respectively).

C17.P46 When analyzing differences on meaning-making on an individual level, no significant gender differences were found on any of the meaning-making subscales. A significant correlation between younger age and meaning-making was found for the full MMR scale ($r = .24$, $p < .05$) and for the sense-making subscale ($r = .27$, $p < .01$). An ANOVA showed significant differences in religious meaning-making by religion (see Table 17.2). Post hoc tests found that Muslims were significantly more engaged in religious meaning-making activities than the Druze, and that the Druze were more engaged than the Jews.

C17.P47 Surprisingly, no significant relation was found between SWBS scores which measured subjective well-being and MMR scores measuring religious meaning-making. The only modest significant correlation was between significance-making and positive life orientation ($r = .23$, $p < .05$)

C17.S14

## The FQS Prototypes

C17.P48 The picture shifts when examined at the resolution of the 12 extracted prototypes, rather than at level of faith traditions. Each individual loaded differently on the prototypes of their group (i.e., Jewish, Muslim, or Druze), with some loading very high on one prototype and being considered a

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C17.T2

**Table 17.2** Differences in three subtypes of meaning-making and overall meaning-making, by religion (Jewish, Muslim, Druze): ANOVA

| | | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sense-making** | Between groups | 24.974 | 3 | 8.325 | 6.742 | .000 |
| | Within groups | 106.187 | 86 | 1.235 | | |
| | Total | 131.161 | 89 | | | |
| **Purpose-making** | Between groups | 11.874 | 3 | 3.958 | 2.930 | .038 |
| | Within groups | 116.182 | 86 | 1.351 | | |
| | Total | 128.056 | 89 | | | |
| **Significance-making** | Between groups | 17.353 | 3 | 5.784 | 5.273 | .002 |
| | Within groups | 94.343 | 86 | 1.097 | | |
| | Total | 111.695 | 89 | | | |
| **Full Meaning-Making in Religion (MMR) scale** | Between groups | 17.192 | 3 | 5.731 | 5.799 | .001 |
| | Within groups | 84.993 | 86 | .988 | | |
| | Total | 102.185 | 89 | | | |

"defining sort" and fewer double-loading on several prototypes or not loading high on any of them. The analysis of meaning-making by prototype reveals that worldview plays as important a role in meaning-making as the faith traditions themselves.

C17.P49 To delve into the meaning-making processes by prototype we briefly describe the 12 prototypes that were extracted from the Q-analysis. The following summaries incorporate the wording of statements which each prototype either strongly identified with or strongly rejected. An asterisk (*) following a sentence indicates that this aspect distinguishes the prototype from all others, at a significance level of $p < 0.01$.

C17.P50 In the Q-analysis of the 45 *Jewish* Israeli Q-sort arrays, 4 prototypes emerged. Thirty-two of the 45 Q-sorts were "defining sorts," which means that they loaded heavily on one prototype and not on the others.

C17.P51 *Prototype 1: The Socially Concerned Rationalist*: This perspective is characterized by a combination of forcefully rejecting religiosity and strongly embracing a moral and socially active outlook. Religious ideas that conflict with scientific and rational principles are rejected*, while individual freedom of choice in matters of faith and morality is supported*. At the core of this prototype lies an atheist view of divinity which sees religion as the illusory creation of human fears and desires*. However, this narrative is not only

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about disbelieving and rejecting. It also sets great store on being caring, empathic, morally involved, and socially engaged, and it actively seeks to change societal structures and values*.

C17.P52 *Prototype 2: The Institutionally Committed Socially Engaged Adherent*: This prototype reflects a religious worldview which involves belief in a divine being with whom a personal relationship can be had; strongly identifying with religious texts and teachings* which are considered to be clear and true*, engaging regularly in religious or spiritual practices in private and in public,* and actively working toward making the world a better place to live as part of what it means to be religious*. Alongside a religious commitment, this prototype reflects some progressive thought. For example, it supports individual freedom of choice in matters of faith and morality and actively endeavors to change societal structures and values. This prototype also involves a positive outlook on life, characterized by inner peace and a sense of internal conviction.

C17.P53 *Prototype 3: The Security-Oriented Unengaged Traditionalist*: This is a perspective of a nonpracticing believer-of-sorts. Lacking religious knowledge and experience, it reflects religious disengagement, but the "synagogue not attended" is traditional. This prototype involves believing in some way, but not in a way that would count as "religious"*. The deity ascribed to is similarly disengaged—a deep mystery that can be pointed to but never fully understood*. This faith is not accompanied by religious activity, public or private*. There is an acknowledged utilitarian bent to this perspective, as it involves becoming more religious at times of crisis or need*. A vague and shifting religious outlook is also reported*. There is a clear sense of discomfort with religion, partly attributable to a lack of religious knowledge and partly resulting from disengagement. Still, the continuity of ancient religious traditions is deemed important.

C17.P54 *Prototype 4: The Experience-Oriented Spiritual Seeker*: This is a strongly spiritual perspective*. It involves a deeply held belief of a personal nature leading to moments of profound illumination*. This prototype involves further seeking to intensify experiences of the divine or some otherworldly reality* by acquiring knowledge and by using consciousness-altering methods*. Spiritual self-realization is a primary goal in life*, and the idea that particular religious claims are true is rejected*. Rather, elements from various religious and spiritual traditions are embraced*. Finally, this prototype is not one of contemplative spiritual retreat from the world, but rather

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an active endeavor to make the world a better place to live, blending spirituality with social action.

C17.P55 *Muslims* constitute 17.5% of the Israeli population, making them the largest minority group in Israel (CBS, 2016). The Muslim community in Israel has absorbed significant Western secular trends leading to changes in the role of religious values since the establishment of the state, but is still considered a traditionalist society. Today, Muslims in Israel experience the pull of two powerful processes: the return to religion and secularism (Al-Haj, 2004; Lybarger, 2007).

C17.P56 In the factor analysis of the 22 Muslim Israeli Q-sort arrays, 5 prototypes emerged. Fourteen of the 22 Q-sorts were "defining sorts," loading clearly on one of the four prototypes, but not on the others. Following is a brief description of each prototype:

C17.P57 *Prototype 1: The Committed Institutionally Anchored Believer* : This prototype involves a strong and firmly held belief in Islam, God, and Islamic scriptures. Religious faith is viewed as a never-ending quest* for a deeper, more confident faith*. Faith is reflected behaviorally in religious and spiritual practices such as prayer and strictly observing the religious commandments*. Uniquely, this prototype involves a belief that religion should play the central role in the ruling of the nation*, and it is the only one to reject individual freedom of choice in matters of faith and morality*.

C17.P58 *Prototype 2: The Institutionally Unattached Universalist*: This prototype reflects a sense of comfort with faith and its use mainly for personal comfort in times of need*. God and religion are taken as given, the level of involvement is deemed just right, there is little guilt for not living up to ideals*, and there is a strong sense of inner peace*. This is a prototype which values stability. For example, existing social structures and values are supported*. There is a spiritual side to this prototype, too, as it involves the experience of moments of profound illumination*. The insights of religion are a source of comfort and support, but this is not reflected in daily religious practices other than engaging in charitable acts or social action*

C17.P59 *Prototype 3: The Religiously Uninterested but Culturally Committed*: This prototype is characterized by a powerful sense of distance from religion and from God*. It expresses modern Western precepts of individualism, and religion does not seem to occupy a major role in it, possibly due to daily responsibilities, which leave little or no time for spiritual matters*. There are signs of religious doubt, which have been felt for a long time*, yet this prototype avoids exploring or expressing this doubt*, perhaps due to fear of being

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criticized for secularity or due to a general disengagement with religion. Rather than a sense of peace in the face of life's difficulties* there is a disquieting sense of guilt for not living up to ideals*.

C17.P60 *Prototype 4: The Experientially Inclined Committed Believer*: This prototype expresses a strong belief in God, who is perceived to be a compassionate and spiritual mystery* as well as a sheltering and nurturing parent*. However, organized religion does not play a role for this prototype, nor does being an active, contributing member of a religious or spiritual community*. This faith is of a personal sort rather than communal, and it does not lead to a sense of affinity with those who share the same faith or outlook*. The effect of modernization on religiosity is evident in this prototype, which embraces Western individualistic views that detach morality from religion and support freedom of choice in religious matters.

C17.P61 *Prototype 5: The Scripture- and Institution-Oriented Traditionalist*: This is a highly traditional religious perspective. It involves the belief that it is important to maintain continuity of the religious traditions of family and ancestors* and that one should remain loyal to the religion of one's nation in an uncritical manner. Religion is considered a central means for becoming a better and more moral person, but it is also a key to flourishing in the world to come, and earthly life is spent in conscious anticipation of the life hereafter. Religious dictums such as preserving one's purity, gender essentialism, offering charity, and giving up worldly or bodily pleasures are observed, yet no sense of personal closeness to God is reported; spiritual experiences are not an important part of this prototype.

C17.P62 The *Druze* are an ethno-religious community concentrated mainly in the Middle East with religious practices and ideas which diverged from Shiite Islam in the 11th century. Most of the Druze live in Syria, Lebanon, and Northern Israel. At the end of 2016, they made up 1.6% of the Israeli population and 8% of its Arab population (CBS, 2016). Druze is an esoteric, philosophically oriented religion with few rituals and a focus on moral commandments. Its core principles of faith are kept in great secrecy, and only some tenets such, as an abiding faith in the unity of God and a belief in destiny and in reincarnation, are known to outsiders. Conversion to the Druze religion is forbidden and even within the Druze community, only an elite minority of initiates known as Uqqāl ("The wise") have access to religious teachings and services (Falah, 2000). The distinction between Uqqāl and Juhal ("The Ignorant") is sharp. Shifting from one to the other can never be revoked and requires a rigorous initiation process. Druze communities are

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conservative, and the family is at the nucleus of society (Abu-Rukun, 2006; Ben-Dor, 1996). However, they, too, have been undergoing a process of transition from traditionalism to modernization (Al-Haj, 2004; Azaiza, 2004; Lavee & Katz, 2002).

C17.P63 In the factor analysis of the 23 Druze Israeli Q-sort arrays, 3 prototypes emerged. Thirteen of the 23 Q-sorts were "defining sorts" which loaded clearly on one of the prototypes and not on the others. It is worth noting that none of the 23 interviewees was "Uqqāl" or Druze religious initiates. This is a typical state for young Druze adults.

C17.P64 *Prototype 1: The Confident Religious Traditionalist*: This prototype is characterized by a strong sense of religiosity* and a deeply held belief in the Druze religious convictions and traditions, such as affirming the idea of reincarnation, the cycle of birth and rebirth. However, since it is a nonreligious prototype in the Druze sense of the term (not *uqqāl*), religion does not fully dictate this worldview nor is it reflected in religious practices per se, which cannot apply to it. One might say that this prototype reflects orthodoxy but not orthopraxis.

C17.P65 *Prototype 2: The Socially Emphatic Ambivalent Conformist*: This prototype embraces both the traditions of the Druze community and the values of Western modernity. There is a strong belief in God and in the core tenets of Druze religion, such as reincarnation, but, at the same time, the Western worldview of striving for social change* is supported. The mixed effects of incorporating traditional and modern elements are expressed by observing some traditional proscriptions (e.g., not using forbidden substances), while disregarding others such as personal prayer.

C17.P66 *Prototype 3: The Privately Detached Adherent*: This prototype reflects a shift toward secularity and Western values of universalism, autonomy, and nonreligious morality. It involves some sort of belief but does not involve being religious*. This prototype is the only one in the Druze sample to support individual freedom of choice in matters of faith and morality* and to believe that one can be moral without being religious*. Living in a strict and conservative community, this is a privately held prototype which is considered best kept to oneself*.

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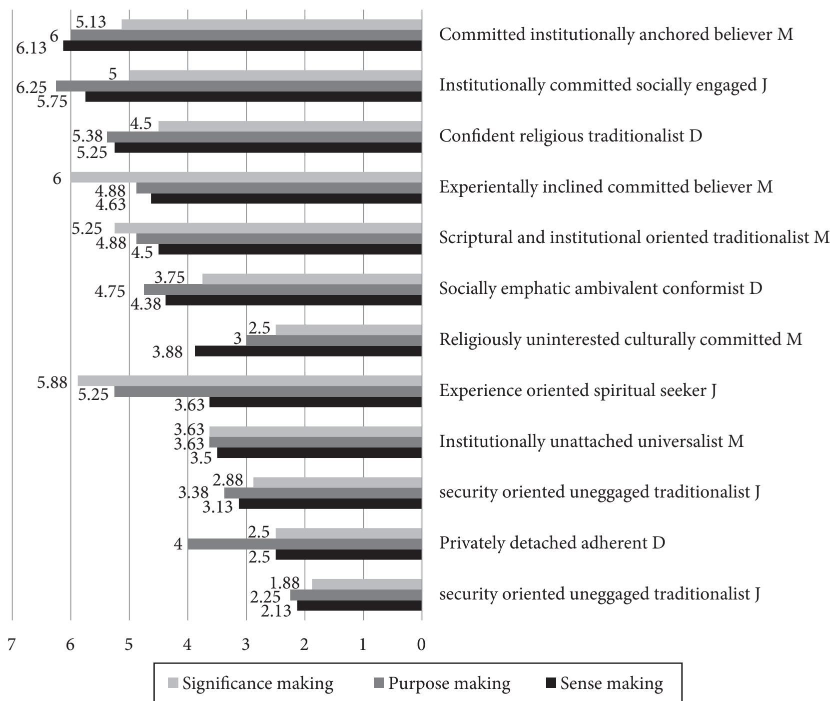
C17.S15

## The Relation Between Prototypes and Religious Meaning-Making

C17.P67 We compared these 12 prototypes on religious meaning-making using the MMR scale we devised. In each of the three religious groups we examined, some prototypes seemed to involve more meaning-making activities than others. Figure 17.1 outlines the 12 prototypes by each subtype of meaning-making activity. The proportions of sense-, purpose-, and significance-making vacillated as well. We identified religiously cross-cutting patterns in the subtypes of meaning-making, as follows:

C17.P68 *Sense-making*: In all three faith traditions, the prototypes which most strongly reflected institutionalized religion (e.g., following religious dictates and traditions, belonging to a religious community etc.) were those who engaged in the most religious sense-making. The secular prototypes tended to be the lowest on religious sense-making, as did the spiritual prototypes (see Figure 17.2).




C17.F1 **Figure 17.1** Meaning-making activities of the 12 prototypes in the Israel sample (M = Muslim, J = Jewish, D = Druze).

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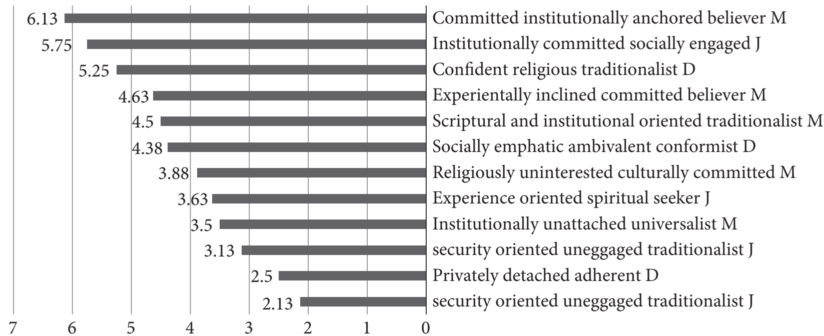


C17.F2 **Figure 17.2** Sense-making subscale scores by Faith-Q-Sorts (FQS) prototype (M = Muslim, J = Jewish, D = Druze).

C17.P69 *Purpose-making*: Similarly to sense-making, the more institutionally committed religious prototypes were those who engaged in religious purpose-making most often. However, the prototypes that were characterized by high levels of spirituality also used religious purpose-making, more than they use religion for sense-making.

C17.P70 *Significance-making*: The Jewish and Muslims samples each generated a single distinctly spiritual prototype, which was highly experiential, mystical, and personal in its religious worldview. These prototypes were the highest on significance-making (see Figure 17.2). It was also apparent that most Muslim prototypes are higher on significance-making than are most Druze and Jewish ones.

C17.P71 To sum, across faith traditions, the institutionally committed prototype tended to be higher on religious sense-making, while the spiritual-experiential prototype tended to be highest on religious significance-making (Figure 17.3), and both types were high on purpose-making (Figure 17.4). The secular or detached prototypes were low on all three subtypes of religious meaning-making.

C17.S16

## An In-Depth Analysis of Narratives: Prototypes and Meaning-Making

C17.P72 A closer look at the narratives of the defining sorts for each prototype uncovered a third and more nuanced layer of meaning-making and meaninglessness in this sample of young Israeli adults. The narrative analysis pointed

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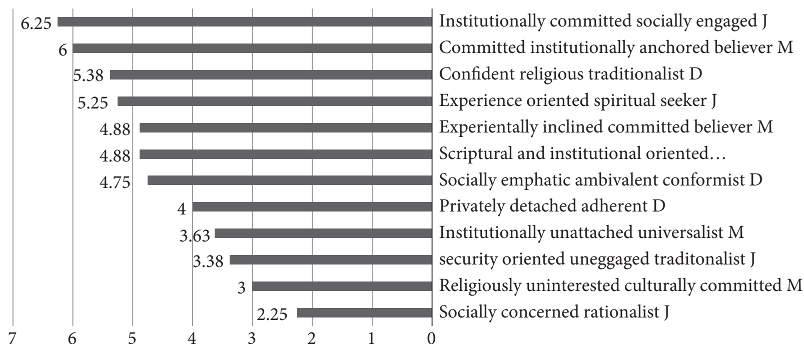
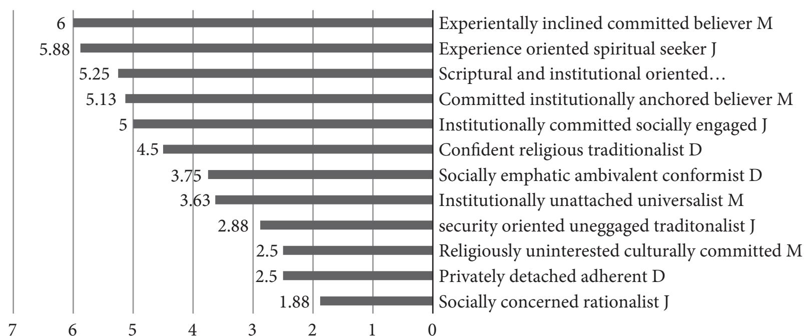



C17.F3 **Figure 17.3** Significance-making subscale scores by Faith-Q-Sorts (FQS) prototype (M = Muslim, J = Jewish, D = Druze).

to the role of culture as socially sanctioning or frowning upon nonreligious meaning-making. We describe the Jewish case study in some depth and touch briefly on the other two faith traditions due to space constraints.

C17.P73 Among the Jewish sample, religious meaning was confined to the religious and spiritual prototypes, but the Socially Concerned Rationalists clearly engaged in a different sort of meaning-making. In contrast, the Security Oriented Unengaged Traditionalist prototype stood out as very low on meaning-making of any kind.

C17.P74 The Socially Concerned Rationalist prototype matches the attitudes of anti-religious secularity in Israel. Unquestionably, religion is not a sense-making framework for this prototype, but there is a clear alternative: science and rationality. This is further supported by survey data in which the




C17.F4 **Figure 17.4** Purpose-making subscale scores by Faith-Q-Sorts (FQS) prototype (M = Muslim, J = Jewish, D = Druze).

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self-reported average level of religiosity among the defining sorts of this prototype was the lowest of all four prototypes: 1.24 (standard deviation [SD] = 1.6) on a 0–10 scale.

C17.P75 Noa,[4] one of the defining sorts for this prototype, says, "I am a pure atheist. . . . I'm, like, I have a lot of criticism toward religion. Uh—especially regarding the state, but also in general" adding later how she feels about faith: "I really despise it. I believe in science, and I believe in things you can prove, things that can be tested."

C17.P76 Socialist Kibbutzim are a mainstay of the anti-religious secularism. A sizeable proportion of participants who fit this prototype were raised or live on kibbutzim. Elli, a kibbutznik, describes the anti-religious sentiment on his kibbutz: "Yom Kippur, we used to go to the plantations to have a barbecue. When I was a child, when the kibbutz was still really a cooperative kibbutz and such, so on Yom Kippur there was—there was like a party of the kibbutz, and a barbecue of a huge pig." An "anti" stance may not provide enough positive meaning in life. However, these narratives also positively embrace humanism and social involvement. Kobi says: "I know a lot of people who are religious and are not moral, and I know a lot of people who are moral and are not religious at all. I try to be one of them. We all have our moral conscience." This is in marked contrast to the reputation of the anti-religious seculars in Israel, who are often portrayed in the media (and by religionists) as hedonistic, egocentric, and empty of values. Clearly, this is not the case for this prototype. Science provides this worldview with an alternative to religious sense-making, and humanistic activism offers a sense of purpose in life. What seems lacking is a venue of connecting to something greater than themselves, now that social communism is not a viable option. As Ella says: "For me life is as it stands. We will all die, be buried, become dust. That's it."

C17.P77 The narrative of the Institutionally Committed Socially Engaged prototype is indicative of moderate Religious Zionism in Israel and reflects a mixture of traditional and modern values. This prototype is rated as the most highly religious of the sample, with a mean score of 7.7 (SD = 1.5) on the 1–10 religiosity scale. All three meaning-making activities were easily identifiable in these narratives. Sense-making was expressed, for example, by a strong conviction that religious scriptures are true and God-given. Eliav says: "Moses wrote the Torah from the name of the Holy One Blessed Be He. And this is something essential, I mean compared to other belief systems where one

[4] All names and identifying details were changed.

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person at most wrote it, here, the whole people, many people heard it. It's a collective memory thing." At the same time, there is a clear modernist bent guiding these narratives, and sense-making is seen as a process involving critique. Yaakov says: "I have a hard time with brain-washing. . . . sometimes in religious culture, certain ideas, to certain values, and—dogmatism, and—there is some sort of intolerance toward those who question these things." Moria says: "I'm OK with criticizing my religion." In terms of inherited versus constructed meaning-making, these religious emerging adults are engaging in both internalizing and critiquing, working to take ownership of this global meaning system by personalizing it.

C17.P78 For this prototype, religion is also instrumental in providing a sense of purpose. Moshe says, "The connection to God, the religion that—I truly believe in that. That—is something important to me. . . . The thing is that it really has a deep meaning in my life. It's the force that keeps me going to this day." But religion informs purpose-making in another way, too: it fosters social activism and voluntarism. This prototype has the highest levels of voluntarism and benevolence on the survey. Dovrat explains: "You came to this world to improve it. Like, when you really boil it down. That is what is required from you, and you should act accordingly."

C17.P79 Significance-making via self-transcendence of any sort was reported less frequently in these interviews. Some participants described communicating with God, but most did not, with one stating clearly: "I am not mystical."

C17.P80 The Security Oriented Unengaged Traditionalist prototype matches the "traditional secular" perspective in Israel. Interestingly, all the defining sorts for this prototype were female and most were immigrants from the former USSR. Being Jewish in the former USSR was at times dangerous and typically allowed for very little knowledge and practice. Marina describes being Jewish in the Ukraine: "No, it's very difficult. Nearly impossible. I don't remember any store near us being Kosher in the Ukraine . . . as a child it was very difficult," later adding: "It's dangerous. It is dangerous to be there now. Especially for Jews, and for anyone who looks very Jewish," but Jewish identity did not become much easier after emigrating to Israel: "They [local Israelis] pushed me out. That wasn't easy at all." Involvement with Judaism was similarly disappointing: "I didn't keep Kosher. I tried, I tried fasting, OK, I tried. And then I stopped again." Similarly disengaged although born in Israel, Rona describes the role of Judaism in her life: "When I look back at my life, it's not something that I, like, relate to or engage with. I mean, it's kind of always there, but I don't, I simply don't think about it." Still, this prototype does not

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reflect principled atheism. Sveta says: "I do believe there is a God but I'm not really in touch with him"

C17.P81 This prototype involved very little meaning-making of any sort, religious or otherwise. Rona says: "No one truly knows what is right. . . . Like, purpose, what's the purpose? what is the purpose and the direction?" Natasha says: "Most of the time I'm like a robot that functions. . . . I feel, I know I'm not the only one that is constantly chasing something, but I, like, don't understand it. . . . It's, like—is it even worth all the energy put into all this time?" Correspondingly, the defining sorts who made up this prototype had the lowest Positive Life Orientation score (2.25), the highest depression score (19.5), and the lowest meaning-making score (2.71) of all 12 prototypes in our study.

C17.P82 The Experience-Oriented Spiritual Seeker prototype was in many ways the most actively meaning-making of all 12 prototypes. Principled spiritualism is a relatively new player on the Israeli religious scene, breaking-down the pervasive "secular–religious" dichotomy. This was a minority narrative in the sample, but its voice was loud and clear. Yuval describes the process of seeking and actively making meaning for himself: "It started about 3 years ago, when I started meditating with a mentor, and then I really started, I found it very interesting. I became exposed to all of this Buddhism, that entire field, of seeing what it is exactly." Eilon describes his religious eclecticism: "I am interested in all kinds of religions. . . . I'll take from the religious traditions what is useful to me. And if it's in—in the Buddhism, the meditation, and holy texts in the Christianity or in the Kabbalah." This prototype engages in considerable significance-making by means of self-transcendence but is just as involved in social action. In this it challenges the Israeli stereotype of the New Ager as self-centered and disengaged from society. Eliana[5] says: "I donate to Greenpeace every month and . . . if we go camping, and we arrive to a dirty camp site, we will take trash bags and pick up the trash. Um—and I was a girl-scout, and that is something that is very important to me." She says she is active in "many groups. Social justice, Free Israel, all that stuff." Tuval volunteers in a center for Jewish and Arab children: "A tough neighborhood. It's some sort of a house that kids come to at noon to meet other kids. So, I'm there to help them with it." Correspondingly, this Active Spiritualists prototype had the highest score of all prototypes on Positive Life Orientation (4.25).

[5] Eliana loaded high on the Active Spiritualist, although not one of its defining sorts.

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C17.S17

### The Muslim and Druze Prototypes and Meaning-Making Activity

C17.P83

The narrative patterns of meaning-making were somewhat different for the Muslim and Druze samples. Each group displayed one prototype with low levels of engagement, low levels of well-being, and low levels of meaning-making. However, among the two Arab samples this converged with secularism—the Religiously Uninterested but Culturally Committed among the Muslims and the Privately Detached Adherent among the Druze—whereas among the Jews it was the Security-Oriented Unengaged Traditionalist prototype that exhibited this lowered level of meaning-making, in contrast to the highly secular Jewish prototype which had come into its own humanistic meaning-making system.

C17.P84

Muslim participants reflecting the Religiously Uninterested but Culturally Committed prototype, such as Hanan, feel religion does not make sense to them, but they are not able to search elsewhere for meaning. Telling of being encouraged to study the Quran by a religious leader, Hanan recalls: "So he said to me: 'Now you come and try and listen to the Quran,' so here, to be honest, I felt a strong feeling of rejection, like 'No, I do not *want* to listen to the Quran!' And Uh—and it is that also when I talk about the thing, I talk about the thing with a lot of sensitivity. Because I do not like to say things like 'What is that Quran? And what is that? This is Nonsense!' " In effect, Hanan says that she cannot, or will not, voice her private views on the Quran.

C17.P85

All other Muslim and Druze prototypes reflected faith narratives of sorts, at times ambivalent but fully within the normative bounds of conformity. Most of these interviews indicated deep and unwavering faith, but the meaning was of the inherited meaning form rather than actively meaning-making. Mona, a Druze who reflects the Confident Religious Traditionalist prototype, says, "Religion is—yes, it has a role of the first order, very powerful, especially the Druze religion, I trust and believe in it very, very much. It is what gives you—it guides you to the right way, like, it makes you walk right." Similarly, Shirin, a female Muslim who was one of the defining sorts of the Committed Institutionally Anchored Believer said, "I think that religion should play the central role in the ruling of the nation. . . . I am of course talking about *my* religion. I mean, we should follow, in my opinion, my religion that I believe in. In Islam for example, if you follow it, everything will surely be fine, if I follow it one hundred percent, as in the Quran, according to the Sunnah of our Prophet Mohammed, so yes, surely everything will be right, and the biggest proof is that our Prophet Mohammed, for example, he was the cleverest man in the world, and there were studies about that and it

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was written, so whoever follows his way, according to our belief, will definitely do well." Raya, A female Muslim who reflected the Institutionally Unattached Universalist prototype, also expresses a strong sense of certainty in the inner sense of the world: "God is managing human matters. Of course, God is the one who also knows what will happen to me, he is the— like, this faith, faith which is what lets me know, as they say, what is written is written. Our faith in what is written is—that is the thing which, like, you and I, in the future, we do not know what will happen to us. That is managed by the Almighty God." There is little doubt in these narratives that the self-critical note of the Jewish Institutionally Committed Socially Engaged prototype is missing here. Thus, we conclude that there was more *inherited* meaning, particularly of the sense-making variant, among the Muslim and Druze participants that we interviewed than there was personal meaning-making, which seemed to be more acceptable among the Jewish participants, religious and secular alike.

C17.P86 Things were less simple for Arab believers in terms of purpose-making via religion. For some, religion plays a clear and important role in conferring purpose. Shirin, a Muslim female says: "I constantly think that . . . yes, what is this life, like, at the end surely there is a hereafter, death will surely come. So as much as possible I try to correct myself every time I make a mistake. . . . So I always, yes, I set in front of me the hereafter, paradise and hell, and think to myself that I want to be at the highest level in paradise, God willing, and that is it, actually the most important thing." However, purpose-making can be challenging for other believers since they may wish to pursue self-realization and feel that religion inhibits their exploration. This might be a gendered quality. Siham, a Druze woman says: "Many things are becoming *Haram*, *Haram*, *Haram* [forbidden by religious law]. . . . In our religion it is not written that it is *Haram* that a girl sleeps outside her home but I was forbidden by the sheiks to sleep outside of the home. . . . I want to build myself, I want to build—I want to study and finish my studies and become educated, I don't want only to be called religious."

C17.P87 Reported significance-making was relatively rare in the interviews of all three faith traditions, but we found it especially noteworthy that is was nearly entirely absent from the Druze narratives. This is surprising as the Druze is a deeply spiritual and even mystical religion. It would seem that for these Druze participants, the very idea that a person who is not Uqqāl could have a mystical experience is perceived as impudent. The implicit message was: The ancient prophets experienced God, but who am I, a modern

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ignoramus, to have such an experience? The one type of significance-making which we identified in the interviews was a merging of individual and community. Sari, A Druze, says, "I love to participate in things, many activities. Anything for the sake of the village, I will throw myself into it. I love making improvements, changes for the good of my community in general because I feel the thing—the thing belongs to me."

C17.P88 Finally, although sample sizes were too small to compare statistically, three prototypes stood out as exceptionally low on well-being and high on depression: The Jewish Security Oriented Unengaged Traditionalist, the Muslim Religiously Uninterested but Culturally Committed, and the Druze Privately Detached Adherent. This can be taken as an indication of how the cultural sanctioning or prohibition of nonreligious paths to meaning affects subjective well-being, perhaps more than the actual role of religion and spirituality in meaning-making, among this sample of emerging adults in Israel.

C17.S18

## Discussion

C17.P89 We began this study with the theoretical construct of meaning-making and subdivided it into three categories of meaning-making activities—sense-making, purpose-making, and significance-making—which are comparable but not parallel to the Meaning in Life typology (George & Park, 2016; Martela & Steger, 2016). From this model we derived the 24-item (Cronbach's alpha = .90) MMR scale and used it to explore how religious meaning-making is expressed in the FQS and interviews of 90 emerging Israeli adults in three faith traditions. We analyzed meaning-making levels and patterns on four levels: (1) overall in the sample; (2) a quantitative faith-tradition comparison of Jews, Muslims and Druze; (3) a more nuanced quali-quantological (Stenner, 2019) comparison of 12 religious prototypes which emerged from the FQS; and (4) an in-depth qualitative analysis of religious meaning-making patterns, based on the interviews. Throughout, we considered how meaning and meaninglessness are culturally sanctioned and how this relates to the affect and subjective well-being of the participants. Our main findings were as follows:

C17.P90

1. Overall, being religious and/or spiritual was related to more religious meaning-making, serving as a sort of validity-check for the MMR. Subjective well-being was unrelated to meaning-making on this level.

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C17.P91

2. When compared by faith tradition, Muslims were significantly more engaged in all three subtypes of religious meaning-making activities than the Druze, who in turn, were more engaged in them than the Jews.

C17.P92

3. When comparing the 12 emerging FQS prototypes on MMR scores, worldviews were found to play as much of a role in meaning-making as faith traditions. Across religious groups, prototypes reflecting organized religion were highest on sense-making, while prototypes reflecting a spiritual outlook were highest on significance-making. Each faith tradition had one detached prototype. Among the Jews, these were the traditionalists, while among the Muslims and Druze, these were the secularists. These prototypes had the lowest levels of meaning-making and, correspondingly, the lowest levels of subjective well-being.

C17.P93

4. A qualitative analysis pointed to the role of culture as socially sanctioning or frowning upon nonreligious meaning-making. Thus, secular Muslims and Druze had less of an outlet for secular meaning-making activities and ended up with a sense of meaninglessness. In comparison, Jewish seculars reflected high levels of purpose-making based on social action, indicating that they have come into their own culturally sanctioned forms of nonreligious meaning-making activities.

C17.P94

We would like to expound on this last finding. In allowing meaning studies and psychology of religion to illuminate each other, our study found that secular humanism did a good job of allowing for meaning to emerge, both in terms of sense and purpose. Thus, sense-making and purpose-making needs can be met by religion, spiritual teachings, science, humanism, or social action. However, this was true only of the Jewish sample, whereas secular prototypes in the Arab samples had a harder time constructing meaning. This indicates how important it is to have multiple culturally sanctioned routes to meaning-making to allow as many individuals as possible to find meaning in life.

C17.P95

In fact, one of the important findings in this study was that not all emerging adults in Israel have found or are actively seeking meaning: in each religious group, we found one prototype of detached young adults who engage very minimally in meaning-making and express low levels of well-being. Whereas among the Arab samples these were the (often closeted) seculars, who may feel a sense of discrepancy between their society and their own personal beliefs and may not have the possibility of exploring other meaning venues, among the Jews these were in fact traditionalists, whose support for

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tradition has become disconnected from personal meaning, possibly due to lack of in-depth knowledge of tradition.

C17.P96 We also found that a certain type of explorative, questing, and self-critical meaning-making characterized the Jewish religious sample more than the religious Muslim or Druze. While the basic process of meaning-making is a universal cultural attribute and is clearly practiced across cultures (Oyserman, 2011), a personal search for meaning reflects cultural expectations and values about seeking and openness, tradition and submission to authority. Muslim and Druze societies in Israel endorse tradition and authority values (Novis-Deutsch et al., in press), and this may mean that for many individuals in these groups, meaning-making is more of a process of internalization than of creative modification and construction.

C17.P97 Another possible interpretation is that, for the Arab groups, being minorities in a Jewish state and experiencing very complex identity conflicts may mean less meaning creation and more meaning internalization since new meaning construction might highlight the impossible conundrums in which they live. In the Israeli context of a powerful Jewish majority and a marginalized Arab minority, we see a set of young adults who have not completed a transformation to a Western mindset or, perhaps, do not desire to do so, but this leaves them in some respects "stuck" between cultural tropes. This is particularly noteworthy as this study explores an internal psychological process, which shows how at least some Arab young adults turn to a practical, day-by-day mindset and give up on attempts to make meaning altogether.

C17.P98 This study also demonstrated the importance of spirituality in religious meaning-making. Although the four most institutionally committed religious prototypes across all three faith traditions involved high engagement in sense-making, spiritual seekers, although few and far between in our sample, fared better at engaging in significance-making, and their levels of well-being were the highest in the survey. This last point—the paucity of spiritual seekers in our sample—deserves further pondering: Across samples, significance-making did not seem have much place in the lives of these emerging adults. There are various possible explanations of this. First, it may be less common in this specific sample (and might surface in larger samples). Second, it may be due to participants' developmental stage in life: busy emerging adulthood may not necessarily be the time for transcending the self. It is also possible that significance-making should be formulated more broadly. In line with Czordas's (2004) discussion about alterity, significance-making might better be expressed as making meaning from a position of strong

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identification with an "other" (deity, group, or individual) which has a relevant, decisive, and productive impact and relevance on one's life, implying a shift from "ego" to "alter." Future studies should explore this alternative formulation of significance-making.

C17.P99 This study has pointed us on the route to exploring the extent to which social and cultural constraints implicitly affect engagement with meaning-making activities, religious, spiritual and other, but some of our finding require further exploration:

C17.P100 First, the MMR scale doesn't explore forms of meaning such as love, family, friends, and work. Culturally shaped meaning-making both constrains and enables perception and reasoning (Nisbett & Noranzayan, 2002; Shweder, 1994). Further studies might allow us to engage in depth with this issue by including these forms of meaning and provide empirical indications as to when we are witnessing low levels of meaning-making and when meaning-making is merely subtler and rooted in everyday life. To fully understand the place of religious meaning-making in the larger scheme of personal meaning systems, we need nuanced and comparable measures of nonreligious meaning-making.

C17.P101 Second, our finding that religious meaning-making did not relate directly to higher levels of subjective well-being does not match previous findings about meaning-making and well-being (Hamby et al., 2017; Park, 2013) and instead supports Alea and Bluck's (2013) findings that this relationship does not hold in non-American settings. This small-scale study provides yet another indication that the SWB-meaning relation is in need of further cross-cultural attention.

C17.P102 Third, to further test our argument about the cultural contingency of meaning-making, additional studies should use larger and more representative cross-cultural samples.

C17.P103 Finally, let us return to the pair of questions posed in the Introduction: Is meaning created or discovered, and by whom? Geertz (1973, p. 31) once famously noted that "man is an animal suspended in the webs of significance he himself has spun . . . I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be . . . an interpretive one in search of meaning." For meaning to inform an individual's life, it must be the product of subjective effort, and, in that sense, it must involve ongoing acts of agentic appropriation, adaptation, and even invention. At the same time, meaning is made in social and cultural context. Attempting to set apart the invented aspects of meaning from its inherited ones is akin to trying to disentangle a spider from its web. We conclude that

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although cultural values play an important role in determining the relative weight of meaning constructed and meaning discovered, ultimately it involves both processes; it is the shared venture of individuals and their social network. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the domain of religion, where meaning can be transmitted across the generations, perhaps indefinitely, yet cannot survive for even a single generation unless it is adapted and reinvented by its individual adherents, every lifetime afresh.

*Highlights*

C17.P104
- In a sample of 90 Israeli students (18–30 years old) from three faith traditions, being religious and/or spiritual was related to more religious meaning-making activity.

C17.P105
- Among the three faith traditions, Muslims were significantly more engaged than the Druze in three subtypes of religious meaning-making activities (sense-making, purpose-making, and significance-making). The Druze were more engaged in them than the Jews.

C17.P106
- Subjective well-being was unrelated to overall levels of meaning-making but was found to relate positively to significance-making.

C17.P107
- When comparing the 12 faith prototypes (derived from a Q-sort measure) on meaning-making across religious groups, prototypes reflecting institutionalized religion were highest on sense-making, while prototypes reflecting a spiritual outlook were highest on significance-making.

C17.P108
- Each faith tradition had one detached prototype. Among the Jews these were the traditionalists, while among the Muslims and Druze these were the secularists. Detached prototypes had the lowest levels of meaning-making and subjective well-being.

C17.P109
- Culture was important in socially sanctioning or frowning upon meaning-making paths. Secular Muslims and Druze had less of an outlet for humanistic meaning-making than did Jewish seculars. The former often expressed a sense of meaninglessness, while the latter expressed high levels of purpose-making based on social action.

C17.P110
- Social and cultural constraints implicitly affect engagement with meaning-making activities, religious, spiritual, or otherwise.

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C17.P111

- Although cultural values play an important role in determining the relative weight of meaning constructed and meaning discovered, ultimately meaning-making involves both processes.

C17.S19

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