

**Crime in Their Midst:
A Thematic Analysis of a Crime Committed in an Orthodox Jewish
Community and its Impact on Community Members**

by

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ABSTRACT

CRIME IN THEIR MIDST: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF A CRIME COMMITTED IN AN ORTHODOX JEWISH COMMUNITY AND ITS IMPACT ON COMMUNITY MEMBERS

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Much is unknown about insular communities as they are often closed and guarded. This is especially so when it comes to crimes committed in their midst. Online forums geared to community members can reveal the discussions they have following a crime and the thoughts and feelings of the group. Using a functionalist approach, this study fills a gap in the literature on crimes committed in insular communities by and against community members by asking: what topics of discussion arose for Orthodox Jewish community members following a crime in their midst and were community members united or divided in their discussions? More explicitly, the sociological importance of what they discussed and how this affected community cohesion was examined. To address these questions, the comments following articles about a murder committed in an Orthodox Jewish community in New York on two Orthodox Jewish news websites (*Yeshiva World News* and *Vos Iz Neias*) were examined. Qualitative thematic analysis was used to examine how community members reacted to the murder through the discussions they had and whether these discussions affected and reflected community cohesion. Implications for better understanding crime in insular communities are discussed, as are directions for future research.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background:

On Monday, July 11th, 2011 Leiby Kletzky, an eight year old Orthodox Jewish boy from Borough Park, New York, went missing. When he failed to return home from camp his parents contacted *Shomrim* (Hebrew for protectors), the community's volunteer patrol organization, to search for him. Five thousand Orthodox Jews volunteered to search for Leiby. Approximately two hours later, at 8:30 p.m., *Shomrim* contacted the New York Police Department (NYPD) because they were unable to find Leiby. Surveillance tapes from store video cameras showed Leiby missing the turn he was to take to go home. Another video captured Leiby, thirty-five minutes later, appearing to ask an Orthodox Jewish man for directions and Leiby followed the man to a car. Leiby and the man were also captured by CCTV cameras standing outside a dentist's office. Police contacted the dentist who identified the man Leiby was seen talking to as his patient, Levi Aron. By the time the NYPD arrived at Aron's home on Wednesday morning they found Aron covered in blood. When they asked where the boy was, Aron pointed to his fridge where the police found the boy's severed legs and feet. The remainder of his body was stuffed in a suitcase in a nearby dumpster.

The Orthodox Jewish community was shocked by the tragic murder of the little boy and an estimated 8-10,000 people attended the child's funeral. The coroner's report revealed that the boy had died due to an ingestion of a lethal mix of the drugs cyclobenzaprine, quetiapine, hydrocodone, acetaminophen, and duloxetine, as well as smothering. Aron confessed to taking Leiby to a wedding on Monday night, hoping to drive the boy home the next day. He claimed that he left Leiby at home on Tuesday when he went to work, but panicked upon seeing the

dozens of signs regarding the search for the missing boy. When he returned from work and the boy was still there, Aron decided his only option was to kill him.

Reports in Orthodox Jewish media sources suggested Aron had killed the boy because he had something to hide. They assumed that Aron had sexually abused Leiby during the time they were together. However, molestation charges were never put forth, nor was there any evidence to suggest that sexual abuse had occurred. Moreover, one article reported that Aron's name was not on a list of suspected child molesters that *Shomrim* keep but do not report to the police. The issue of sexual abuse continued to be discussed by readers who posted comments on Orthodox Jewish news websites covering the Kletzky murder. Some believed the lesson to be learned from the tragedy was that the way the community deals with sexual abuse cases must change.

The functionality of crime as a means to strengthen or reinforce community cohesion is explained by the theory of boundary maintenance. This framework is adopted in this study as a means to better understand how insular communities function and how they deal with threats, such as crime. The Orthodox Jewish community's reaction to the Kletzky murder will be examined in this study to further understanding of how boundary maintenance occurs. This study examines how this case was influential in functioning to reinforce community cohesion.

1.2 Research Questions:

Two research questions were explored in this study. The first descriptive question is, what topics did members of the Orthodox Jewish community discuss because of the murder? It will consider both agreements in issues raised as well as potentially contentious topics of discussion. Contentious topics are concerning issues that are taboo and, therefore, rarely discussed amongst members of the Orthodox Jewish community. These include conversations about sexuality, abuse, questioning authority, or highly stigmatized behaviours, such as mental

illness. As Durkheim (1964) contends that crime reaffirms community morals, the second question will explore whether or not these discussions united or divided the community.

As a member of the community I conducted insider research and I acknowledge that my personal biases may affect this study. “*Insider research* refers to when researchers conduct research with populations of which they are also members” (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 58). I kept an open mind to the many possible answers to the research questions posed as the data were gathered and analyzed. I have made every effort to follow the steps needed to prevent my community involvement from unduly biasing the research; this is discussed in the methodology chapter of the thesis.

1.3 Theoretical Framework:

This study is both data driven and guided by theory derived primarily from writings by Emile Durkheim (1964) and Kai Erikson (1966). As research questions began to formulate, my thoughts about the issue moved from the specific case of one crime, or threat, to a more generic consideration of how an insular community responds to threats, and what can be learned from the reactions of the social group. The specific research questions of this study arose five months after the murder, as I continued to learn more about the events and read the articles and comments on both mainstream and Orthodox Jewish news websites. The theory of functionalism emerged as I wondered why readers were commenting on sexual abuse following the articles about the murder. Was the murder a catalyst for community members to address taboos and reaffirm group values? Thus, my methods are consistent with the inductive approach as described by Elo & Kyngas (2008) and informed by theory building on the work of Durkheim (1964). This study arose from an initial interest in the crime which grew as I followed the developments of the case through various media sources.

Functionalism can explain how crime is useful to communities in that it allows community morals to be reaffirmed (Durkheim, 1964). Examining online forums for the Orthodox Jewish community provided insight as to the specific morals of the community and how they were reaffirmed through group discussions following the murder. It also revealed how expressions of anger towards Levi Aron united community members (Erikson, 1966), as explained with reference to the functionalist perspective. These discussions offer insight into communal boundaries, what they mean, and the strength of religion in maintaining such boundaries (Durkheim, 1912).

1.4 Relevance of Research:

This research is both theoretically relevant and highly pertinent to criminal justice. The Orthodox Jewish community is a tight-knit, insular community with low crime rates. However, this low number may be due to the fact that reports of crime and deviance by community members are kept hidden from public view (Ben-Yehuda, 2010). Violent crimes are even more rare, especially between community members as in the case of the Kletzky murder. Theories that consider crime functional can generate responses as to why and when crimes occur. The findings of this study can demonstrate how closed communities deal with threats to group cohesion. Furthermore, insular communities often have their own form of crime control, like the *Shomrim* organization that initiated the search for Leiby Kletzky. The effectiveness and limitations of these models can also be examined and assessed. Additionally, this study will engage the question of how insular communities are brought together or in conflict following the commission of crime in their midst.

1.5 Outline of Study:

The next chapter will develop the theoretical framework with specific reference to insular communities, and more specifically, the Orthodox Jewish community. Key functionalist theorists, Durkheim (1964) and Erikson (1966), see crime and deviance as useful to a community's existence. Durkheim (1964) contends that crime can unite communities and serves to reaffirm their morals; thus, crime is "an integral part of all healthy societies" (Durkheim, 1938, p. 67). Erikson (1966) also sees deviant behaviour as contributing to the "stability of social life" (p. 13). When studying insular communities or groups in which crime is a rare occurrence, such as the Orthodox Jewish community, functionalism can clarify what happens to the community when crime does occur and why.

The methodology chapter will outline the approach and design of this study as well as the conceptual framework of the research. It will also explain how I conducted insider research as well as provide specific information about the data used, such as how the data were collected and analyzed. A synopsis of the articles used in this study will be presented and a description of the specific software used to analyze the data will be provided.

The results chapter will present the findings of the data analysis. This includes the topics that arose for community members, the themes that the topics were divided into, and whether community members were united or divided in their discussions. Excerpts of the comments will be used to highlight community members' thoughts and feelings about the murder. Finally, this study will conclude with a discussion about the findings that emerged from the data, as well as the implications of these findings, and directions for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview:

This chapter outlines the conceptual framework of my study which draws from functionalist theorists such as the work by Emile Durkheim (1964) and Kai Erikson (1966). The chapter also reviews research on the insulating social mechanisms specific to Orthodox Jewish communities and Amish communities given some similarities (Nadel, 2009) as well as research that has examined how insular communities respond to threats. In particular, Ben-Yehuda's (2010) study on deviant and non-conformist behaviour by Orthodox Jews in Israel will be reviewed including the Orthodox Jewish mechanism or policy of "the right of the people not to know" (p. 133). This factor is important to consider as it affects what community members are allowed to publish and what they are allowed to read and, therefore, know which is relevant to my study.

2.2 Functionalism & Mechanical Societies:

Functionalism sees law as the system that protects the welfare of society, settles disputes, and regulates behaviour (Akers & Sellers, 2009). As the relationship between law and society is important, one must understand how societies form and how social control functions. In *The Division of Labor in Society* (1964), Durkheim studied and analyzed how societies develop and how cohesion was attained. He believed that law grew out of the type of solidarity that existed in a society. In more primitive societies, mechanical solidarity integrated community members through a common belief system. In more complex societies, however, people were less similar and brought together by organic solidarity.

Mechanical societies differ from organic ones in many ways. The former are more isolated and self-sufficient, and its members lead similar lives (Durkheim, 1964). The members

of mechanical societies, overall, think and act alike, and differences are not well tolerated (Ibid). The societies are mechanical in the sense that its members do not give much thought to the structures they follow, but abide by the rules in a mechanical way (Driedger, 2009). Society members strive to resemble one another as much as possible (Durkheim, 1973) and solidarity is based on this uniformity, as well as the group's sense of superiority and moral righteousness (Durkheim, 1964). Law functions to enforce uniformity and repress deviance, (Smith, 2008) and the fears of the people also serve to control deviance (Erikson, 1966).

In contrast, organic societies are those that arose on the heels of industrialization and modernity, both of which placed much value on individualism. Cohesion and solidarity decreased as people in modern societies were more diverse (Driedger, 2009). The division of labour prompted the development of individual personalities (Durkheim, 1973) as opposed to the clear roles held by people in mechanical societies (Durkheim, 1964). In organic societies, law serves a more regulatory role, strives for restitution in dealing with interpersonal wrongdoings (Vold, Bernard, & Snipes, 2002), and is the "the objective indicator of morality" (Smith, 2008, p. 336). The changes to social life brought with them a rise in anomie, a state of normlessness, in which crime can increase and new social structures were needed to manage and deal with crime (Durkheim, 1964). Individuals recognized their dependence upon other members of society and the division of labour became "the chief source of social solidarity" (Durkheim, 1973, p. 139), whereas in mechanical societies this was achieved through the collective conscience. Though present in organic societies, the role of the collective conscience was diminished (Birner & Ege, 1999). The collective conscience served to unite the people and can explain the function of crime (Durkheim, 1964).

Durkheim's (1964) concept of the 'collective conscience' is an important factor in understanding how communities are held together. Smith (2008) defines it as 'group mind' or 'shared morality' (p. 336). The emotions, values, and everyday activities of the members living in mechanical societies were the same, and so collective conscience reigned supreme as solidarity was very high. Solidarity is dependent on internalization of the collective conscience as "it is in the school of collective life that the individual learned to form ideals" (Durkheim, 1912, p. 425). In mechanical societies, the individual is absorbed into the group and individuality is difficult to develop (Birner & Ege, 1999). However, as the division of labour dispersed people and changed their roles, the collective conscience became less important (Ibid). Industrialization destabilized social solidarity as it allowed individuals to reject traditional norms and authority figures (Driedger, 2009). As individuality continued to develop in organic societies, the collective conscience lost its ability to restrain people from acting in deviant ways (Birner & Ege, 1999). This also led to anomie and social instability.

Durkheim believed that crime occurs when social norms break down. Crime is, therefore, associated with "the absence of social controls" (Vold et al., 2002, p. 116). Rules exist to curb or control people's proclivities, but a certain amount of crime is functional to society. Durkheim (1964) saw crime as useful in drawing the conscience of people together, as it integrates them and renews their sense of morality (Smith, 2008). If crime is natural, it also must be necessary as Durkheim saw deviance as a resource and "an integral part of all healthy societies" (Erikson, 1966, p.3). When people come together to express anger towards the deviant and his or her act, they are united through their mutual feelings (Erikson, 1966). This contrast between the conformers' reaction and the deviant's behaviour allows for the maintenance of social cohesion

(Ibid). However, the outpouring of negative feelings towards deviance is just one of the ways communities respond to crime.

Punishment is another response to crime and can be applied formally or informally. Whereas informal sanctions include the withholding of acceptance or shaming an individual, formal sanctions are more about punishment through law (Akers & Sellers, 2009). The move from mechanical societies to modernity transformed the norms, mechanisms, and the ways that law and punishment function. Durkheim studied societies' response to crime and how deviance was punished. He believed that punishment was not meant to correct the offender, but to sustain the collective conscience by demonstrating that the group's sentiments have not changed (Durkheim, 1964).

In earlier times, punishment of criminal behaviour was dependent on the type of power authority figures held. The more centralized the power, the harsher the punishment (Smith, 2008). Prior to modernity, punishment was more about retribution than restitution (Durkheim, 1964). Punishing a community member transfers the individual into a deviant position (Erikson, 1966). It also serves to "reaffirm core values" and serves the moral needs of the community through strengthening moral boundaries (Smith, 2008, p. 336; Erikson, 1966).

Both boundary creation and boundary maintenance are vital to communities. A group creates boundaries when it decides whether to define disruptive behaviour as deviant (Ben-Yehuda, 2010). The brackets a community draws around acceptable behaviour "are the community's boundaries" (Erikson, 1966, p. 10). In doing so, a community measures what they are not and this confirms their identity (Ibid). Maintaining boundaries helps group members feel a sense of belonging and purpose. The act of maintaining those defined boundaries is a form of regulation and social control. As boundaries are critical, there are various forms of control put in

place to ensure they will be maintained. Social control is generally a system of norms or rules, and can be made up of informal or formal mechanisms. These rules aim to promote conformity and they rely on socialization to do so (Akers & Sellers, 2009). A breakdown in one of the forms of social control will typically lead to an increase in the other. In other words, the breakdown in either formal or informal means of social control increases the need for the other mode of social control to fill the gaps caused by the disintegration (Ibid). However, boundaries are only meaningful if they are tested again and again by people on the group's outer edges and defended by group members who "represent the group's inner morality" (Erikson, 1966, p. 13). The boundaries are not fixed, as they shift when the group redefines itself and "the outer limits of their universe" (Ibid, p. 12). Erikson (1966) explains the importance of referring to boundaries when a crime has been committed, especially in religious communities and cultures.

2.3 Religion & the Orthodox Jewish Community:

Orthodox Jewish communities resemble mechanical societies in many ways (Loewenthal et al., 1997) and are highly involved in boundary maintenance. As this study examined the impact of crime on this specific religious community it is important to note the functionalist perspective on religion and the impact it has on members of religious groups. Religion is a form of social control, as "the idea of force is of religious origin," (Durkheim, 1912, p. 206). Religious groups have many boundaries, some of which ensure its members do not leave the group. The group is the basis of religious life and the group shares religious beliefs, practices religious rites, and is united through common faith (Ibid). Religion, then, is a form of collective conscience and is central to the development of solidarity (Driedger, 2009), especially in faith or moral communities (Lee & Bartkowski, 2004). It provides meaning to believers and charges them with "faith and energy, and directs behavior" (Ben-Yehuda, 2010, p. 218). Religion also protects and

provides immunity from various societal problems, such as suicide, due to the way it disciplines and regulates thoughts and actions (Durkheim, 1897). It is because religion is a community made up of obligatory and traditional practices and beliefs that it has protective properties: the greater the integration of religious communities, the greater protection they have (Ibid).

The Orthodox Jewish community is an example of a community formed by religion. Orthodox Jewish life is highly regulated by Torah commandments and religious traditions involving even the smallest details of one's day (Korb, 2010). These include reciting a blessing following the use of the bathroom, complicated dietary laws, and intricate laws related to Sabbath observance. Torah law and moral codes guide one's every action and thought, as all interactions are framed and inspected through a Torah lens (Semans & Stone Fish, 2000).

Valins's (2000) account of the history of the Jewish religion helps explain how its regulatory character has changed over time. The many regulations that structure daily Orthodox Jewish life evolved from institutionalized places, such as the Jewish courts or the Temple, to institutionalized holy texts. In earlier times, places of worship ordered social interactions and disseminated values necessary to sustain these relationships. The king and his palace were the 'centre of the city' (Ibid, p. 576) and the temple was the most physical manifestation of G-d's¹ presence. When the Temple was destroyed and the Jews were exiled from their homeland, the space in which their lives were ordered disappeared.

The laws of Judaism are divided into the written law and the oral law which were transmitted from one generation to another. When the Jewish people were exiled from their homeland the oral law was written down as a means to preserve the religion. This text, the Talmud, institutionalized a highly ordered lifestyle, and Orthodox Jews practice this way of life

¹ In keeping with the Orthodox Jewish custom of treating G-d's name with respect and ensuring that when printed or written it not be destroyed (Deuteronomy, 12:3-4), the name of G-d will not be written out completely in this study.

today. In this way, social control was maintained even though the Jewish people no longer congregated in the physical spaces that previously ordered and controlled their lives. Writing down the oral law was a way to order and enforce discipline without the Temple. The codified laws regulate and structure the lives of Orthodox Jews in a similar way that the holy places, such as the courts and Temple, did. The Old Testament which is the Torah, and the oral law known as the Talmud, “are preserved as the supreme and ultimate guiding texts to direct the life of the community” (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005, p. 31). These guidelines assist community members to control impulses and unacceptable behaviour (Ringel, 2008) and can protect the community from societal ills such as crime.

Many religious communities or cities boast low crime rates (Myers, 2008; Hull, 2000; Lee & Bartkowski, 2004); however, the reality of crime occurrence is unclear. It is possible that crime rates are low because crime is not reported. This is known as the “criminological dark figure” (Ben-Yehuda, 2010, p. 139). It is also possible that low crime rates are due to the deterrent effect that the civic engagement of community members has on moral or religious communities (Lee & Bartkowski, 2004). Other factors may contribute to the low crime rates, such as the power that such communities have to condemn deviant behaviour and the force with which they do so. As the lives of people in religious groups revolve around the many religious institutions, religion can help individuals integrate into society (Driedger, 2009). Consequently, religion contributes to social solidarity and helps maintain communal boundaries (Durkheim, 1912). Some religious groups set more boundaries than others, and those that are highly separated from society can be considered insular. Even in religious communities, where crime could be a mere violation of a taboo, it is significant and affects the entire society (Smith, 2008).

2.4 Insular Communities & Groups:

Many terms can describe insular communities, including closed (Campbell, 2005; Shoham, 2005; Lightman & Shor, 2002), separate (Lightman & Shor, 2002), and tight-knit (Coleman, 2007). The community being examined in this study is considered an insular community (Coleman, 2007; Albert, Harlap, & Caplan, 2004) and is often referred to as strictly-Orthodox, fundamentalists or by the Hebrew word for ‘those who tremble,’ *Haredi* (Longman, 2007; Lightman & Shor, 2002; Fader, 2006, and Korb, 2010). Common aspects of such communities include members living in close proximity to one another, high degrees of community integration, and separation between themselves and what they perceive as the outside world or culture (Coleman, 2007; Albert et al., 2004).

There is much to be gained from belonging to such a community. This includes a shared experience with other community members (Schubert, 2009), social or financial support (Bruhn, 2005; Glenn, 2001; Ringel, 2008; Hartman & Kaufman, 2006) and socialization to group norms (Bruhn, 2005). Being part of a community gives members the sense that they “belong to a special ‘kind’ and live in a special ‘place’” (Erikson, 1966, p. 10). Aside from the benefit of socialization to group norms that comes with community belonging (Bruhn, 2005), a benefit particularly relevant to Orthodox Jewish communities is the moral compass provided to community members by community guidelines and boundaries (Schubert, 2009; Semans & Stone Fish, 2000; Mann, 2006; Fader, 2006).

Shoham (2005) describes the *kibbutz* (Hebrew for communal settlements in Israel, both religious and secular) as a closed community because it is “distinct from other communities by clear physical, cultural, and social boundaries” with a “separate system of norms and social definitions” than mainstream society (p. 428). Cultural insularity can be found in “ethnic groups

whose identity is defined by orthodox or fundamentalist religious behaviour,” or in particular features of a group, such as dietary rules and dress codes (Albert et al., 2004, p. 649). Orthodox Jews, orthodox Muslims, and some South Asians belong to such communities (Ibid).

Often, these groups or communities do not have access to various resources, including proper health promotion or protection from law enforcement agencies (Ibid; Lavoie, 2006). “Not only are they often unaware of laws intended to protect them, but if they become aware, they rarely report violations” (Lavoie, 2006, p. 32). There are several reasons why crime in insular communities may go unreported. As will be discussed later in this chapter, these include the divisiveness that reporting could cause to the community (Anderson & Autry, 2011), the shunning of those that do report (O’Neil, 1997; Lavoie, 2006; Ben-Yehuda, 2010), and the silencing of victims by other community members (Lavoie, 2006; Kasdorf, 2007).

The fear of the community’s reaction to those who report crime and covering up crimes that are committed by community members are other factors that make reporting crime rare in Orthodox Jewish and Mennonite communities (Ben-Yehuda, 2010). The shame created by publicizing acts of deviance can be seen as a sign of strength in a community as it allows the deviance to remain a secret. Shame, then, is a tool of social control used on victims of crime to keep them silent and isolated (Ibid). In Orthodox Jewish communities, rabbinic law also prohibits Jews from informing secular authorities when a fellow Jew has broken the law (Broyde, 2002; Resnicoff, 2012) which explains the reluctance and opposition to reporting crime to law enforcement. It is evident, then, that insulation from the outside world impacts all group members. It affects the group’s identity as well as how, or whether, they are seen by others.

Ramp (2001) discusses the ways in which a group represents itself to the outside world and to members of its own group. Sometimes this is accomplished through a singular group

member who becomes representative of the entire group and the group becomes subsumed under this individual. For example, the rabbi is often seen as the quintessential Jew, and the Imam (Campbell, 2007) or ulama (Islamic scholars) may be considered the ultimate Muslims, invested with divine authority (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005). This can also occur when the activities of a member of an insular community become public through the mainstream media because, for example, they commit a crime or engaged in an act of kindness. The attention drawn to the community, whether positive or negative, because of the actions of this one individual affiliated with the group leaves the impression that all people affiliated with that group share similar tendencies. Whether or not outsiders actually believe this, the group nevertheless worries about the way they will be perceived. In the Orthodox Jewish community, individual community members may feel pressure from the commonly held notion that the behaviour of one Jew represents that of all Jews to the outside world (Ringel, 2008).

Group representation also explains the phenomena that when one group member is threatened, the entire group is concerned, as a threat to one is a threat to all (Reeves & Bylund, 1992). When a crime is committed against a member of one socially cohesive group, all other group members feel vulnerable. Whereas for the individual morality provides a sense of obligation (Driedger, 2009), for groups this sense is heightened, especially towards those in the same group. In fact, many groups believe that all group members are responsible for one another. This gives the collective group much cohesion and solidarity and demands constant vigilance over one's behaviour, as well as those of other community members. In religious societies this is easy to accomplish as members of the group reside in close proximity to one another which allows for "tight surveillance exercised by all over each" (Durkheim, 1897, p. 165).

For example, in the Orthodox Jewish community, the doctrine of “mutual responsibility” necessitates that community members pay attention and be involved in the affairs of others as this principle “holds all Jews responsible for each other’s behavior” (Ben-Yehuda, 2010, p. 97). Ben-Yehuda (2010) sees this as the reason why ultra-Orthodox Jewish publications censor the information they print about their community to “create a biased representation” that ensures a positive image of the community is conveyed (p. 133).

Representation is about identity (Ramp, 2001) and is important for how the group sees itself. It also explains the importance of identifying outsiders as well as those within the community who do not conform to group norms and boundaries. Setting these boundaries creates hierarchies within the group, and many religious groups categorize people into groups of ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Kastoryano, 2010). ‘Othering’ is an important and useful tool to maintain cohesion (Erikson, 1966). Both individuals outside of, or within, a group can be viewed as an ‘other’. The act of creating categories of people such as ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ further separates these groups from the outside world.

2.5 Mechanisms of Social Control in Orthodox Jewish Communities:

Lightman and Shor (2002) differentiate between communities that are separate by exclusion, such as ethnic minorities, to those that are separate by choice, such as a number of religious groups. Those that choose to be separate do so because of their rejection of contemporary life. For these groups, the collective is often more important than its individual members. This is true for both the Amish community and the Orthodox Jewish community. The Amish are “surrounded cradle to grave in a setting where they receive signals that reinforce their way of life” (Glenn, 2001, p. 197). They see themselves as a nation who has been chosen, who

are in exile (O'Neil, 1997), and whose religion “influences every aspect” of life (Anderson & Autry, 2011, p. 65).

Similarly, the Orthodox Jewish community utilizes various sheltering mechanisms to insulate and shelter its members from the outside world. Though modern-Orthodox Jews are similar to ultra-Orthodox ones in their religious observance, they differ in their approach to contemporary life (Lightman & Shor, 2002). Modern Orthodoxy embraces religious observance while engaging in modern life. Ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities, however, separate and insulate themselves from modern society through various social mechanisms (Rier, Schwartzbaum, & Heller, 2008; Hartman & Kaufman, 2006; Deutsch, 2009). Those involving language, deference to authority, and modesty are examples of sheltering mechanisms imposed on community members to achieve solidarity and establish group norms. Analyzing these sheltering mechanisms reveals the insularity of community members in daily life.

Language & Speech:

The use of language and speech by the Orthodox-Jewish community as a mechanism to insulate is well documented. Many Torah laws and customs revolve around speech and language, including commandments relating to gossip, refined speech, and speaking out against a fellow Jew to secular authorities (Rier et al., 2008; Fader, 2006; Lightman & Shor, 2002). Unrefined speech includes street language, or vulgarities, and “coarse expressive behavior” (Fader, 2009, p. 162). Deutsch (2009) explains that some of the boundaries on language are a way to preserve customs from Jewish communities of another era, such as those that existed in Poland and Lithuania. Community culture affects what is and is not permissible and appropriate to discuss, and with whom. When social problems arise, members are reluctant to reach outside of the community for professional help as they do not believe that outside professionals have the

appropriate language with which to communicate with members of the community (Lightman & Shor, 2002). A professional may not understand the Orthodox Jewish culture and the values it holds dear. Individuals seeking professional help may be uncomfortable discussing the difficulties that being observant causes them if he or she believes the therapist will encourage moving away from an observant lifestyle. Also, an individual may not feel safe discussing family problems or issues of sexual orientation if the therapist does not appreciate community norms. Language can also be manipulated as a tool of boundary maintenance. This occurs when ultra-Orthodox media uses “moralistic, extreme, exaggerated, and intense” language to maintain the boundaries of “what is considered right and wrong” (Ben-Yehuda, 2010, p. 142).

Deference to Authority:

Orthodox Jews believe they must follow the Torah’s commandments even if they do not understand them or are unsatisfied in doing so (Fader, 2006). This acquiescence to G-d’s word is extended to community leaders, specifically rabbis. In discussing the role of a group’s chief, Durkheim (1973) emphasizes that chiefs “derive their power” from the group and are elevated above all people through their ability to direct the group (p. 82). Religious authority “draws on a particular form of legitimization, often linked to a divine source” (Campbell, 2007, p. 1046). For the Orthodox Jewish community the rabbi is king, as he is viewed as a conduit to G-d (Fader, 2006). He, as Orthodox Jews only ordain men to the rabbinate (Longman, 2007), is the vessel through which Torah law is interpreted and interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts are resolved.

Lightman & Shor (2002) explain that community members consider deference to authority figures as “a necessary condition for group survival” (p. 316). Participation in many activities requires rabbinic approval, especially when it comes to members’ involvement in the

outside world (Rier et al., 2008). ‘Kosher’ is no longer strictly related to dietary laws, but has been extended to products bearing rabbinical endorsement (Deutsch, 2009). Today, one can find a myriad of ‘kosher products’ such as kosher cell phones, kosher Internet, kosher Facebook, concerts, vacations, and books.

Rabbis can also censor what community members read by exerting control over what is and is not printed in Orthodox media outlets. This is justified through the “right of the people not to know” which makes it virtually impossible to acknowledge and tackle the real issues that a community may face (Ben-Yehuda, 2010, p. 153). Rabbis have the power to sanction community members who do not adhere to community norms (Hartman & Kaufman, 2006) and can ostracize community members which impacts the individual as well as his or her family. They can provide a negative reference about a community member who does not follow communal norms or defer to authority, as rabbis are often called upon as references by schools or potential marriage partners.

Rabbis also serve as judges in the Jewish courts (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005) and community members are prohibited from turning to secular courts until they have attempted to reach a decision through the Jewish system. It is clear, then, that rabbinic authority is rarely questioned and the community will defer to the rabbi, even if his opinion is contrary to that of a professional. The message to community members is that authority is not to be challenged, whether that authority is divine in nature or invested in humans. Deference to authority, coupled with Torah law and community moral guidelines, leaves little room for individual choice and autonomy.

Modesty:

Codes of modesty stem from the Torah commandment to “walk modestly, with G-d” (Micah, 6:8), as well as cultural traditions and customs. Modesty is one of the most encompassing mechanisms used by the Orthodox Jewish community to insulate its members, in that it intersects with all of the other mechanisms. Strict modesty rules govern how community members must speak, dress, and behave. Over time, however, the emphasis to be modest has been placed primarily on women and their bodies (Korb, 2010). To be an Orthodox Jewish woman is to have many rules surrounding one’s body and sexuality (Longman, 2007; Shai, 2002).

Modesty laws govern all interactions between men and women, and Orthodox Jewish education and socialization practices separate the sexes from an early age (Rier et al., 2008; Shai, 2002; Korb, 2010). “Modesty is a central issue among Haredim, and full separation between adult males and females is enforced and kept” (Ben-Yehuda, 2010, p. 115). Marriages are arranged by matchmakers or mutual friends, dating is only for the purpose of marriage, and any physical contact between the sexes outside of marriage is prohibited (Shai 2002; Korb 2010). Modesty also dictates community members’ roles. Women are to find fulfillment in the private, domestic domain while men are occupied with religious obligations and public leadership roles (Hartman & Kaufman, 2006; Ringel, 2008; Longman 2007; Korb, 2010). Though Haredi women are currently entering the workforce in greater numbers, they are limited in the types of occupations that are deemed appropriate or permissible (Ben-Yehuda, 2010).

The above information about the Orthodox Jewish community and its members has demonstrated the ways in which the Orthodox Jewish community insulates its members from the larger society. Though there are many benefits associated with communal belonging, the

literature makes it clear that there are also costs. These include constant self-monitoring, and monitoring of others, to ensure community norms are being upheld and stigmatization for being different. Strong adherence to the word of authority makes individuality and independence difficult to achieve. Much of Orthodox Jewish life and discussion revolves around finding a mate (Lightman & Shor, 2002; Shai, 2002), and men and women who are unsatisfied with the rigid gender roles will find it difficult to find a life partner. Those who remain single often feel there is no place for them in the community.

The strict adherence to religious laws by Amish and Orthodox Jewish communities forces them to separate from the outside world. Their religious values and ideology also shape the way they respond to issues that affect their respective groups (Nadel, 2009).

2.6 Managing Threat:

As this study proposes to analyze how one insular community experienced and understood a murder within their community, it is important to consider what research has shown about how similar communities perceive threats and what they do to manage or counteract them. Erikson (1966) explains how the people of Massachusetts Bay defined their boundaries through three specific “crime waves” (p. 29). These can be considered threats that the community encountered. The term “crime waves” does not necessarily connote an increase in the volume of criminal acts but is instead indicative of the alarming sentiment from the public that something needs to be done about the threat. The waves arise when a group becomes concerned with a member’s behaviour and the group comes together to address their concerns. Reactions to the threatening behaviour included punishing the offender, and if that did not serve to correct the behaviour, more severe penalties were meted out.

Erikson (1966) characterizes the crime wave involving suspicions of witchcraft as possibly the best indicator of “social disruption and change” (p. 153). He further notes that this occurred when the community was already “experiencing a shift of religious focus” (p. 153) and “confronting a relocation of boundaries” (p. 154) prior to the presence of the threat of witchcraft. Ben-Yehuda’s (1980) writing on witch hunts, however, demonstrates that the threat itself causes the redefinition of moral boundaries. Communities felt threatened by witchcraft and this led them to reaffirm and redefine moral boundaries by persecuting the witches. Evidently, restoring moral boundaries, punishing the deviant actor, and persecuting him or her through the law are some of the ways communities react to crime.

Not all threats to insular communities involve crime or deviant behaviour, however. As Ben-Yehuda (2006) notes, “Deviance is a relative phenomenon among cultures and over time within cultures” (p. 561), and must be viewed in culturally relevant ways (Reisling, 2002). This is because what some cultures consider deviant behaviour other cultures would not. For example, the Amish consider the common occurrences of lying, irresponsibility, hurting someone’s feelings (Reisling, 2002), and relying on the outside world for assistance (Glenn, 2001; Anderson & Autry, 2011) as deviant behaviours. This explains why the Amish people reacted the way they did when the American government extended social security to farmers who were self employed (Glenn, 2001). This was a threat to their faith and lifestyle because being linked to, and dependent on, the outside world is against their religion, as are insurance programs (Glenn, 2001; Anderson & Autry, 2011). In order to ensure that they and fellow community members would not be tempted to participate in the social security program, and to reinforce the very crucial communal value of mutual aid, the Amish engaged in collective precommitment. “Collective precommitment occurs when a group of like-minded individuals work together in order for each

member to precommit to a common goal” (Glenn, 2001, p. 194). The Amish came together to insist on an exemption from the social security system thereby removing the option of collecting social security. By making it impossible for any one community member to collect social security, the internal conflict experienced in contemplating whether or not to collect it was avoided. Thus, when the Amish felt threatened they attempted to circumvent any chance of acting on the temptation altogether through, what Glenn (2001) calls, “collective binding strategies” (p. 199).

Divisiveness is also a threat to societies in which collectivity and community are crucial. Therefore, some utopian communities, like the Oneida (a First Nations people) and the Amish, avoid going to court, even to defend themselves, and they also do not sue others (Ibid; Anderson & Autry, 2011). This is not due to the fear of losing the case, but instead to the possible divisiveness the case or trial could cause within the community (Glenn, 2001). The threat of the state’s involvement in community matters and the potential disruption of the community’s peace and harmony calls for members of such communities to ensure that group solidarity is maintained. Many insular groups demand conformity from its members as divisiveness can arise through nonconformists and their offending behaviours. However, each community contains members who refuse to conform to communal norms and this poses a threat to the community. Non-conformists, taboo violators, and sinners are shunned, banned or excommunicated within Amish communities (O’Neil, 1997; Lavoie 2006).

Kasdorf (2007) discusses the West Nickel Mines shooting that occurred in an Amish schoolhouse in 2006 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and highlights how the Amish reacted with forgiveness and silence to this horrific event. A man entered an Amish schoolhouse, murdered three girls, and critically wounded several others. Parents of one of the victims

encouraged people to forgive the shooter and pursue “random acts of kindness” (Ibid, p. 331). Kasdorf (2007) describes the almost immediate forgiveness that emerged as the theme of the tragic event. The wife of the shooter was comforted by the victims’ families and a foundation was set up for her family, as well as the families of the victims. The Amish accepted the shooting as part of G-d’s plans - an act of Divine providence.

Kasdorf (2007) explains further that silence and forgiveness are also employed by the Amish community when dealing with crimes of a sexual nature. The community deals with these acts “by church confession and a forgiveness that guarantees the sin will no longer be discussed” (Kasdorf, 2007, p. 240). Lavoie (2006) discusses the threat posed by formal investigations of such crimes to Amish communities. Amish villages will not cooperate with investigations and will even order witnesses not to testify. Victims are punished and left with no support as community members support the perpetrator and shun the victim. Furthermore, the perpetrator is usually returned to the same community where the victim lives. Victims must decide whether to assist in covering up their assault or be banished from their loved ones. Silencing the victims of crime and any others who could testify against the offender leaves law enforcement officials with little assistance in their pursuit of justice. As a result, many times the state is unwilling to get involved because of the obstacles they will face in their investigation. Silence and forgiveness appear to be the coping mechanisms the Amish use to deal with threats as they believe that “justice is G-d’s alone” (Kasdorf, 2007, p. 341).

2.7 Change & Modernity:

Change poses another form of threat to insular communities and this is one of the reasons the Amish reject the use of electricity, phones, and cars (O’Neil, 1997). The possible ramifications of the objects they use on the spiritual lives of community members leads the

Amish to separate themselves from mainstream society in this way (Ibid). Modern life and the advancements that come with it can be threatening to insular groups, religions, or communities. Barzilai-Nahon and Barzilai (2005) have studied how fundamentalist communities view modernity. They define religious fundamentalism as “a system of absolute values and practiced faith in G-d that firmly relies on sacred canonical texts” (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005 p. 25). These types of communities or groups reject modernity as a way to preserve religious principles and ideals against secular temptations (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005).

Traditional religions, such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, view all that is in the world through two lenses; “that which is sacred and that which is profane or secular” (Campbell, 2005, p. 5), and they embrace the sacred and distance themselves from what is secular. As modernity fits in the ‘secular’ camp it is rejected by traditional groups and the lifestyle of the members of these groups becomes shaped by this rejection (Campbell, 2005). Durkheim (1912) discusses the distinction religious groups make between things sacred and things profane that divides their world into two realms. “Sacred things are those things protected and isolated by prohibitions; profane things are those things to which such prohibitions apply and which must keep their distance from what is sacred” (Durkheim, 1912, p. 38). He explains that religious life entails belonging to one of those realms while having left the other. The sheltering mechanisms of the Orthodox Jewish community discussed above and their anti-progressive ideology are a way to ensure community members are connected to the sacred and distanced from the profane.

Orthodox Jewish communities choose to be insular because of an anti-progressive ideology (Rier et al., 2008; Deutsch, 2009; Shai, 2002; Longman, 2007; Fader, 2006). The modern world is unacceptable to Orthodox Jews and incompatible with a Torah lifestyle (Longman, 2007; Lightman & Shor, 2002). Orthodox communities reject and mistrust many

aspects of modern life because of the threat that exposure to contemporary society will change the way community members think (Rier et al., 2008; Shai, 2002; Fader, 2006; Lightman & Shor, 2002). Therefore, many community members do not own televisions, listen to the radio, or read secular newspapers or magazines. As Durkheim (1912) explains, man “cannot live a religious life of any intensity unless he first withdraws more or less completely from secular life” (p. 313).

Individual community members judge each other based on the extent that they insulate themselves from contemporary society (Fader, 2006). Isolation from secular society ensures the transmission of the collective identity and discourages community members from embracing individualism (Longman, 2007; Deutsch, 2009; Fader, 2006). They are also discouraged from pursuing higher education in secular institutions (Deutsch, 2009; Shai, 2002).

Advancements in technology, such as the Internet, have caused much tension for community members as they attempt to navigate between what is permissible and prohibited (Deutsch, 2009). Those who do participate in modern life do so with modifications, such as engaging in its ‘kosher’ form (Deutsch, 2009; Lightman & Shor, 2002; Fader, 2006). As Haredim believe they possess the absolute truth they reject “change or innovation” and hold tightly to their traditions (Ben-Yehuda, 2010, p. 142).

Though Orthodox Jews reside in segregated pockets, they are surrounded by contemporary society. Rejecting many parts of the world around them can lead to much tension. The threat of exposure to modern life increases as the world continues to progress and technological advancements are made. Community leaders may feel the need to impose more stringent laws and community norms which were once reserved for the extremely pious. This is currently the case in many Orthodox Jewish communities (Deutsch, 2009; Fader, 2006) and is

exemplified through stricter dietary rules, a stricter dress code, or the ever growing list of activities that are banned. The struggle between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern, is really a struggle about how to define the collective identity and about the future (Ben-Yehuda, 2010). The fact that mechanical societies regress while organic ones progress (Durkheim, 1973) raises questions about the ramifications of rejecting innovation.

Durkheim (1938) noted that there are times when crime and deviance actually pave the way for change. In insular communities change threatens the traditional way, which is viewed as the best way to live. Change, even desirable change, must be implemented slowly as the community is wary of how change will impact them. “Always the burden of proof rests with those advocating change, which must be justified in terms of wellbeing of the community” (O’Neil, 1997, p. 1137). Ben-Yehuda (2010) also sees how “deviance and unconventionality can be a source of cultural innovation and change” especially when it comes to deciding whether or not to classify behaviour as deviant (p. 214).

2.8 Chapter Summary:

The above research has shown how the functionalist perspective can explain crime’s usefulness to a community. It has demonstrated how Durkheim’s (1964) ideas of crime, collective conscience, and punishment affect a group’s reaction to crime and the criminal. Erikson’s (1966) notion of deviance as part and parcel of a healthy society and its effects on community members and boundaries has been explored. Furthermore, ideas of social control, religion and insular groups have been discussed in an effort to unravel their ties to criminal and deviant behaviour. Though Ben-Yehuda’s (2010) study is specific to ultra-Orthodox Jews living in Israel, understanding the mechanisms of social control used by Orthodox Jewish communities

around the world can clarify why members of the Orthodox Jewish community reacted the way they did to the Kletzky murder.

Given the characteristics of the Orthodox Jewish community as outlined above, the present study examines what topics of discussion arose following a threatening act - a murder. It will also examine whether or not the community was cohesive or divided in their discussions, drawing from functionalist theorists. Reviewing the literature on both functionalism and its notion about the relationship between crime and particular types of societies, as well as the sheltering mechanisms used by the Orthodox Jewish community, has shown how the ideas of Durkheim (1964) and Erikson (1966) apply to the specific group in this study. It is clear that insulating community members does not occur in a vacuum, but is done through a social process in which particular mechanisms are employed for specific purposes. This process resembles the way in which mechanical societies function as well as how solidarity is expressed. Furthermore, the changes that come with modernity and the effects this has on cohesion helps explain why insular communities, such as the Orthodox Jewish community, strongly shelter their members (Deutsch, 2009). Finally, as Orthodox Jewish communities resemble mechanical societies one imagines that their collective conscience is strong and their solidarity depends on this, as Smith (2008) argues. Merely violating a taboo can be considered a crime in such societies (Durkheim, 1964). The discussions being examined in this study will offer a glimpse into how one of these communities confronted real deviance in their midst and what it propelled them to think and to talk about. The discussions will also demonstrate the effect that the threatening deviant act, the murder, had on the cohesion of this mechanical society.

Based on the above research on functionalism, insular communities, and the Orthodox Jewish community, I anticipated several pertinent findings to arise from my analysis. In

examining the discussions Orthodox Jewish community members had following the murder, the literature suggests the possibility of several topics of conversation emerging from the data. Comments made by community members may reveal the way in which the murder was functional to the community (Durkheim, 1964). Some of the discussions may engender unity as readers discuss their shared morality (Smith, 2008) or express anger towards Levi Aron, the murderer (Erikson, 1966). Discussions about the collective conscience of the community may revolve around punishment, to demonstrate that the community has not changed because of the crime (Durkheim, 1964), or around religion (Dreidger, 2009), which is central to Orthodox Jews (Semans & Stone Fish, 2000). Discussing punishment would also transfer Levi Aron to a deviant position, make him into an ‘other’ (Erikson, 1966), and strengthen community boundaries (Smith, 2008).

As outlined above, there are many ways communities can respond to crime. Topics of discussion may reveal a specific way this community reacts to crime in general, as well as to this specific crime, and how their religion affected their response (Nadel, 2009). The literature also suggests that community members may be concerned with the community’s representation (Ramp 2001; Ringel, 2008) because of a murder of a community member at the hands of a fellow community member. It is also possible that community members feel responsible for the murder in some way, as Ben-Yehuda’s (2010) doctrine of mutual responsibility suggests. It is in discussions about relocating (Erikson, 1966) or redefining (Ben-Yehuda, 2010) boundaries because of the murder that readers may be divided as the community is apprehensive when it comes to change (O’Neil, 1997). As crime itself can pave the way for change (Durkheim, 1938) it would be interesting to see what changes, if any, were suggested in community members’ discussions and how they felt about the suggestions.

The following chapter will describe the data used in this study, as well as the data collection process, and the methodology used to respond to the two research questions.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design:

This chapter will identify the approach and design of this study, including how I collected and analyzed the data with further reference to the conceptual framework of the research. I will discuss inductive research and qualitative analysis, insider research, the use of online forums, and describe the software I used to code the data. I will also elaborate on how the specific research design helped me to investigate the specific research questions of this study.

Qualitative data analysis is “a dynamic, intuitive and creative process of inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorizing” (Wong, 2008, p. 14). It allows researchers to explore values, thoughts, and beliefs and can explain behaviour by identifying “social structures or processes” (Wong, 2008, p. 14). Qualitative research has increased in popularity because quantitative methods do not typically allow for an in-depth look into people’s beliefs or behaviours (Wong, 2008). The qualitative content analysis conducted in this study used an inductive approach as I sought to examine and understand the thoughts and beliefs of the Orthodox Jewish community in reaction to the Kletzky murder. In contrast to quantitative studies in which data are tested to determine whether they are consistent with prior hypotheses or theories (Thomas, 2006), the inductive approach “begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12) “without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies” (Thomas 2006 p. 238).

3.2 Insider Research:

I am a member of the community that is the subject of this study. Subjectivity is a factor in conducting any kind of research, but this is especially so when conducting insider research. Subjectivity has been compared to “a garment that cannot be removed” as it is present through

the entire research process (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17). Since it is unavoidable, it is important that researchers are cognizant of how subjectivity may shape their study and its results (Peshkin, 1988). The personal qualities of a researcher that come together with the researcher's object of study "have the capacity to filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe, and misconstrue" all that happens in the research study (Peshkin, 1988). Being an insider does not make one "a better or worse researcher," instead, it makes them "a different type of researcher" (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 56).

There are both benefits and disadvantages to either role that a researcher may play, whether he or she is an insider or outsider. Though having the status of insider may influence the researcher's perspective, an outsider is not immune to this influence (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). In fact, DeLyser (2001) suggests that all researchers are insiders as they are people studying other people. Others see researchers as "occupying the space between," meaning they may be closer to being an insider or outsider but they "cannot fully occupy one or the other of those positions" (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 61). In any event, insiders can become outsiders by the end of the research process and the opposite is true as well (DeLyser, 2001).

When studying one's own community, like I have done in this study, subjectivity takes on greater significance. Researchers studying their own can be suspected of being involved in a conflict because they may share the biases and assumptions of those they study (Groves, 2003). Though no research is completely free of bias, with self-reflection and the recognition of biases, one's biases can be repressed (Groves, 2003).

When studying one's own, researchers must examine at what points they are insiders and outsiders throughout their work and the implications of those roles on the research process (Groves, 2003). Being an insider may enhance "the depth and breadth of understanding a

population” but “questions about objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity” must be addressed as the researcher may be too close to the people being studied (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 57).

Subjectivity can be positive in allowing researchers to make contributions that are distinctive, which is due to the coming together of the data and the personal qualities of the researcher (Peshkin, 1988). Benefits of insider research include being able to access a difficult to study population (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) and the ability to study compelling topics that use the insider position to provide insight and assistance (DeLyser, 2001). Insider research can also identify what is oppressive and how this can be changed which demands an understanding of the subjects, culture, and oneself to dispel misconceptions (Groves, 2003, p. 104). Furthermore, researchers who study their own can in fact “inspire powerful research designs” and avoid “exoticizing the other” (Groves, 2003, p. 104).

On the other hand, researching from the inside can make research more difficult and complex (DeLyser, 2001). Researchers’ perceptions may be clouded by personal experience or they may emphasize factors they share with the people they are studying and neglect those that are different in their analysis (Corbin Dwyer, & Buckle, 2009). Also, the researcher’s familiarity with the community being studied can cause him or her to be more of a participant and fail to observe certain things (DeLyser, 2001) or to turn away from accurately describing and understanding the culture being examined (Groves, 2003). Role confusion is an issue that may arise in any type of research, but this risk is greater when the researcher is an insider (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). When researchers present the subjective results of their studies, their work may be more about themselves and appear “autobiographical” or “authorized”; thus they must identify how their subjectivities may have impacted their work (Peshkin, 1988, p. 20).

Instead of exorcising subjectivity researchers must manage it (Peshkin, 1998). It is therefore important to disclose “where self and subject” come together (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17). Disclosing one’s subjectivity is not enough; one must attend to it “in a meaningful way” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17). One way of doing this is to gather data with open eyes as if one is unfamiliar with what is being studied (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Other ways of handling the potential conflicts inherent in insider research include “disciplined bracketing and detailed reflection on the subjective process, with a close awareness of one’s own personal biases and perspectives” (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 59). One must seek out his or her own subjectivity by being “mindful of its enabling and disabling potential” at early stages of data collection rather than stumbling upon it in the research process (Peshkin, 1988, p. 18). “Enhanced awareness” can come “from a formal, systematic monitoring of self” such as taking notes on thoughts and feelings regarding subjectivity and its impact on one’s work (Peshkin, 1988, p. 20).

I have attempted to follow the appropriate guidelines to manage my subjectivity in this study. I have disclosed my status as both researcher and community member. In gathering and analyzing the data, I attempted to code what was there as opposed to my thoughts about what I was reading. I attended to my subjectivities by taking notes of my feelings throughout the research process, as Peshkin (1988) suggests. As he explained, when my feelings were heightened it signaled that my subjectivity had been elicited and I was mindful of its effect on my presentation of the results of my data analysis. My insider status has benefited my research as I was able to understand Hebrew and Yiddish terms as well as community jargon used in the comments. I was also able to understand particular concepts that an outsider may not have, such as discussions about how the community functions, concepts specific to Orthodox Judaism, and

verses from the Bible and Oral Law. Being aware of subjectivities in research makes it possible to escape “the thwarting biases the subjectivity engenders, while attaining the singular perspective its special persuasions promise” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 21).

3.3 Data Sources:

For this thesis, a qualitative content analysis of comments posted on two Orthodox Jewish websites was conducted to determine what topics of discussion arose after the Kletzky murder, and whether community members were divided or united on how to deal with the topics they discussed. As online forums are observable and accessible (Im & Chee, 2006), they are a good source of data. Online forums can be used to exchange information, form new relationships, or discuss topics that are of common interest to people (Sixsmith & Murray, 2001).

There are various types of online communities including “asynchronous or synchronous” (Al-Saggaf & Begg, 2004, p. 43). Asynchronous communities are those in which participants interact in no particular time, whereas synchronous ones “take place in real time” (Al-Saggaf & Begg, 2004, p. 43). In asynchronous interactions, such as online forums, people can post messages as well as comment on other people’s messages at their convenience (Burri & Etter, 2006; Im & Chee, 2006). This study examines two asynchronous online communities which took place on public forums. Prior research has found that people are more comfortable discussing sensitive issues, such as personal health or problems, on online forums than in person (Burri & Etter 2006; Im & Chee, 2006). As noted previously, the Orthodox Jewish community is insular so it is difficult to gain access to their thoughts and feelings. Using the comments posted on news websites that cater to the community is an effective way of accessing community members’ thoughts on the murder. Because the messages posted on online forums remain available for others to access in the future, they can be used to “analyze the naturally occurring unsolicited

everyday talk” to examine and gain insight into “social phenomena” (Sixsmith & Murray, 2001, p. 424).

Using this type of data has some limitations, however. The words or meanings of online posts can be misinterpreted and/or misrepresented by researchers in their attempt to explain what was being said (Sixsmith & Murray, 2001). Furthermore, the anonymity of contributors to online posts can be compromised when included in a study such as this if researchers are not careful to remove all identifying information when using excerpts from online comments (Sixsmith & Murray, 2001). Since many studies do not include the total communication of online posts, including an indication of whether a remark was an original post or a reply to someone else’s post, researchers may detract from the message contributors to online posts wanted to convey (Sixsmith & Murray, 2011). Finally, it is also difficult to read the emotional state of one who participates on online forums as posts do not include non-verbal cues of the participants (Im & Chee, 2006).

In addition to the issues surrounding using online forums as data, this study considered the delicate relationship between religion and Internet use. Religions or religious people make value judgments about the Internet and whether it is permitted or prohibited depends on how it is described (Campbell, 2005). If used in the service of G-d then it may be allowed, but if related to the secular world it is not acceptable and boundaries are set up to ensure people are distanced or discouraged from its use (Campbell, 2005). When religious users use the Internet to connect with like minded individuals or people of the same faith, the Internet becomes a technology that is used to affirm religious identity and life (Campbell, 2005). In this way, the Internet can be a resource that builds cohesion (Campbell, 2005).

Barzilai-Nahon and Barzilai (2005) note that though fundamentalist religious groups do not trust technology, cyberspace is particularly threatening. The Internet has transformed many aspects of modern life and many religions, such as the Bahia'I (Campbell, 2007) and the Abrahamic religions (Cejka, 2009), struggle with it. The attitude towards the Internet can be described as one of both "concern and pragmatism" (Cejka, 2009, p. 99). The fear of the Internet's influence on youth as well as its ability to undermine religious values is due to its liberalism (Cejka, 2009). The pragmatism is the recognition that the Internet is necessary and essential and can also be used to disseminate religious ideas (Cejka, 2009).

For example, though the Internet has been forbidden from being in the Orthodox Jewish home it is nevertheless present in many (Cejka, 2009, p. 103). The official ban has been overridden when the Internet is needed for practical purposes, such as keeping in touch with family and friends or to conduct business (Cejka, 2009; Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005). It has also provided opportunities for women to be able to work from home (Campbell, 2007). This is why even with its officially forbidden status, Ultra-Orthodox Jews are very active online (Deutsch, 2009; Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005). Therefore, using data that consists of online comments did not significantly affect the results of this study. However, it is important to note that this study could only monitor the comments and assess the reactions of those who use the Internet.

The data were derived from two Orthodox Jewish news websites, *Yeshiva World News* (YWN) and *Vos Iz Neias* (VIN). The data are the posted comments following the articles on the websites which consist of words, phrases, and themes. The readership base of these two websites is similar in that they are Orthodox Jews who get their daily news information from these two websites, especially news relating to the Orthodox Jewish community at large. It is therefore

appropriate to use the comments following news articles about the Kletzky case from both news sources. The *Yeshiva World News* header page describes the site as providing ‘*Frum Jewish News*,’ which means news for religiously observant Jews. *Vos Iz Neias* is Yiddish for ‘What’s News?’, and their website describes them as “the voice of the Orthodox Jewish community.” I chose these two websites because they are “the dominant news sources on the Internet for religious Jews” (Nathan, 2008).

The main difference between these two news sources is that VIN does not censor the articles they post in the same way that *Yeshiva World News* does. The head of VIN claims, “We come out very strongly on child abuse, and other things that other places would not talk about” (Nathan, 2008). The *Yeshiva World News*, on the other hand, has been described as rarely being willing to print information that frames the Orthodox Jewish community in a negative light, such as injustices or abuses of power in the community (Fink, 2012). Therefore, analyzing the comments from both sites provides an understanding of the different types of conversations that arose after reading articles from the more conservative website (YWN) to those in the more open website (VIN). As the websites may appeal to Orthodox Jews of varying levels of insularity or religiosity (closed-minded/religiously right wing to more open minded), the comments posted by readers on both websites can demonstrate a range of reactions that the various types of Orthodox Jews had to the articles and to the murder. These reactions are revealed in the readers’ comments. The comments sections of YWN and VIN are where the conversations following the murder arose and where people could comment on what another reader wrote. They are, therefore, key sources from which to gather answers to this study’s research questions and to examine how community members experienced a particular threat – the murder of one community member by another community member. The data drawn from both websites allowed

for a more robust understanding of the topics that arose for community members and how their discussions affected community cohesion.

Many members of the Orthodox Jewish community do not watch television and some do not listen to the radio or read secular newspapers. Thus, the news articles posted on YWN and VIN may be their main source of daily news. Both websites often post entire articles taken from mainstream news websites, or excerpts with or without a link to the complete article in its original news source. These mainstream news sources include the New York Post, New York Times, CBS News and many others. Therefore, many articles on these two websites are the same or very similar.

In order to post a comment, both websites require an individual to create an account by providing an email address and password. YWN asks readers to choose a name when creating an account and, whether one uses their real name or a nickname, this is the name that shows up every time that individual posts a comment. On VIN, however, one has the option to post anonymously, choose a nickname, or use his or her actual name. VIN also has rules that posters must follow and states its goal to be “a positive means of growth for *Klal Yisroel* (the Jewish nation)” (VIN, 1999). It requests that posters communicate in a decent manner, keep a calm tone as the Sages advise, and to act respectfully as people were created in the image of G-d. No gossip, profanity, derogatory names, or defamation is allowed. Such comments will be deleted as all of the comments are moderated. YWN does not state any such rules.

3.4 Data Collection:

Two searches were run using the terms ‘Leiby Kletzky’ and ‘Levi Aron’, spanning the time period from when Leiby went missing on July 11, 2011, until approximately six weeks following the murder on August 29, 2011. This time frame was chosen because it provides a

sufficient period of time to examine the immediate and later reactions of community members to the crime during which the investigation and court process progressed. Within six weeks of the murder, Levi Aron had pleaded guilty but had not yet been sentenced. Furthermore, after six weeks there were few articles or discussions about the murder appearing on either website. The searches generated a total of 90 articles with 836 posted comments on the YWN website and 130 articles, with 4741 posted comments on the VIN website (see Table 3.1 below). The difference in the number of comments on each website may be due to the above mentioned facts regarding censorship, or to YWN's policy that individuals must log in to post comments which VIN only recently adopted.

Of these articles, there were 28 articles on each website that were the same or very similar. Articles were identified as the same or very similar based on several factors: the articles were either exactly the same; or almost identical with the exception of a few lines. In short, the details that make the articles different were not so significant that they prompted the readers' comments to go in a particular direction. For example, the only difference in the articles on Levi Aron's written confession was that YWN warns readers about the graphic nature of the content in the article whereas VIN does not. The warning provided to readers by YWN does not affect the comments and therefore, these articles were considered the same and the comments of these articles were included in this study.

On YWN, 26 of the 28 articles (or 93%) originated from other sources and 27 of the 28 (or 96%) articles on VIN originated from other sources (see Appendix B for a complete list of the origin of each article). Altogether, the comments on these same/very similar articles generated a response of 1303 comments from readers – 191 comments on YWN and 1112 comments on VIN (see Table 3.1 below). This study has used only the comments posted below

articles that were the same or very similar which provided a richer and more comprehensive picture of how the Orthodox Jewish community experienced the murder. In short, the topics of conversation that arose for community members and whether or not they agreed with the views expressed by others were directed at the same or very similar content, making the comparisons more valid.

Table 3.1. Final Sample of Articles/Comments Analyzed

Website:	Total Articles: (7/12/2011-8/29/2011)	Total Comments:	Same/Very Similar Articles:	Total comments on same articles:
Yeshiva World News	90 (41%)	836 (15%)	28	191 (15%)
Vos Iz Neias	130 (59%)	4741 (85%)	28	1112 (85%)
Totals	220	5577	56	1303

3.5 Synopsis of Articles:

The content of the articles on the two websites and included in this study have been summarized below. This synopsis allows the reader to understand what happened in those six weeks and why particular topics arose in the data. As a lot of information was relayed in the articles, the summary has been divided into groups for clarity and ease of reading. The articles reported on the missing child, the murder and confession, the police, the lawyers, keeping children safe, and Leiby’s family. (For a more comprehensive summary of each article included in this study, see Appendix C). Though this synopsis is not sequential, it serves to provide a general overview of the progression of events for a clearer understanding of the results of the analysis presented in the next chapter.

Missing Child: The first article appeared two days after Leiby went missing. Two surveillance videos captured Leiby talking to a man whom the police believe he followed to the

man's car. The next day, Leiby was found dismembered. He had been kidnapped and killed. Articles focused on how to best keep children safe and the rarity of the case.

The Murder & Confession: Levi Aron was charged with murdering Leiby. He confessed that he offered Leiby a ride to a bookstore and then invited him to a wedding in Monsey. Since it was late when they returned from the wedding, he took Leiby to the home he shared with his stepmother, father, and uncle where the boy watched television and fell asleep. The morning after the wedding, Aron bound Leiby up when he went to work. Aron's coworkers confirmed that he came to work on the day after the boy went missing and that he participated in prayer services on behalf of the missing boy. Aron claimed that he planned on taking Leiby home after work but when he saw fliers about the search for the boy, he panicked. He returned home, made Leiby a sandwich, and then smothered him with a towel. It was later reported that he also drugged the boy. He carved up the body, put some parts in the freezer and some in a suitcase which he threw in a garbage dump, and returned home to clean up.

The Police: The police confirmed that Aron went to the wedding of a relative and guests at the wedding confirmed seeing him but not Leiby. Later, the police discovered a surveillance video in a New Jersey gas station, which is on the way to the wedding hall. The footage showed Aron escorting the boy to the bathroom on the day the boy went missing. The boy did not appear pushed or frightened. Throughout the six weeks, police continued to remove evidence from Levi Aron's home including a mattress, box spring, bags of children clothes, a cell phone and computer. Police searched for DNA in Aron's living room but reported that it did not look like Leiby was molested before he was killed. They also investigated whether Aron had killed before. One article referred to Yaakov German, an Orthodox Jewish man who helped lead the police to Levi Aron by knocking on doors and scrutinizing video footage.

The Lawyers: Aron's family hired defence lawyers to represent him in court. One of the lawyers resigned from the case because he felt that he could not represent Aron in good conscience as the allegations were too horrific. He stated that Aron's lawyers were considering an insanity defence which the community felt would be an injustice. The district attorney dismissed the suggestion that Aron was insane and explained that he would be seeking life without parole.

Aron's defence team then hired a new lawyer experienced in high profile murder cases and insanity defence cases, and Aron was indicted on multiple counts including first degree murder and kidnapping. He was also accused of drugging, smothering and dismembering Leiby. Aron pleaded not guilty and his lawyers said he has hallucinations, hears voices, and was on suicide watch. Though Aron had been found fit to stand trial, his lawyers said this would not rule out an insanity defence. The new lawyer explained that she understands the outrage about the crime and the desire for punishment, but she must defend her client's rights.

While awaiting trial, Aron was interviewed by the Daily News whom the defence team criticized because Aron was mentally unfit to consent to an interview. They argued that the press did not treat the case with dignity, ethics, or justice. In responding to these complaints and others, the judge expressed concern that the defence lawyers are not experienced enough to ensure Aron would receive a fair trial. Aron's psychological evaluation was illegally leaked to the press and the judge implied that the defence may have leaked it themselves. The defence lawyers denied this.

Safe Children: After the murder, New York City parents wanted Mayor Bloomberg to lift a ban that had been enforced since 2006 on cell phones in schools, but he would not reverse the ban. Also, Stanley Patz, a father whose son disappeared in 1979, suggested that every child be

provided with an emergency cell phone which could be known as Leiby's phone. Various Jewish community organizations met with the NYPD to discuss Operation Safe Child. Officials also discussed increasing privately-monitored security cameras in Brooklyn's Hasidic neighbourhoods. Hasidic parents considered having state issued identification cards with their child's birth date, height, weight, and fingerprints making them easier to locate should they go missing. A community member called the murder of Leiby Kletzky the 9/11 of the Jewish community.

Leiby's Parents: Two days after their son was murdered, Leiby's parents posted a statement on their building door thanking G-d, their community, friends, neighbours, volunteers, and federal, state and local agencies for all their help through the tragedy of losing their son. Leiby's father then attended synagogue services on the Sabbath, a few days after the funeral, and was comforted by his belief in G-d which he said helps community members when something bad happens. Later, Mr. Kletzky appeared on the radio to thank everyone for their support and to tell listeners that by donating to a memorial fund to help others experiencing tragedy, they could make sure Leiby's death was not in vain. His goal was to raise one million dollars. He also said that 'Leiby Forever', a song composed by Orthodox Jewish singer and songwriter Lipa Schmeltzer, has helped him cope with his son's death. The singer later said that the father's comments countered criticism he received from those believing he was trying to profit from the tragedy.

3.6 Data Analysis:

This study drew from Braun and Clarke (2006) in conducting the thematic analysis. The data that were coded were the comments and represented the units of analysis. I searched for themes within the comments in an attempt to provide a rich and detailed account of the

discussions community members had following the reading of the articles related to the murder (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Developing categories is part of inductive analysis and it consists of identifying, defining, labeling and describing the categories (Thomas, 2006).

The topics and themes that emerged from the comments were the focus of this study. The comments were analyzed at the latent level. More specifically, this means rather than simply focusing on the surface meaning of each comment, I went further to “examine the *underlying* ideas, assumptions” and “structural conditions” that shaped the comments (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84, 85). For example, comments that were made in relation to rabbinic authority were analyzed as to the importance of such authority in Orthodox Jewish communities. Analyzing the data in this manner has revealed the cultural context in which they were formed as well as the socially-constructed meaning and worldviews of the Orthodox Jewish community. In this way, the comments posted by readers were described and then interpreted using a constructionist approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The analysis proceeded with three separate readings of the posted comments on three separate occasions. Reading the data multiple times and interpreting the data is the inductive part of the research (Thomas, 2006). In an attempt to respond to the first research question, what discussions arose following the murder, a list was made of all the topics of discussion that arose in the readers’ comments. Topics refer to the ideas that were discussed in each comment, such as the defence team or Levi Aron’s family. The topics were then divided into themes by grouping the topics that fit together under a particular heading. For example, all topics relating to the murderer were grouped together under the theme ‘Levi Aron’. To answer the second research question, the topics in the main themes were analyzed if possible to determine whether

community members were united or divided in their discussions, although not all topics could be analyzed in this way as will be discussed.

Using the phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) to conduct thematic qualitative analysis as my guide, I followed the following steps to analyze the data:

Step 1: Drawing from the coding method explained by Kraska and Neuman (2008) and that of Braun and Clarke (2006), I read the articles and the accompanying comments to determine what was being said and then I coded each comment. First, I familiarized myself with the data by reading through all of the articles and accompanying comments twice. The first read-through did not involve any note taking or coding and it allowed me to formulate ideas as to what was in the comments and what might be significant about them. I then systematically re-read through each article and comment. During this second reading of the data, I began to answer the first research question, ‘what topics arose’. This involved reading all of the articles and deciphering the purpose of each one (i.e. what was it telling the reader, what was the article about). Though the unit of analysis was the comment, analyzing the purpose of each article takes into account that the comments were made in response to something mentioned in the articles. Knowing this information allowed for a comparison of the purpose of the articles to the topics of discussion they elicited.

Following the reading of each article, the comments that followed were read. I made note of what was significant about each comment and coded for what topic was being discussed in each. I did not limit myself to a certain number of topics but instead coded “for as many potential themes/patterns as possible” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.89). It was common that comments focused upon or included more than one topic in its discussion. Therefore, comments with several topics were coded under multiple topic headings. For example, if a comment discussed

the topics of prison, mental illness, and the defence team, this comment was coded under each heading.

Coding is the subdividing of the data and categorizing them into themes that the researcher identifies (Wong, 2008). Coding allows the researcher to label and sort particular aspects of the data (Walsh, 2003) and it is also where textual data is divided into segments and examined for “similarities and differences” (Wong, 2008, p. 17). I used the specialized software NVivo to collate the comments together under the appropriate topic heading that I had identified in the second reading of the data and to further analyze the data. (The benefits and disadvantages of using this software are discussed at the end of this chapter). Some researchers use “pre-constructed coding schemes” by first creating the nodes and then coding (Wong, 2008, p. 17). In NVivo, nodes are like sticky notes that researchers use to “indicate that a particular passage belongs to a certain theme or topic” (Wong, 2008, p. 17). In this study, the nodes represent the topics that arose in the comments. However, as this study was primarily inductive, I used a “bottom-up” approach to code the data (Wong, 2008, p. 17). That is, I read the comments and created nodes as the topics emerged from the data. Below is an example of a comment coded under multiple topic headings.

Figure 3.1. Example of Coded Comment

<p><u>Comment:</u> I am shocked that the family has hired an attorney to defend this monster. They should take this money and place it into the Leiby Kletzky fund to help other children. The family is also to be blamed for this. They are helping their Butcher.</p>	<p><u>Topics coded for:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aron’s family 2. Aron’s lawyers 3. Derogatory Classification
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This process was done systematically, reading each article and deciphering its purpose and reading each comment and deciphering its topic, to inform the research questions by allowing me to read the articles community members read, the discussions they had, and how

they reacted to each other's comments. At the end of this phase, each comment was linked to at least one topic.

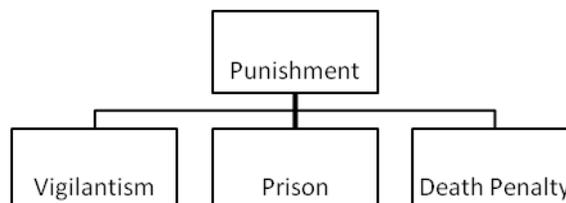
Step 2: In this phase, I generated a list of all the topics that arose from the comments that emerged in Step 1. Once I had a list of all the topics, I organized the comments into meaningful groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006) by grouping all the comments that fit under each topic together. For example, all comments that related to Aron's mental health were collated together under that topic heading. This process of developing categories creates meaning in the data (Thomas, 2006). Using NVivo, one can group data that is conceptually similar into respective nodes. Once all the similar passages are grouped together, each node is like a folder containing all the comments related to that specific node title or topic.

Step 3: While NVivo can help organize the data, it cannot make sense of themes. It is therefore best to combine manual and electronic methods to analyze data (Welsh, 2002) as "it is the researcher who determines the results found" and not the software (Wiltshier, 2011, p.1). Therefore, once a list of all topics and accompanying comments were generated, I manually sorted the topics into potential themes. I identified themes by reading and rereading the topics that I coded in NVivo and seeing what came together. As Walsh (2003) explains, themes are identified by repeated readings of the data and writing down the interpretations of what the researcher is seeing develop. I analyzed the topics and considered how different topics might come together "to form an overarching theme" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89). A theme is a compilation of all the topics that fall under that specific heading. For example, the topics of 'vigilantism', 'prison', and 'death penalty' were grouped together under the theme of 'punishment' because punishment is the overarching idea being discussed in each of those

individual topics. I also created a ‘miscellaneous’ theme in which I grouped all the topics that did not seem to fit under any particular theme.

Step 4: Once I had divided the topics into themes, I ensured that the coded comments I grouped together formed a theme and created a “candidate thematic map” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91) which is a diagram of all the potential themes and accompanying topics (see Figure 3.3). Then, I reread all of the comments a third time and considered the validity of the comments to the themes and whether the candidate thematic map was an accurate reflection of the meanings in the comments and the topics included in each potential theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As I reread the comments, I determined whether I missed any topics in earlier coding. Any topics that had been missed or incorrectly coded were recoded. For example, I had incorrectly coded the topic called ‘evil’ and did not include all the comments that belonged under this heading. Therefore, I recoded the comments to ensure that all comments that fit here were grouped together. I also moved any topics out of the ‘miscellaneous’ theme if they fit under another theme, such as moving the topic of ‘media’ to the theme ‘The Case,’ as readers discussed the media coverage of the case.

Figure 3.2. Example of Candidate Thematic Map



I discarded themes that appeared to be irrelevant or insubstantial. For example, ‘sentencing’ was discarded because this theme, and the topics included in it, was the same as the ‘punishment’ theme. I also merged those themes that fit together. For example, I combined the themes ‘evil’ and ‘derogatory classification’ because in both themes, readers commented that Aron was evil or classified him as a monster or butcher. Large themes with many topics or separate elements were further divided to include sub-themes. For example, the themes ‘the case’ and ‘Orthodox Judaism’ had many topics covering several elements, so those two themes were divided into several sub-themes (e.g. ‘The Case’ includes ‘law enforcement’, ‘court’, and ‘media’). At the end of this phase, the themes that remained were the main themes that emerged from the data. I then defined, named, and refined the themes. The core or essence of each theme was identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and I explained the aspects of the comments that were captured within each topic in each theme.

Step 5: Though this study is primarily qualitative, there was nevertheless a quantitative element to it. In an attempt to respond to the second research question - whether discussions following the murder united or divided the Orthodox Jewish community - each of the main themes was analyzed as to whether readers were united or divided in their discussions. This was done first per topic rather than per theme because it was possible that within a theme community members were united about some of the topics that fell under that theme but divided over others. Not all the topics in the themes allowed for this type of analysis, however. For example, the topic ‘derogatory classification’ in the theme ‘Levi Aron’ did not elicit a discussion in which readers debated anything. Instead, they made derogatory comments about Levi Aron and, therefore, this topic does not offer insight into whether the community was united or divided in discussing Aron in a negative way. On the other hand, in discussing the topic ‘Aron’s mental health’ in the same

theme, readers debated whether or not Aron was mentally ill or insane, which were used synonymously. It can, therefore, be analyzed as to whether or not readers were united or divided in their opinions about this topic.

For the topics that allowed for an analysis of unity or division, I posed a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ question based on what readers discussed in the comments. For the above example about Aron’s mental health, the question was, ‘Is Aron mentally ill or insane?’ I tallied up the total number of comments in the topic that would respond to the question. I then counted all the affirmative answers and then all the negative comments. I compared these totals to determine whether or not readers were united or divided on the topics being discussed. Answers in which the majority of the responses were the same would demonstrate unity and answers in which readers were split in their responses would show division. Based on the number of unifying versus dividing comments and using a two-thirds rule, I determined whether the community was more divided or united on that particular topic. If two-thirds of the readers felt one way while one-third felt another way this was considered united, whereas if less than two-thirds of readers agreed on the topic, it was considered divided. I also noted instances where the threshold for unity was missed by only a few points.

There are very few guidelines in prior research work as to how to determine if readers were united or divided and I have, therefore, drawn from the way governments make decisions. I used the two-thirds rule, known as a supermajority, because it is used for decision making in the United States Congress, in both the House of Representatives and the Senate (Rubinfeld, 1996; McGinnis & Rappaport, 1999). It is also used in the Canadian House of Commons and legislative assembly (Forsey, 2005). As I am both a researcher and community member, using a two-thirds rule removed the issue of dynamic inconsistency where a person’s preferences may

change over time (Dal Bó, 2006). This demonstrates that I did not allow either of my above noted identities influence the study's results regarding communal unity and division. Using the two-thirds rule removed discretion or biases on my part in determining the findings. However, one of the limitations to using this threshold is that it is somewhat arbitrary and other types of measure would have resulted in different findings.

I then analyzed each of the main themes for unity and division to assess how readers felt about the overall theme by considering their responses for unity and division. The overall analysis of each theme included whether community members were brought together or were in conflict in their discussions relating to the theme and also explains which topics under each theme engendered unity and which produced a division.

Step 6: Next, I used readers' comments, or excerpts of the comments, to provide support for my identification of each topic and theme and whether readers were united or divided in their discussions. Each topic had a narrative that related to its accompanying comments and the research questions. This narrative is best explained through the use of the comments. Using excerpts from the comments helps relay the views that community members had about the topics following the murder and why these topics were important to them. I also used the comments to provide examples of unity and division for the topics in each theme. Using the questions presented by Braun and Clarke (2006) to guide thematic analysis, I considered the meaning of each individual theme, the underlying assumptions, implications, and conditions that gave rise to each theme, why each theme was discussed in the comments in the way that it was by community members, and the overall story that each theme tells about the topics being discussed in the comments.

Step 7: Finally, themes that emerged from the data were compared to the themes that arose in the theoretical literature regarding functionalism, insular communities and their response to threats. As such, I moved from describing what was in the data to interpreting the data by relating it to what has been written in prior research. For example, the comments in which readers expressed an opinion about Levi Aron were analyzed as to how the community viewed him following the murder. Some comments defended his right to a fair trial while others believed that due to the nature of his crime, Aron's rights should not be upheld. In this phase, the comments expressing anger may be linked and compared to the concept of 'social cohesion following a crime' through an outpouring of anger towards the deviant that appears in the literature on functionalism (Durkheim, 1964). In this way, the themes that emerged from the data were related and compared to the themes that emerged from the literature.

Figure 3.3. Steps of Analysis

1. Read all articles and comments – no notes.
Reread and note – purpose of each article; interesting aspects of comments; and code topic.
2. Generate a list of all topics and collate all comments under appropriate topic headings.
3. Sort topics into potential themes.
4. Review themes and create thematic map. Define, name and refine themes.
5. Analyze each topic under each theme for unity/division.
6. Create narrative for each theme. Create narrative to explain unity and division.
7. Relate themes and topics to relevant literature.

3.7 Using NVivo:

NVivo can be used for many types of data and methods and doing so has benefits as well as disadvantages. I chose to use NVivo because it performs the tasks of cutting, pasting, and categorizing the data that I would have to do manually and it is, therefore, an efficient and faster process for sorting the data and “retrieving coded themes” (Wong, 2008, p. 15). Computer software programs like NVivo can enhance the “quality, rigour, and trustworthiness” of a research project (Welsh, 2002, p. 5). It is a convenient and time-saving tool to analyze text (Durian, 2002) and it is especially useful in allowing researchers to perform accurate searches quickly, which would be difficult to perform manually, and to uncover and identify themes (Welsh, 2002; Wiltshier 2011).

NVivo is like a binder in which many types of documents can be stored, connected, organized, and accessed easily (Walsh, 2003). Its ability to import documents and make the codes one creates visible and clear are examples of its ease and simplicity (Welsh, 2002). Researchers can systematically work through their data using NVivo (Wiltshier, 2011). It also gives the researcher more freedom to connect and “compare patterns within and across documents” (Walsh, 2003, p. 253). By saving time using the software to perform laborious tasks, NVivo gives researchers more time “to explore trends, identify themes, and make conclusions” (Wong, 2008, p. 19).

Where it is less useful, however, is in “addressing issues of validity and reliability in the thematic ideas that emerge during the data analysis process” because themes emerge in “fluid and creative ways” (Welsh, 2002, p. 6). Using NVivo can also cause researchers to extend the coding process due to the ease in which coding is done using the software (Welsh, 2002). This can lead researchers to think that their work is more rigorous when, in fact, extending the coding

had no benefit to their work (Welsh, 2002). Because there were 1303 comments included in this study, NVivo was useful in helping me sort them into their respective topic headings quickly and efficiently. It also allowed me to view and compare the comments collated under each topic at the same time, as well as catch mistakes I had made in coding the data and correct them quickly. Without NVivo, these actions would have been tedious and time-consuming.

This chapter has outlined the type of research I conducted and described how I managed my dual role as researcher and insider. It also described the sources of the data as well as how I collected and analyzed the data using NVivo. Chapter 4 will describe the results of this work.

Chapter 4. Results

This chapter will outline the results of the analysis. First, the main topics and themes will be presented. The primary focus will be on whether readers were united or divided in their comments. Excerpts of the comments will be used to highlight readers' reactions following the murder and to illustrate how they were united or divided.

4.1 Online Postings:

In consideration of the ethical issues involved in using online posts in research (Sixsmith & Murray, 2001), I did not change the words, spelling or grammatical errors of the comments. In short, the excerpts included in this chapter are direct quotes. I did, however, translate Hebrew and Yiddish words or concepts into English. Though it has been suggested that paraphrasing can protect the anonymity of contributors to online posts (Sixsmith & Murray, 2001), I protected readers' anonymity by removing any identifying information they may have included in their posts, such as the names or nicknames they used.

Contrary to the suggestion of Sixsmith and Murray (2001) to include the total communication, I did not always quote the entire comment, but instead often only used a portion of the comment that was relevant to the particular topic or theme being discussed. Though it could be argued that by separating the comments I have misrepresented readers' messages by limiting the context of what was being conveyed (Sixsmith & Murray, 2001), because I coded each comment for as many topics as possible, I am confident that the portion of an excerpt that is not included is captured elsewhere. Therefore, quoting only parts of comments does not take away from the message a reader was conveying. In this way, I attempted to ensure that the representation of the comment remained accurate. For example, to explain how readers felt about providing children with cell phones only the underlined portion of the quote below would be

used. This is because the earlier and later portions of the comment neither add to, nor detract from, the discussions about cell phones.

“If you're being sarcastic & your usual Marxist self, get off the site. If you're sincere, yes...EVERY child should have a Kosher phone with Shomrim, parents & 911 numbers only. I'm going to get my grandson one, thanks to Bloomberg's cuts he has to walk almost a mile & cross two major roads to get to Yeshiva (Jewish school) because there are no buses. He was 9 when he first had to do this, he's just turned 11 now.”

4.2 Main Topics:

In response to the first research question, which asks what topics of discussion arose following the murder, the results showed that 45 topics emerged from the comments posted in response to the articles (see Appendix D for a complete list and brief explanation of all of the topics). Of these 45 topics, 28 emerged as the main ones (see Table 4.1 below). Main topics were determined based on two criteria. If a topic was one of the ten most dominant topics discussed in the comments it was considered a main topic as readers discussed these topics more than all the others. If any of the remaining topics were able to be analyzed for unity and division and fit under a theme, which will be discussed in further detail later, they were also considered a main topic. All of the 28 main topics meet these criteria.

For example, though the topic ‘death penalty’ was not one of the ten most dominant topics, it allowed for an analysis of unity and division as readers debated whether Aron deserved the death penalty. However, the topic ‘prison’ was neither one of the ten most dominant topics, nor did it allow for an analysis of unity and division, as readers simply discussed what they thought would happen to Aron in prison. Therefore, this topic was not considered a main topic. The ten most dominant topics (which are in bold below) came up between 5.1% and 18.4% of the time in readers’ discussions. Discussing all of the 28 main topics would take up too much time, therefore, the ten most dominant topics will be discussed in depth since they reflect what

readers discussed the most over the six-week period the articles in this study covered. The ten most dominant topics were identified by dividing the total number of comments per topic over the total number of topics included in this study (1303) as seen in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1. 28 Main Topics

28 Main Topics:	Number of comments:	Percentage of comments in relation to 1303 comments in this study:
Defence Team	240	18.4%
Derogatory Classification	130	10.0%
Orthodox Jewish Community	98	7.5%
Jewish Beliefs	89	6.8%
Children's Safety	89	6.8%
Jewish Texts	88	6.8%
Due Process	87	6.7%
Insanity Defence	81	6.2%
Media	76	5.8%
G-d	67	5.1%
Communal Responsibility	53	4.1%
Cell Phones	50	3.8%
Police	50	3.8%
Aron's Family	46	3.5%
Molestation	44	3.4%
Aron's Mental Health	43	3.3%
Death Penalty	40	3.1%
Rabbis	28	2.1%
Vigilantism	27	2.1%
Aron as Liar	27	2.1%
Federal Crime	26	2.0%
Amber Alert	25	1.9%
Civilian Search	24	1.8%
Prior Knowledge	23	1.8%
Shomrim	15	1.2%
Secular Society	13	1.0%
Lipa	12	0.9%
Aron's Previous Crimes	8	0.6%

First Dominant Topic: Defence Team

The Defence Team was discussed in 240, or 18.4% of all the comments in this study, making discussions about Aron's lawyers the most dominant topic. There were many articles

about Aron's lawyers and readers discussed how they felt about the lawyers defending Aron.

Many readers were angered that Aron was being defended at all:

"Ms. McCann², if you have children, I hope you continuously have nightmares about them being dismembered by some cruel, sick animal like the one you are trying to defend. "Innocent until proven guilty" my foot. The kid was FOUND in his apartment, and he DIRECTED the police to where the other half of the boy was! Don't tell me he's not guilty you..."

Others understood his right to a defence attorney but not why his lawyers would put themselves in the position of defending him:

"I dont see why we need to argue about her defending him. We know that in America the murderer has the right for defense, but as a human being I wouldn't want to defend him and cannot understand how someone with a conscience can do that. That's all."

Readers also wondered whether the lawyers were court appointed or privately hired, and many readers sought to clarify this issue:

"Actually they are NOT court appointed. The NEWS reported that they were hired by the family."

One of the lawyers on the defence team quit saying that the case was too horrific for him and readers discussed their views on this development. Some felt the lawyer was wrong for quitting:

"I cannot believe the story that a lawyer bowed out because he could not in good conscience plead the case. That is not an acceptable legal reason for bowing out. A lawyer can bow out because he lives to far from his client or he has become a witness in the case, but becoming convinced of the guilt of his client does not help. A lawyer can get disbarred for such action."

Others were happy that he quit, as one reader stated:

"Thank you Mr. Marrone³ for seeing this vicious, cold-blooded murderer for what he is, a menace who needs to be exterminated."

² The new lawyer hired by the defence team after one of the lawyers quit.

³ The lawyer who quit his job defending Levi Aron.

Second Dominant Topic: Derogatory Classification

Readers referred to Levi Aron in derogatory terms and compared him to serial killers such as Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer in 130, or 10% of all the comments in this study. The most common words used to describe Aron were evil, monster, sick, psycho, animal, butcher, and *rasha* (Hebrew for wicked person). Below are two examples in which readers refer to Aron by one of the terms listed above:

“The monster knew enough to follow through on his acts in secrecy.”

“I just read another piece of disturbing news of what this animal did to the body which wasn't publicized on other outlets, too gruesome to share here...”

In comparing Aron to serial killers, readers focused on the fact that Aron was Jewish and killed another Jewish person, which was shocking to them:

“i think the diff between bundy and here is that its a jew who killed and did this to jewish kid and all in bp (Borough Park)...a shock!!! of course aron levi is not worse or better than bundy and co. but still.....”

They also mention these killers as examples to explain why Aron deserves a trial:

“He is no different than Charles Manson or Ted Bundy - they had trials. Can you imagine the chaos that would ensue if this were not the case?”

Third Dominant Topic: Orthodox Jewish Community

The Orthodox Jewish Community was discussed in 98, or 7.5% of all the comments in this study. Readers discussed the larger Orthodox Jewish community and the lifestyle of community members. This includes discussions of Orthodox Jewish establishments and organizations, communal dating practices, and the community's response to mentally ill individuals, pedophiles, victims of abuse, and more all in relation to the case. One reader expressed concern with how the comments on the websites represent the Orthodox Jewish community to the outside world:

“the picture the outside world is getting of the the jewish community is, that they want this guy immediately removed from society, no wasting time trying to defend him, just throw him straight into prison! that's not what yidden (Jews) are about and that's not what america is about.”

Comments demonstrated additional concerns and embarrassment about how Jews and more specifically, Orthodox Jews, were being represented through Aron’s very public case:

“LEVI, thanks for taking off your 'kipah' (skullcap) so not to make us any more "bishes" (embarrassment), maybe the public following this, won't see every second that your jewish.”

Another reader described the tendency in the community to ignore major issues:

“people were complaining on how our community sweeps incidents under the rug. arguments like this are the reason why. we run around blaming the parents, grandparents and wife’s second cousin four times removed. entire families are stigmatized because of one person’s crimes. of course we sweep things under the rug”

Several issues that may go unaddressed in the Orthodox Jewish community were raised in the comments, one of which was mental health problems. Mental health issues cause several problems for community members and they are therefore stigmatized and often unacknowledged. Having a mental illness in one’s family will affect one’s potential to find a mate (Lightman & Shor, 2002). One reader explains that because mental health issues carry with them embarrassment and shame, people may not seek help.

“The use of the term “shrinks” contributes a great deal to the “shanda” (shame) many in our community feel about seeking help for mental health issues. I urge you to discontinue using this term as it obviously sounds derogatory and prevents many people from getting the help they need and at the same time contributes to the terrible practice of those who shun a shidduch (marriage match) b/c either the prospective partner or a family member sees a PSYCHIATRIST and/or PSYCHOLOGIST!!!!”

In highlighting how the Orthodox Jewish community’s failure to address community problems, such as mental illness, may have played a role in the murder, one reader wrote:

“There is an intolerably tremendous number of individuals in the frum (religious) community who are mentally ill. We have few resources for dealing with the most severe cases within the community and refuse to look for them in non-frum (non-religious) or

non-Jewish settings...If the perpetrator had received help when he first showed signs of illness, Leiby would be alive today! This is a wake-up call to the community. I hope to G-d it works!"

One reader assumed that if Aron had returned Leiby to his home, the community would have covered up Aron's actions or crime:

"He could have knocked on his father's door and told him he had the kid and was in over his head. His father surely would have somehow returned the child to the community. AND THE COMMUNITY WOULD HAVE COVERED IT UP!!!"

Fourth Dominant Topic: Jewish Beliefs

Readers discussed Jewish Beliefs in 89, or 6.8% of all the comments in this study.

Readers discussed various Jewish beliefs that are related to Jewish values, such as loving your fellow Jew and awaiting the redemption. Believing in the future redemption is central to Orthodox Judaism as Orthodox Jews believe that the Messiah will one day appear and return them to Israel where the third Temple will be rebuilt (Valins, 2000). Many readers expressed ideas relating to the redemption, which is a major tenet of the Jewish faith. As one reader said after reading about the murder: *"Its really time for geula (redemption)."*

Another reader responded to an individual who suggested getting a new rabbi if the one he or she follows covers up abuse by saying:

"Excuse me????? Did you ever hear of daas torah⁴ (literally 'knowledge of torah')? Or are you too busy following your emotions to heed advice of those a bit more learned than you.... How dare you say that if a Rav (rabbi) wouldn't pasken (rule) the way YOU see fit, you would dispose of him. Shame on you. You should learn to respect the words of our heilige (holy) torah."

Several readers suggested things people should focus on following the murder. One wrote that people should work on *"teshuva (repentance), more achdus (unity) and shalom (peace) among each other not only in time of tzara (trouble),"* all of which are important Jewish beliefs.

⁴ Da'as Torah (literally knowledge of Torah) is a very important belief in Orthodox Judaism in which Jews seek advice and input on all matters of life from their rabbis, even matters unrelated to Jewish law (Coleman, 2007).

Fifth Dominant Topic: Children's Safety

Keeping children safe came up in 89, or 6.8% of all the comments in this study. Readers provided various safety measure ideas for children such as cell phones, identification cards and security cameras. Other suggestions were to educate children about strangers, a GPS tracking system, and devices children could wear that would have an emergency button such as a pendant, watch, or bracelet. Here is an example of a comment where a reader made several suggestions in regards to safety measures:

“There are many ways to respond to a tragedy of this magnitude. One way would be to find methods to lessen the chance of a repeat tragedy. Some examples: 1) “Teach your kids NEVER to go into someone's car or walk away with someone unless that person provides your kid with a "password" you have all memorized” “2) If lost and seeking help, it is preferable to approach a woman (especially a middle-aged woman), or a police officer, as opposed to a male stranger on the street (even if he is wearing the garb of an orthodox Jew).3) Your child must be instructed: report anything that is uncomfortable immediately to you. The child should be told this is NOT loshon hora (gossip). If a gym teacher, rebbe (rabbi), janitor, friend's father etc makes your child feel uncomfortable in any way, he must tell you immediately.4) Girls can be victims as well, including from female predators.5) If someone offers to take your kid to a ball game or an overnight trip, ask yourself: What's he getting out of this? If it seems too good to be true, it probably is! Be cautious.”

Other practical lessons to prevent such a crime from reoccurring were offered, such as the posting below:

“It makes sense to also address problems which might prevent a similar tragedy in the future. Dov Hikind's suggestion to grant a \$500 tax credit to homes and businesses which have security cameras is an example of such a measure. So would be funding of child safety courses for children. Also, there could be funding for programs to train rabbonim (rabbis) on issues of child abuse, as doctors, nurses, and so many other professionals have to learn as part of their licensing requirements.”

Sixth Dominant Topic: Jewish Texts

This topic is distinct from Jewish beliefs because Jewish texts have added strength to enforce social control (Valins, 2000) and direct the life of community members (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005). Though Jewish beliefs may be derived from Jewish texts, it is the texts that

make up Jewish law. Readers referred to or quoted Jewish texts, verses, or biblical commandments in 88, or 6.8% of all the comments in this study. Many comments began with the words “According to the Torah (Jewish Bible),” as the Torah is the lens with which everything in an Orthodox Jew’s life is framed. For example, readers discussed the Torah view on punishing Aron:

“And according to our torah we can not punish someone without witness and warning. It is up to god, not to us, to punish when there was no witness and warning.”

The Torah view on Aron’s confession was discussed and many readers commented that in Jewish court one cannot proclaim oneself to be a wicked person, saying:

“His confession has Zero value in a Jewish court.”

Readers also debated whether speaking negatively about Aron was permitted, as one of the biblical prohibitions known as ‘*lashon hara*’ (evil tongue) is speaking ill of another. However, one reader remarked:

“Loshan Horah (The prohibition of gossiping) applies to a human being. This is not the case here. We are talking about an animal who ripped up his prey in a cold blooded fashion.”

Verses that discuss every Jewish person’s portion in the World to Come were discussed as well. Orthodox Jews believe there is an afterlife where the righteous will reap their rewards and sinners will pay for their crimes. Readers wondered whether or not, because of his crime, Aron would merit a portion in the World to Come. As one reader said:

“All Jews have a chelek (portion) in olam haba (the World to Come), and he may do tshuva (repentance).”

Seventh Dominant Topic: Due Process

There were 87 comments that discussed due process, 6.7% of all the comments. Readers discussed due process in general and debated whether Aron should be afforded this right. Below are examples of the differing views readers had:

“Every suspect has the right to counsel. That is why we have laws in this country and not lynchings.”

“To all the preachers out there preaching about how monster Aron is entitled to a lawyer blah blah blah, innocent until proven guilty blah blah blah, the lawyers r just doing there job blah blah blah. BLAH BLAH BLAH! Nows NOT the time for that, that only pertains to cases within NORMAL range as is NOT with this case.”

Eighth Dominant Topic: Insanity Defence

This topic is distinct from the topic of Aron’s mental health, which was a main topic but not of the ten most dominant. The topic of Aron’s mental health discussed whether readers thought Aron had a mental illness. In this topic, however, readers speculated as to whether or not Aron should use an insanity defence, and it arose in 81, or 6.2% of all the comments in this study. They also discussed whether it would be appropriate for him to do so and gave reasons as to why he would:

“He will never be set free after what he did. His lawyers are going after an insanity plea because they feel he will be safer in a mental institution than in the prison system. That is probably the truth. I don't think anyone would deny the fact that he should be placed in a psychiatric facility. Only a crazy person would do what he did, normal people don't act that way.”

Readers also attempted to understand Aron’s not guilty plea and used an insanity defence to explain it:

“A defendant may plead not guilty to a 1st degree murder charge despite having confessed to the murder. He can do so by claiming insanity, (which he is obviously attempting in this case), or by asserting that his actions may rise only to a 2nd degree murder charge, and that he is therefore "innocent" of 1st degree murder. Essentially, he is denying the charges, not the actions.”

Ninth Dominant Topic: Media

Readers discussed media coverage of the case in 76, or 5.8 % of all the comments in this study. They discussed the accuracy of the reporting, media bias, censorship, and statements Levi Aron, the defence, and prosecution made to the media. Readers praised the way the websites in this study covered the story:

“I got to give it to YWN for covering this story with dignity and respect. This is a very tragic and painful story to all of us. All along you have given the coverage we needed without turning this into a tabloid.”

They discussed the interview given by an imprisoned Levi Aron to the Daily News:

“The press has just interfered. Every such publicity increases the risk that the prosecution will be unable to get a conviction, as a jury conviction could be challenged as tainted by the media reports. This case needs to be kept away from the media completely until trial.”

Comments were also made about Jews and the media. For example, one reader describes the comments about the case on a mainstream news website:

“I saw for myself last week. There are horrible comments on the CBS site in response to every article about the Kletzky tragedy. It appears that the CBS site is a gathering place for anti semites or anti chareidi (Orthodox) Jews. It was truly frightening to me.”

Though Aron self-identified as an Orthodox Jew and was called so by the media, readers were uncomfortable with his representation of Orthodox Judaism in the media:

“Some one should at least try to explain to the media that although he was jewish he was not observent. Some of the media outlets (cbs880 for example) made sure to say every time “the murder was also ohrtodox” and Savage said he was hasidic... I know u can't explain a goy (non-Jew) too much but at least we should try to minimize the wide brush that they paint us with.”

Tenth Dominant Topic: G-d

Readers talked about G-d in 67, or 5.1% of all the comments in this study. Many discussed the importance of not desecrating or shaming G-d. Readers often expressed that the

Kletzky's reaction to the murder of their son was a sanctification of G-d, as articles stated that they expressed their thanks to the officials and the public for their assistance.

In general, G-d's will is often invoked in the everyday language Orthodox Jews use such as prefacing expressions of future plans with the words 'G-d willing' and in responding to fears that Aron might get off with an insanity defence, one reader said:

"If by some chance he were to be freed then that too is what hashem (G-d) wants, just as he wanted Leibby near him."

Another reader expressed the view that G-d is the ultimate judge, saying:

"The problem is ppl are looking for 'justice' to the legal system rather than HKB'H (an acronym for the Holy One blessed be He)."

Many readers offered a prayer to G-d or asked others to pray to G-d in their comments:

"You have to pray that Hashem (G-d) guard over us and our children. This is a crazy story that happened because this was the will from above. That's the best security system we could have."

Prayers on behalf of Leiby's safe return, his soul, his family, and that the prosecution should be successful are examples of the types of prayers offered.

The above topics were the ten most dominant ones readers discussed in their comments. Other topics emerged from the data that were considered main topics together with the ten discussed above. Some examples include discussions about communal responsibility, the death penalty, molestation, and Aron's previous crimes (see Table 4.1). For a complete list and description of all 45 topics that arose, please see Appendix D. The division of the topics into themes will now be presented.

4.3 Themes:

After reviewing the list of all 45 topics that emerged from the data and accompanying comments, the individual topics were sorted into themes. The larger themes were further

categorized into main themes and sub-themes. Sorting the topics into themes made it easier to respond to the second research question, whether community members were united or divided in their discussions. Six themes were identified and they are: I) Levi Aron, II) the murder, III) the case, IV) punishment, V) preventative measures, and VI) Orthodox Judaism. The six themes, which include the 28 main topics listed above in Table 4.1, are presented and described below. The topics in these themes will be further explained in the analysis of whether readers were united or divided in their discussions, which appears in the next section.

Theme I. Levi Aron

This theme included the topics that discussed Levi Aron, the perpetrator of the crime. In discussing Aron, readers referred to him using derogatory terms and compared him to serial killers, discussed his family and mental health, and debated whether he lied to Leiby and/or the police. Readers also discussed Aron's involvement in secular society and whether he had committed crime prior to the murder.

Figure 4.1. Theme I. Levi Aron

<p><u>Topics:</u> Derogatory Classification; Aron's Family; Aron's Mental Health; Aron as Liar ; Secular Society; Aron's Previous Crimes.</p>

Theme II. The Murder

This theme included the topics about events leading up to the murder. Readers discussed whether Aron committed a federal crime when he took Leiby to the wedding in Monsey because he crossed state lines. They also discussed whether he and Leiby had known each other prior to the day Leiby went missing or if they had just met as the articles reported.

Figure 4.2. Theme II. The Murder

<p><u>Topics:</u> Federal Crime; Prior Knowledge.</p>

Theme III. The Case

Because it contained several topics about the case, this theme was divided into sub-themes which encompass the role of law enforcement, the court, and the media in the case.

The sub-theme Law Enforcement included topics discussing the role of the police in the investigation and in the community, why an Amber Alert was never issued, and how a civilian assisted the police in locating Aron.

The sub-theme Court included topics discussing Aron's lawyers. More specifically, readers expressed their opinions of the lawyer who quit and the new lawyer that was hired in his place. They discussed who was paying for the defence team. Readers also discussed Aron's rights and whether or not he deserved those rights to be upheld. The appropriateness of an insanity defence in this case was discussed as well.

The sub-theme Media included all comments about media coverage of the case. As noted above, readers discussed the accuracy of the reporting, media bias, censorship, and statements Levi Aron, the defence, and prosecution made to the media. Comments were also made about Jews and the media.

Figure 4.3. Theme III. The Case

Law Enforcement Topics: Police; Amber Alert; Civilian Search.

Court Topics: Defence Team; Due Process; Insanity Defence.

Media Topic: Media.

Theme IV. Punishment

Topics in this theme were about punishing Levi Aron. Readers discussed the death penalty and whether Aron was deserving of this form of punishment. They also engaged in a

discussion about exacting vigilante justice on Aron, and whether or not it would be appropriate to do so.

Figure 4.4. Theme IV. Punishment

Topics: Death Penalty; Vigilantism.

Theme V. Preventative Measures

This theme included topics discussing ways to prevent such a crime from reoccurring. As noted above, readers discussed various ways to keep their children safe and whether children should be given cell phones for safety purposes. The topic of cell phones arose because several articles discussed a ban that New York Mayor Bloomberg imposed on children having cell phones in schools. Furthermore, Stanley Patz, the father of Etan Patz, a 6-year-old boy who disappeared in 1979 and was never found, suggested that every child be provided with an emergency cell phone which could be known as Leiby's phone.

Figure 4.5. Theme V. Preventative Measures

Topics: Children's Safety; Cell Phones.

Theme VI. Orthodox Judaism

The unique nature of this crime was that it was committed by an Orthodox Jew against another Orthodox Jew. In attempting to understand Orthodox Jewish community members' reactions to the murder, the data for this study were drawn from two Orthodox Jewish news websites. It is therefore understandable that the theme 'Orthodox Judaism' was large and was divided into sub-themes to better understand the topics readers discussed in relation to their

religious affiliation and that of the victim and perpetrator. This theme included all the topics that were relevant to Orthodox Judaism.

The sub-theme Judaism included the topic of Jewish Beliefs, which discussed beliefs that are important to Judaism and how readers conceived of these beliefs in relation to the case.

The sub-theme Community included topics discussing issues that affect the Orthodox Jewish community and about the community in general. Topics about the community's involvement in the crime, how the community responds to sex crimes, and whether this was an issue in this case were raised as well. It also included the topic of one community member's response to the crime whose name is Lipa Schmeltzer.

The sub-theme Authority included topics discussing various types of authority that are significant to the Orthodox Jewish community and how these authorities are perceived in light of the murder. The specific authorities discussed were Jewish texts, G-d, Shomrim, the community's volunteer patrol organization, and rabbis.

Figure 4.6. Theme VI. Orthodox Judaism

Judaism Topic: Jewish Beliefs.

Community Topics: Orthodox Jewish Community;
Communal Responsibility; Molestation; Lipa.

Authority Topics: Jewish Texts; G-d; Shomrim; Rabbis.

In sum, the themes that arose from the main topics were about the perpetrator of the crime, the case itself including the murder and Aron's punishment, approaches to keeping the community safe, and reflections on Orthodox Judaism.

4.4 Communal Unity and Division:

To answer the question of whether readers were united or divided in their discussions, I examined the relevant topics that allowed for this kind of analysis. For example, the topic ‘prison’ did not allow for this kind of analysis as readers speculated as to what would happen to Aron in prison but did not debate anything in particular. By contrast, in discussing ‘Aron’s previous crimes,’ readers debated whether or not Leiby was Aron’s first victim and therefore this topic was analyzed for unity and division. After reading the comments in the topics presented below, I posed a yes or no question based on what readers were saying about each topic. I analyzed each for unity and division by calculating the affirmative and negative comments that were relevant to the question I posed. For example, the topic ‘Aron’s family’ included 46 comments; however, only 26 of these comments were relevant to the question of whether or not readers supported the family. The other comments were general comments about the Aron family: “*They seemed to never make ends meet & chaotic.*” Therefore, only the 26 comments that were relevant to the question posed were analyzed for unity and division.

Below is an analysis of the themes and topics that united and divided readers. The results regarding unity and division for the topics in each theme will be presented first, followed by the results for the overall theme. Topics that united readers will be discussed first, followed by the topics that divided them. Excerpts of the comments are included to demonstrate how readers coincided or differed on the topics. The final conclusion of unity or division was based on a two-thirds rule, meaning if two-thirds (67%) or more of the readers on a given topic felt the same way I concluded that they were united. If less than two-thirds of readers felt the same way I concluded that they were divided. I noted the times when the threshold for unity was missed by just a few points.

Theme I. Levi Aron:

This theme included the topics that discussed Levi Aron, the perpetrator of the crime.

Aron's Mental Health:

Table 4.2. Aron's Mental Health

Question	Yes	No
Was Aron mentally ill or insane?	21	6
27/43 relevant comments	78%	22%

Articles reported that Aron drugged Leiby with several antipsychotic medications before killing him and that his lawyers claimed he hears voices. In the comments, readers wondered whether Aron was seeing a psychiatrist prior to the murder. They also discussed whether Aron was mentally ill or insane (terms which were used synonymously) or in his right mind. In debating this issue, 78% of readers believed that he was mentally ill or insane, while 22% did not. Therefore, readers were united on the issue of Aron's mental health.

Many readers were sure Aron was mentally ill and expressed this in their comments:

"He hacked another human being to pieces. If that isnt insane, I dont know what is."

"Someone that's psychotic and out of touch with reality is not thinking about what the consequences of his actions are."

"rememberer we are trying to get into the mind of an 8 year old and what one thinks the mind of someone who is mentally ill"

Aron as Liar:

Table 4.3. Aron as Liar

Question	Yes	No
Did Aron lie?	23	4
27/27 relevant comments	85%	15%

Readers discussed whether Aron’s statements, either to Leiby or the police, were untruthful. Regarding whether or not Aron lied, 85% of readers felt that he did, while 15% did not. Therefore, readers were united in their belief that Aron was not truthful.

As one reader said about Aron’s confession:

“all lies!!even if he would have taken him he could have run away. he for sure killed him that night.”

Several readers believed Aron was lying so he would not have to admit to abusing Leiby before murdering him:

“C’mon, people. Do you really believe any of that drivel? He took Leiby, hyd (may G-d avenge his blood), straight to his apartment, abused him and then smothered him. The rest is all rubbish.”

Readers were also unhappy with how Leiby was being portrayed by what they thought of as Aron’s lies. Readers found it hard to believe that after asking Aron for directions, Leiby voluntarily went with Aron to a wedding and stayed at his house overnight without calling his parents:

“Why is he making Leiby out to be a stupid kid that doesn’t know where he wants to go? He knew he had a doctor’s appointment and that is where he was supposed to go, to meet his mother. Isn’t it enough that he tortured and killed him? Does he have to lie about it too?”

Aron’s Family:

Table 4.4. Aron’s Family

Question	Yes	No
Did readers support Aron’s family?	12	14
26/46 relevant comments	46%	54%

Readers discussed the Aron family, especially whether or not they should be paying for Aron’s lawyers. They also discussed whether they blamed the family for Aron’s crimes. In responding to whether readers supported the Aron family, results showed that 46% of readers

supported them, while 54% did not. Therefore, readers were almost evenly divided in their views on the Aron family, and more specifically whether or not they are liable for, or less worthy because of, Aron’s crime.

In an exchange between two readers, one invoked a passage from a Jewish text, the Talmud, as evidence that the Aron family is evil:

“If you would bother learning the Talmud you would see that G-D brings good through the good and evil through the evil. To bring to this world such a miserable monster means that there is something wrong with them. Sorry but those are the facts.”

Another blamed the family for paying for the lawyers:

“I am Shocked that the family has hires an attorney to defend this monster. They should take this money and place it into the Leiby Kletzky fund to help other children. The family is alo to be blamed for this. They are helping their Butcher.”

However, others felt it was wrong to blame or malign the Aron family for Levi Aron’s actions:

“Levi Aron's parents no more asked for a murderer for a son, then did the Kletzky parents ask for their son to be murdered.”

“I do think people should remember that parents and other relatives did not cause this man to do this heinous act. They should not be vilified and hurt further. They already have to live with the shame of being related to this scum.”

Secular Society:

Table 4.5. Secular Society

Question	Yes	No
Did Aron’s involvement in the secular world contribute to his crime?	5 42%	7 58%
12/13 relevant comments		

Readers discussed whether Aron’s involvement in secular society influenced him to commit this crime. Comments focused on his Facebook page and the celebrities and television shows that he followed. Of all readers who discussed this issue, 42% felt that secular society was influential to him committing the murder, while 58% did not. Therefore, readers were divided in thinking that Aron’s involvement in secular society contributed to his crime.

One reader explains how Aron may have become desensitized to murder through movies and therefore committed the crime:

“Imho. The path that led to this despicable act, is the continuous and excessive accessing of movies of people being murdered and dismembered, thus becoming desensitized to it.”

However, other readers were adamant that secular society had nothing to do with Aron’s actions.

“please explain to me where in secular society is it ok to suffocate and dismember a 8 tr old boy, please stop with this nonsense that he was influenced by secular society, he wasnt influenced by anything other than his sick twisted mind.”

Aron’s Previous Crimes:

Table 4.6. Aron’s Previous Crimes

Question	Yes	No
Was this Aron’s first crime?	3	5
8/8 relevant comments	37.5%	62.5%

During the investigation, boxes of children’s clothing were removed from Aron’s home and readers speculated as to whether or not Aron had previously committed criminal acts or if Leiby was his first victim. In debating this issue, 37.5% of readers felt that Aron had previously committed crime, while 62.5% did not. Therefore, readers were divided in thinking that Aron had previously committed crimes. They were more united, however, in thinking that Leiby was his first victim.

As one reader said, *“This could not have been Aron’s debut into abuse.”*

This sentiment was echoed by another reader:

“Police have uncovered boxes of children’s clothing from the crime scene. It is my guess that the perpetrator planned a kidnapping long ago, hence the clothing. Maybe he was planning to disappear with his victim... In any case, the killer seemed very well versed in what he was doing.”

Another reader claimed Aron was known in the community as someone who had attempted abducting beforehand:

“At least two other parents knew about this killer. They failed to notify the police which is something any parent outside the Orthodox community would have done! Will we continue to protect child predators?! Probably.....”

Some, however, were not so sure that Aron had ever offended before:

“Clothing in an attic may or may not be indicative of Aron’s having prior victims. People store old stuff in attics and basements, and clothing is certainly high on the list of stuff that’s packed away. Remember, Aron had a sibling who died earlier. The clothing could have belong to that child. Conceivably, the clothing could have even belonged to Aron when he was a boy. File this under “Interesting, but not definitive.”

Overall, the analysis of whether readers were united or divided in their discussions about Levi Aron yielded mixed results. Readers were united in thinking that Aron had mental health issues and that he had been dishonest. They were divided in their discussions about his family, the effect secular society had on his commission of the crime, and whether he had committed crime before.

Theme II. The Murder:

Prior Knowledge:

Table 4.7. Prior Knowledge

Question	Yes	No
Did Aron and Kletzky know each other before the day Leiby went missing?	15 75%	5 25%
20/23 relevant comments		

Readers wondered whether Aron and Leiby had known each other prior to the day Leiby went missing. Video footage showed Leiby following Aron, and articles reported that after Leiby asked Aron for directions, he waited for Aron to pay a medical bill, went with him to a wedding, and stayed in his apartment overnight and the following day while Aron went to work. Some readers believed that Leiby’s behaviour implied prior knowledge. In debating the issue of prior knowledge, 75% of readers believed Aron and Leiby knew each other beforehand, while 25% did not. Therefore, readers were united on this topic.

One reader believed that Leiby was waiting for Aron and did not get lost:

“It’s almost obvious from the previous video which leads into this new video that the child KNEW this man and was actually WAITING for him...”

Readers believed that Leiby’s behaviour showed he knew Aron and was therefore unafraid:

“Because Leiby (a”h) (may he rest in peace), for some unknown reason did not feel threatened. As horrible as the outcome turned out to be, it appears that the little boy did know his killer.”

Others felt there was a deliberate attempt to cover up the fact that Leiby and Aron knew each other:

“The Conspiracy” is the LIE to say that “he got lost”. All the evidence so far points clearly to show that he never got lost and he knew exactly why he came to that corner and he knew exactly why he was waiting there and he knew for whom he was waiting and that they knew each other very well before that fateful evening.”

Federal Crime:

Table 4.8. Federal Crime

Question	Yes	No
Did Aron commit a federal crime?	12	7
19/26 relevant comments	63%	37%

Readers debated whether or not Aron had committed a federal crime in the course of the acts that led up to the murder. This is because on the day Leiby was reported missing, Aron took him to a wedding in Monsey, which according to some readers involved crossing state lines. Readers debated whether he should be charged with the Federal Kidnapping Act in which it is a federal crime to cross state lines with a kidnapping victim (Theoharis, 1998). This would allow the federal authorities to intervene. Regarding whether Aron committed a federal crime, 63% of readers felt that he did, while 37% did not. Therefore, readers were divided on this topic. However, most were united in thinking that a federal crime was committed when Aron took Leiby to a wedding in Monsey.

For some readers this issue was clear-cut:

“ If he was definitely at the monsey wedding, and left Leiby in the car; he likely took the George Washington bridge and Palisades, which would mean he was in NJ with Leiby, and should qualify as a multi-state kidnapping crime, and he should be tried in federal court..... ”

However, other readers explained that the federal government would not get involved:

“No, the Feds would not have jurisdiction over this case. Kidnapping and murder occurred inside NYS. The suspect never drove the victim outside the state and thus no interstate crime of kidnapping occurred for Feds to have jurisdiction over the case.”

Overall, the analysis of whether readers were united or divided in their discussions about the murder yielded mixed results. Readers were united in their beliefs that Aron and Leiby had been familiar with each other and were divided in thinking that Aron committed a federal crime.

Theme III. The Case: Law Enforcement; Court; Media

In this theme readers discussed the role of law enforcement in the case, Aron's involvement with the court system, and media coverage of the case.

Law Enforcement - Police:

Table 4.9. Police

Question	Yes	No
Did the police do a good job in this case?	6 26%	17 74%
23/50 relevant comments		

Readers discussed the role of law enforcement in the case. More specifically, they discussed how the police handled the investigation. In debating whether the police did a good job in the Kletzky case, 26% of readers believed they did, while 74% did not. Therefore, readers were united in thinking that the police did not do a good job.

Most readers believed that the police did not handle the case well and that Shomrim, the community patrol group, did a much better job.

“They did nothing when they WERE called - until Shomrim did their detective work for them! If they were called four hours earlier, they would have sat on their hands longer.”

Some readers felt that the police should have been called as soon as Leiby was missing:

“The shomrin are great but the police has massive remorse and data basis that shomrin do not have. In addition it seems the police were called 4 hours after the shomrin were notified. A big mistake.”

Readers also discussed what role the police should play within the community.

“It’s about time for the Jewish community as a whole to begin going to the police, and turning in suspected child molesters, including those with RABBINIC TITLES.”

Law Enforcement: Civilian Search:

Table 4.10. Civilian Search

Question	Yes	No
Did Yaakov German do a good thing in assisting the police?	14 93%	1 7%
15/24 relevant comments		

Articles about an Orthodox Jewish man named Yaakov German, who assisted the police in locating Aron, elicited comments about his efforts. In discussing Mr. German’s assistance to the police, 93% of readers agreed that he did a good thing, while 7% did not. Therefore, readers were united in their positive views about the civilian who assisted police in locating Aron.

In praising Mr. German, one reader said:

“I really hope he'll get the reward but the mitzvah (good deed) -HE GOT!! -Lieby got a kevura (burial) thx to him- 24 hours later.”

Readers also contrasted the actions of this man with the failure of the police. Indeed, the following comment refers to him as holy:

“how come the cops couldnt do what this Heilege (holy) Man did???”

Court: Due Process:

Table 4.11. Due Process

Question	Yes	No
Does Aron deserve due process?	49 83%	10 17%
59/87 relevant comments		

In debating whether Aron should be afforded due process, 83% of readers felt that he should, while 17% did not. Therefore, readers were united in thinking that Aron’s rights should be upheld. The following two excerpts demonstrate this sentiment:

“we live in a free country which has a justice system, everyone even the worst criminal has rights, constitutional rights. as bad as levi aron's acts are, he has rights that need to be defended! he is an american citizen and deserves to be tried fairly for his crimes!”

“Every suspect has the right to counsel. That is why we have laws in this country and not lynchings.”

Media:

Table 4.12. Media

Question	Yes	No
Should the media censor what they print?	24 80%	6 20%
30/76 relevant comments		

In discussing media coverage of the case, readers discussed whether the media should censor what it prints. Comments were about sparing the Kletzky family from the details of the murder of their son and about not glorifying the murder or the murderer. In debating media censorship, 80% of readers felt the media should censor what it prints, while 20% did not. Therefore, readers were united in thinking that the media should censor its published materials.

For example, many readers did not want YWN and VIN to post pictures of Levi Aron to accompany the articles they published.

“Why does YWN have to put up the photo of this terrible Achzor (cruel person) and Rosho (wicked man) every time they write about him ???! We don’t want to look at his face! Osur l’histakel bifney Rosho (It is forbidden to look at the face of a wicked person)”

Readers requested that the websites pay less attention to Aron:

“I think we had enough of these articles. Please VIN..... Stop it already. Only let us know when Levi Aron gets the 100 years behind bars. Otherwise we’ve heard enough!!!!”

Another explained that in writing about the details of the crime, the Kletzky family would be traumatized:

“Emphasis was placed on telling the family the gruesome details about this tragedy. However, the choice of words in every article doesn’t indicate so. (carved up, butchered...) Eventually and naturally the family will get a hold of all these articles. Anything can be done to avoid more trauma?”

Law Enforcement - Amber Alert:

Table 4.13. Amber Alert

Question	Yes	No
Should an Amber Alert have been issued?	7 37%	12 63%
19/25 relevant comments		

The topics of Police and Amber Alert are related because some readers wondered why the police did not issue an Amber Alert while Leiby was missing. They believed this could have helped locate Leiby before he was murdered. In debating whether an Amber Alert should have been issued, 37% of readers felt that it should have been, while 63% understood and agreed with the fact that it was not. Therefore, readers were divided in their discussions about the failure to call an Amber Alert. However, they were more united in thinking that the police were correct in not issuing one when Leiby was missing.

Some readers understood why and agreed with the fact that no Amber Alert was issued as the case did not meet the criteria for issuing one:

“Amber Alert was not issued because they did not have sufficient evidence that an abduction had occurred until it was too late.”

However, other readers felt not calling an Amber Alert was a failure on the part of the police:

“Had there been an amber alert warning by 6.30pm Leiby would’ve been found and hopefully saved and aron arrested.”

Based on these results, readers were more understanding of the fact that an Amber Alert was not issued than they were in thinking that the police did a good job on this case.

Court - Defence Team:

Table 4.14. Defence Team

Question	Yes	No
Did readers support Aron's defence team?	55 49%	57 51%
112/240 relevant comments		

As discussed above, the Defence Team topic elicited the most comments. In relaying their opinions about Aron's lawyers, 49% of readers expressed support, while 51% did not. Therefore, readers were almost evenly divided in discussions about supporting the defence team.

Several readers were upset about the way other readers were talking about the defence lawyers:

"does the entire jewish population realize what kind of chilul hashem (desecration of G-d's name) is taking place? the way everybody is talking about levi aron and his lawyers? no one, even his lawyers, will deny that he did the unthinkable, the most horrible acts a man can do, but what does anyone stand to gain by the way everyone is cursing him out? why is everyone praising the lawyer that dropped out making him such a hero? why is everyone cursing out his new lawyer?"

"Disparaging remarks from this person about the defense attorneys are inappropriate. Defense lawyers have a duty to defend their client."

Other readers made disapproving remarks about the lawyers and the reasons they took the Aron case:

"These two clowns just took this case to build up their own personal experience. They couldn't care less if they lose the case big time. They're in it for themselves."

Not only did readers express hope that the lawyers would not succeed in defending Aron, but they also hoped for the end of their careers:

"Ms. McCann, yemach shema v'zichra (may her name be obliterated), let's hope you see it through till very bitter end, when you watch your case failing in front of your very eyes, and your entire career ruined. Amen."

While readers were united in thinking that Aron should be afforded due process (see Table 4.11), they were divided in their support of the defence team.

Court - Insanity Defence:

Table 4.15. Insanity Defence

Question	Yes	No
Would an insanity defence be appropriate?	12 38%	20 63%
32/81 relevant comments		

Readers speculated as to whether Aron would use an insanity defence in court. This was especially so after a lawyer with insanity defence experience was hired to defend him after the original lawyer quit. In debating the appropriateness of an insanity defence, 38% of readers felt it should be used, while 63% did not. Therefore, readers were divided on this issue. However, more were united in thinking that an insanity defence would be inappropriate.

Some explained why an insanity defence would make the most sense:

“He will never be set free after what he did. His lawyers are going after an insanity plea because they feel he will be safer in a mental institution than in the prison system. That is probably the truth. I don't think anyone would deny the fact that he should be placed in a psychiatric facility. Only a crazy person would do what he did, normal people don't act that way.”

But many readers disagreed and offered several reasons to support their belief that the insanity defence would be inappropriate, such as the amount of time Leiby was with Aron, Aron’s efforts to hide the body, and the drugs found in the boy’s system. These can be seen in the following comments:

“I'm disappointed that the family of the butcher hired a lawyer to make the case that he is insane. EVERY murderer is insane. This little boy was lying for 12 hours in your house, bound in a captive position and expecting his gruesome death. This wasn't an act of panic. This monster was planing it for hours and hours.”

“Proof he is not legally insane is by the fact that he worked very long and very hard and in very great meticulous detail to cover his tracks after the Murder. The legal criteria for him to get 'off the hook', as legally insane, would require that he did not appreciate that there was anything wrong with his murdering a child. But if he felt there was nothing wrong with what he did he would not hide it afterwards, so meticulously.”

“it was premeditated murder, since they found sedating drugs in his system. levi aron know what he was doing, i dont see how he can plead insanity.”

Interestingly, while readers were united in thinking that Aron had mental health issues (see Table 4.2 above), they were divided about the appropriateness of using an insanity defence.

Overall, the analysis of whether readers were united or divided in their discussions about the case again yielded mixed results. Readers were united in their opinion in their views on the police, the civilian’s search, united in talks about due process, and united in their views about how the media should cover this case. They were divided in discussions about the need for an Amber Alert, their views about the defence team, and the use of an insanity defence.

Theme IV. Punishment:

The time period in which the comments analyzed in this study were made precedes Aron’s sentencing and therefore, the comments about punishment discuss what readers think or hope will happen to Aron.

Death Penalty:

Table 4.16. Death Penalty

Question	Yes	No
Does Aron deserve the death penalty?	18	5
23/40 relevant comments	78%	22%

Although the state of New York does not practice capital punishment, readers discussed the death penalty and whether or not Aron deserves this form of punishment. Readers discussed this topic when they debated whether or not Aron committed a federal crime. Comments were

also made about how the death penalty is viewed in Jewish law. In debating whether or not Aron was deserving of the death penalty, 78% of readers felt that he was, while 22% did not.

Therefore, readers were united in believing that Aron deserved the death penalty.

In explaining why the death penalty is appropriate, one reader wrote:

“People are for the death penalty because there should be zero tolerance for murder. Murdering the murderer is the ONLY proven method by countries that effectively carry out the death penalty, to show zero tolerance for murder and effectively lower the murder rate.”

Another explained that paying to keep Aron alive is not a good idea:

“There is no rehabilitation for a person such as this, there is only the deserved consequence of death, however it may come. And it should come more often than it does in this country. Paying to keep a person such as this alive is madness.”

The following reader believed that Aron deserved the death penalty because he was wicked:

“there is a difference between a meshugener (crazy person) and a roshein haloche (wicked person). a nut dos or inflickts damage to himself. a roshe (wicked person) does it to others. the authorities should and must ask for the death penalty for this man. a meshugener (crazy person) must be protected by society, a roshe (wicked person) must be put to death.”

Though readers were divided in thinking that Aron committed a federal crime (see Table 4.8), they were united in thinking that he deserved the death penalty.

Vigilantism:

Table 4.17. Vigilantism

Question	Yes	No
Is it appropriate to exact vigilante justice on Aron?	16 64%	9 36%
25/27 relevant comments		

As previously mentioned, readers framed many of their discussions with reference to the Torah, and although vigilante justice is not appropriate in this context, this topic was nonetheless

discussed. In talking about exacting vigilante justice on Aron, 64% of readers expressed a desire to do so, while 36% felt it would be inappropriate. Therefore, readers were technically divided in their desire to see Aron punished with vigilante justice according to the threshold used in this study. Nonetheless, the majority were united in thinking that vigilante justice would be appropriate.

Some wanted Aron to be treated the same way he treated Leiby:

“Do the same to him from the tuna sandwich to cutting him up and placing him in a suit case in to the dumpster -good riddance -no mental institution for him -dumster will be just fine.”

Others felt it was inappropriate for Jews to be vengeful:

“still it is not at all befitting of klal yisroel (the Jewish people) to be so vengeful and enthusiastically awaiting revenge. Spewing hate and nastiness and stooping to writing so many ugly statements.”

Overall, the analysis of whether readers were united or divided in their discussions about punishment yielded mixed results. Readers were united in thinking that Aron deserved the death penalty but divided in discussions about vigilante justice.

Theme V. Preventative Measures:

In discussing preventative measures, readers discussed ways to prevent such a crime from reoccurring. In this theme, only the topic of cell phones allowed for an analysis of whether readers were united or divided in their discussions.

Cell Phones:

Table 4.18. Cell Phones

Question	Yes	No
Should children be given cell phones for safety purposes?	19 70%	8 30%
27/50 relevant comments		

Readers’ discussions on whether or not children should have cell phones were related to articles about New York Mayor Bloomberg upholding his cell phone ban in schools despite what happened to Leiby. Comments about cell phones were also related to articles in which Stanley Patz suggested giving all children an emergency-only cell phone. In debating whether children should be given cell phones, 70% of readers felt that they should, while 30% did not. Therefore, readers were united in thinking that children should be allowed to have cell phones.

The majority of readers disagreed with the cell phone ban Mayor Bloomberg implemented and agreed with Stanley Patz’s suggestions that children should carry emergency phones which could be known as ‘the Leiby Phone’.

“The Leiby Phone that would have the potential of saving other children is a great way to celebrate the memory of the brave little boy who was too trusting.”

Readers also discussed various types of emergency phones, Orthodox Jewish schools’ attitudes towards phones, and kosher phones which are phones that cannot access the Internet.

“EVERY child should have a Kosher phone with Shomrim, parents & 911 numbers only.”

Theme VI. Orthodox Judaism:

This theme included the topics that were about Judaism, the Orthodox Jewish community, and various forms of authority relevant to Orthodox Judaism.

Community - Communal Responsibility:

Table 4.19. Communal Responsibility

Question	Yes	No
Is the community responsible for the murder of Leiby Kletzky?	43 81%	10 19%
53/53 relevant comments		

Readers discussed whether or not the community was responsible for Leiby's murder or Aron's descent into crime. They also discussed the lessons the community could take away from what happened. In debating their responsibility, 81% of readers felt the community was responsible, while 19% did not. Therefore, readers were united in their belief that the community was somehow responsible for what happened to Leiby.

Some referred to the crime as a 'wake-up call' saying, "*Leiby we miss you and wish you did not have to be the one to wake us all up.*"

One reader blamed the general community for treating Aron like an outcast:

"Just goes to show who's to blame! IT'S US RABOSAI (my friends)! we werent dan l'kaf zchus (giving the benefit of the doubt) enough. He wouldnt've felt like such an outcast! OY VEY (oh no)! Can we say yadeinu lo shofchu et hadam hazeh (our hands did not spill this blood)! I'm referring to all of us, we all occasionally hurt someone meaningful of non meaningful. eitherway, this yiddish (Jewish) soul was lost!"

Others discussed the way the community addresses mental health issues as one of the failings in this case:

"There is an intolerably tremendous number of individuals in the frum (religious) community who are mentally ill. We have few resources for dealing with the most severe cases within the community and refuse to look for them in non-frum (non-religious) or non-Jewish settings. Those of us who at least see the problem may daven (pray) for these individuals but fail to do our histadlus (effort/part), ie, admitting the person needs treatment and finding appropriate help for them."

One reader was more specific in what lesson could be learned from the crime:

"How do we prevent this from happening again? What steps can we take, what knowledge do we need to identify someone ready to kill. I've been reading articles on how to identify a psycopath. Maybe if we can learn to spot troubled people we can do something or at least stay away ??"

Community – Lipa:

Table 4.20. Lipa

Question	Yes	No
Did Lipa do a good thing in writing a song about Leiby?	9 90%	1 10%
10/12 relevant comments		

The discussion about Lipa was about one community member’s response to the crime. Lipa is an Orthodox Jewish singer and songwriter who wrote a song in Leiby’s memory. Readers discussed this as well as comments Mr. Kletzky made about how the song helped him cope with his grief. In discussing whether Lipa’s actions were positive, 90% of readers felt that they were, while 10% did not. Therefore, readers were united in their positive opinion about Lipa and his song.

As readers explained:

“It is a beautiful cd with a beautiful message. Leiby's memory should forever stay in all our hearts. It also is trying to spread the message of unity and achdus (unity) which we all need today.”

“So I think the song here was a beautiful gesture & I'm glad it brought Leiby's father at least a little bit of comfort.”

Authority – Shomrim:

Table 4.21. Shomrim

Question	Yes	No
Is Shomrim a positive organization for the community?	9 82%	2 18%
11/15 relevant comments		

Readers discussed Shomrim, the community’s volunteer civilian patrol group. When Leiby was missing, Shomrim was called several hours before the police were contacted and

readers discussed their role in the search. In discussing the Shomrim organization, 82% of readers felt they are a positive organization for the community, while 18% did not. Therefore, readers were united in their positive views about Shomrim and the service they provide for the community.

Some readers justified calling Shomrim before the police:

“Shomrim can and were able to round up the resources that the police could not as far as man power and territorial knowledge. ... Apparently the parents did the correct thing in this instance because it was Shomrim who found first found anything of substance, which they were able to provide the NYPD.”

Another reader responded to a comment that was critical of Shomrim suggesting that

Aron was known to Shomrim and on a list of suspected pedophiles they keep:

“Aron Moster was NOT known to shomrim! and THANKS to shomrim this Aron Monster got caught! Police wouldv waited 24 hours to start this kind of search and who knows how long to find that tape that lead to the arrest! stop Hating Shomrim! give credit where credit is due!”

Readers also suggested that children turn to Shomrim to keep them safe:

“Rather, we must tell our kids that when you are lost you should go into a store that has customers inside and tell the store owner that you are lost and that you need to call shomrim.”

Others expressed the belief that combining the efforts of Shomrim and the police would yield the best results in cases like the Kletzky murder:

“in cases like this or similar call both the shomrin and the police, need to be called. Together they are stronger. The shorim can do what the police cannot do like more trust from the community or bringing massive volunteers. The police have massive resources, access to data basis and so on.”

Authority – Rabbis:

Table 4.22. Rabbis

Question	Yes	No
Do rabbis protect abusers?	11	4
15/28 relevant comments	73%	27%

Readers discussed rabbis and their role in the Orthodox Jewish community. More specifically, readers discussed rabbis' approach in cases of molestation in the community as many community members turn to rabbis in such cases. A little over half of the comments about rabbis were also about molestation. In discussing whether rabbis protect pedophiles in the community, 73% of readers felt that they do, while 27% did not. Therefore, readers were united in believing that rabbis protect pedophiles and that turning to rabbis about molestation is unwise. The majority of readers discussing this felt that rabbis do protect abusers as can be seen in the following comment:

“The worst thing a school can do in a suspected molestation case is to go to so called rabbis first because the Chazaka (established fact) is that doing so is the surest way to make sure that the evidence will be suppressed, discredited and dismissed and swept under the rug especially if the publicity could cause embarrassment to some high profile respected member of the community or someone of such a family.”

Readers also discussed the reasons people do not go to the authorities in cases of molestation. One is the prohibition of *mesira*, in which Jews are not allowed to report other Jews to the authorities. Another reason is because of how rabbis treat those who do. In explaining why a woman who claimed that Aron attempted to abduct her child never reported this to the police, which was discussed above regarding previous crimes, one reader wrote:

“She chose not to, and I think we all have to ask where that attitude comes from. you answer the question the fear of mesira (being an informant) and from powers rebbies (rabbis) who have and threaten people who say they will go to the police.”

Community – Molestation:

Table 4.23. Molestation

Question	Yes	No
Was Leiby molested before being murdered?	9 56%	7 44%
16/44 relevant comments		

Readers discussed how molestation cases are handled in the community. They also speculated as to whether or not Leiby was molested by Aron, and 56% of readers felt that he was, while 44% did not. Therefore, readers were divided in thinking that Aron had molested Leiby.

Some readers were positive that Aron had molested the boy and that was why he murdered him:

“I believe the monster desperately doesn't want people to know that he took Leiby in order to sexually abuse him. There are people who would prefer to be known as murderers than pedophiles.”

Others did not understand why readers were discussing molestation as there did not appear to be a link between molestation and the murder:

“What did Leiby's case have to do with child molesting?”

One reader argued that though molestation is an important issue, it is not relevant to this case:

“Enough with this molestation molestation molestation nobody was molested here. This is an important issue but does not have to be plugged in in each story.”

It was clear from the comments that many readers found the Orthodox Jewish community's reporting practices of such crimes, or lack thereof, problematic. Many comments emphasized the importance of reporting instances of molestation to police and not to rabbis. As one reader wrote:

“Therefore the most constructive thing we can all do is put the positive and constructive pressure on all the Yeshivos (Jewish schools) to change their long standing policy of not reporting suspected abuse, directly to Police before going first to anyone else.”

Overall, the analysis of whether readers were united or divided in their discussions about Orthodox Judaism yielded mixed results. Readers were united in thinking that the community was responsible for the murder, united in positive views about Lipa, the Orthodox Jewish singer, as well as in thinking well of Shomrim, the volunteer community patrol organization, and in their

discussions about rabbis. They were divided in thinking that Leiby had been molested prior to his murder which was discussed in relation to how abuse cases are handled within the community.

4.5 Summary:

To summarize, after analyzing the 1303 comments readers posted following articles about the murder, 45 topics emerged from the data (see Appendix D for a complete list and brief explanation of all of the topics). This chapter has outlined the 28 main topics that emerged and discussed the ten most dominant topics at length. Excerpts for the most dominant topics were provided to help illustrate the context of these comments. The chapter outlined how the main topics were divided into six themes. Finally, the results of whether these topics and themes united or divided readers were presented. This includes some of the ten most dominant topics and each of the 18 remaining main topics (see Table 4.24 below). Excerpts from the comments posted were used in an attempt to understand readers' stance on the various discussions.

In regards to communal unity and division, none of the topics discussed by readers engendered complete unity or division. Instead, there was variation in each topic and each theme. Overall, readers were united in thinking that a) Aron had mental health issues, b) that he lied, c) that Aron and Leiby knew each other prior to the day Leiby went missing, d) that the police did not a good job, e) that Yaakov German's assistance to the police was well done, f) that Aron deserved due process, g) that the media should censor what it prints, h) that Aron should be punished with the death penalty, i) that children should be provided with cell phones, j) that the community is responsible for the murder, k) that Lipa did a good thing in writing Leiby Forever, l) that Shomrim is a good organization, and m) that rabbis protect pedophiles within the community.

Readers were divided about a) their views on the Aron family, b) whether Aron’s involvement in secular society contributed to his crime, c) whether Leiby was Aron’s first victim, d) whether Aron committed a federal crime, e) about the use of an Amber Alert, f) how they viewed Aron’s lawyers, g) whether an insanity defence should be used, h) that vigilante justice would be appropriate, and i) that Leiby was molested before being murdered.

The final chapter will discuss the results that were presented here and offer a more detailed interpretation of the findings.

Table 4.24. Indicators of Communal Unity and Division

28 Main Topics:	United or Divided:	Table Location:
Defence Team	Divided	Table 4.14
Derogatory Classification	N/A	N/A
Orthodox Jewish Community	N/A	N/A
Jewish Beliefs	N/A	N/A
Children’s Safety	N/A	N/A
Jewish Texts	N/A	N/A
Due Process	United	Table 4.11
Insanity Defence	Divided	Table 4.15
Media	United	Table 4.12
G-d	N/A	N/A
Communal Responsibility	United	Table 4.19
Cell Phones	United	Table 4.18
Police	United	Table 4.9
Aron’s Family	Divided	Table 4.4
Molestation	Divided	Table 4.23
Aron’s Mental Health	United	Table 4.2
Death Penalty	United	Table 4.16
Rabbis	United	Table 4.22
Vigilantism	Divided	Table 4.17
Aron as Liar	United	Table 4.3
Federal Crime	Divided	Table 4.8
Amber Alert	Divided	Table 4.13
Civilian Search	United	Table 4.10
Prior Knowledge	United	Table 4.7
Shomrim	United	Table 4.21
Secular Society	Divided	Table 4.5
Lipa	United	Table 4.20
Aron’s Previous Crimes	Divided	Table 4.6

Chapter 5. Discussion & Conclusion

5.1 Discussion:

The research findings presented here are concerned with understanding the way in which the Orthodox Jewish community perceived a recent crime. More specifically, the focus is on better understanding how crime impacted one insular community with reference to online media coverage of the event in the first six weeks, and the comments posted in response to that coverage. Drawing from prior research work on the effects of crime on and in insular communities, the study used qualitative analysis to answer two research questions. Specifically, building on insights from functionalist theory and research literature examining insular groups, particularly the sheltering mechanisms employed by Orthodox Jewish communities, this study addressed the following two research questions:

- 1) What topics of discussion arose for members of the Orthodox Jewish community in the comments following articles on the Kletzky murder?
- 2) Did the discussions divide or unite the community?

Analyzing readers' comments allowed for the identification of the topics of discussion that arose and an examination of how community members came together to express their reactions to and about the murder. The study identified 45 topics of discussion, 28 of which were divided into six themes portraying the broader discussions that readers had. To recap briefly, the first theme 'Levi Aron' suggests that readers were trying to get a grasp on who Levi Aron was and why he did what he did. The second theme 'the murder' suggests that readers were trying to understand exactly what happened from the time Leiby approached Levi Aron for directions to the time that Aron was arrested by the police. The third theme 'the case' shows that readers were trying to understand the investigation and the court process by following the case in the media.

The fourth theme ‘punishment’ demonstrated that readers were concerned with making sure that Levi Aron would pay for his crime and that many readers wanted Aron to suffer. The fifth theme ‘preventative measures’ suggests readers were concerned with how to keep the community, and especially the children in it, safe from harm. As there was no consensus on which safety measure to employ, this theme also suggests that readers were unsure how to do so. The final theme ‘Orthodox Judaism’ suggests that readers were concerned with several issues pertaining to the religious affiliation they shared with Levi Aron and Leiby Kletzky, including Jewish beliefs, issues within the community, and various communal authorities. Readers were united about some of the topics in each of these themes and divided on others as is discussed in more detail below.

My analysis of the topics raised within the online forums demonstrates how some of these topics united the community and reaffirmed their morals. Of the 28 main topics that arose in the comments, 22 allowed for an analysis of communal unity and division. Readers were united in their discussions about 13 of these topics, including that Aron should be afforded due process. However, readers were divided in their discussions about nine of the main topics, such as whether or not an insanity defence should be used. Divisiveness itself is a threat to the cohesion of a community and it is, therefore, noteworthy that readers were divided about some of the topics they discussed.

5.2 Strength of Communities:

Functionalism can explain how this crime, though horrific, might have served a purpose in the Orthodox Jewish community. Both Durkheim (1964) and Erikson (1966) discuss how societies take shape and the meanings communities hold for individual members. The results of this study demonstrate the significance of the community for readers because four of the 10 most

dominant topics were related to the society they function in – the Orthodox Jewish community. These are the topics of ‘the Orthodox Jewish community’, ‘Jewish beliefs’, ‘Jewish texts’, and ‘G-d’. Of the other 18 main topics, five were specific to the community and these include the topics ‘communal responsibility’, ‘rabbis’, ‘Shomrim’, ‘Lipa’, and ‘molestation’. Readers were united in all but one of the discussions about the community; the exception was in their discussions about molestation.

Topics about the community reveal that readers attempted to understand and discuss the crime with respect to how it impacted them as community members and how it impacted their community as a whole. This is consistent with how mechanical societies are integrated and bound through their common belief system (Durkheim, 1964). Readers’ comments also exemplified that their solidarity was based on feelings of superiority or moral righteousness which is also found in mechanical communities (Durkheim, 1964). For example, one reader implied that because the Jewish people are G-d’s nation, the rest of the world is anticipating how they will respond to the murder:

“The goyim (non-Jews) are looking with shock and are waiting for G-d's nation to unite and move forward with Hashem's (G-d's) plan.”

Ideals and values are formed through being part of the collective life (Durkheim 1912). Therefore, the topics about the community are significant because they demonstrate communal values and ideals which shape a shared morality (Smith, 2008). This shared morality is reflected in the group’s collective conscience (Smith, 2008).

Collective Conscience:

The collective conscience is defined as shared morality or group mind (Smith, 2008). This shared morality heightens the sense of moral obligation group members feel to one another (Driedger, 2009) and to their community (Durkheim, 1973). This shows the strength of the

doctrine of mutual responsibility in which all Jews are responsible for the behaviour of other Jews (Ben-Yehuda, 2010). This can also explain why readers were united in thinking that the community was somehow responsible for the murder. Some readers felt the community contributed to Aron's behaviour because they treated him poorly:

“how did klal yisroel (the Jewish people) produce a Levi Aron? How did we interact with him throughout his life?”

Others discussed the possibility that the murder occurred to atone for community sins:

“I've heard little Leiby & the Rabbi (a rabbi that was killed around the same time as Leiby) bore the brunt of the "community's sins".”

Both these statements in some way lay blame and the responsibility for the murder on the shoulders of the community which readers were united in thinking they should bear.

A community's solidarity depends on the internalization of the collective conscience (Durkheim, 1912), and this is especially so for mechanical societies like the Orthodox Jewish community (Loewenthal et al., 1997). Readers' discussions about religion and punishment reflect the community's collective conscience (Driedger, 2009; Durkheim, 1964) and these were discussed in ways that contributed to communal solidarity. As discussed next, in discussing religion, readers were able to reflect on their shared religious lifestyle and discussing Aron's punishment sustained their collective conscience by demonstrating that their sentiments have not changed because of the murder (Durkheim, 1964).

Religion:

Many topics were rooted in Jewish law and in ideals demonstrating that religion is the collective conscience of this community (Lee & Bartkowski, 2004; Driedger, 2009). As discussed in Chapter 2, Durkheim examined the role of law in societies and considered the ability of religion to bring people together (Vold et al., 2002). From a functionalist perspective,

law is the system that protects the welfare of society, settles disputes, and regulates behaviour (Akers & Sellers, 2009). The law of the Orthodox Jewish community is the Torah, the Jewish Bible, and readers often framed their comments with reference to how the Torah would interpret the topics they were discussing. Readers consulted the Torah to determine how they should feel about Aron:

“I dont believe there is any mitzva (commandment) to have any rachmonus (mercy) on him.”

Semans and Stone Fish (2000) explain that for Orthodox Jews, everything is framed through the lens of the Torah because that is their guide and moral code. Religion is central to the development of solidarity (Driedger, 2009) and this was demonstrated through the topics about Orthodox Judaism. Readers thought about how the crime affected their religious life as Orthodox Jews. One of the ways the community dealt with the murder of one of their own at the hands of one of their own was by reminding themselves of their faith and beliefs.

These discussions also demonstrate Erikson’s (1966) notion of boundary maintenance and how communal boundaries are reinforced or tested when a crime has been committed. The boundaries of the Orthodox Jewish community are clearly defined in the Torah. Readers’ continuous reference to Jewish texts and laws also demonstrates how institutionalized texts have replaced the way in which institutionalized places, such as the Temple, order, regulate, and control the behaviour of community members (Valins, 2000). Aside from discussions about punishment as stemming from criminal law, readers discussed how Aron would be punished according to Torah law. For example, readers discussed the Torah view on capital punishment:

“Everyone seems to be so happy at the possible prospect of capital punishment, however: According to the Torah capital punishment is not applicable if witnesses did not view the actual killing, no matter how overwhelming the circumstantial evidence is and even if he admits it.”

Clearly, community members drew on their collective conscience of religion as a way to guide them in responding to the murder. As discussed below, they did the same when discussing Aron's punishment.

Punishment & Anger:

Discussions about punishing Aron also reflected the collective conscience of the community. The topics related to Aron's potential punishment are consistent with Durkheim's (1964) idea that punishment serves to show that a group's sentiments are unchanged. As noted, discussions about punishing Aron involved consulting Jewish texts, demonstrating that even after the crime the community's ideals are still grounded in the Torah.

Erikson's (1966) work can explain how Aron's act of deviance was discussed in a way that contributed to the stability of the community. When crimes are committed, it is an opportunity for community members to come together in the way they express their feelings about the crime and the criminal (Erikson, 1966). In this way, crime is a resource that brings people together and unites them through their mutual feelings of anger (Erikson, 1966). This was evident in the topics relating to Levi Aron, including 'derogatory classification' and 'Aron's family' in which readers expressed their opinions and often, anger. Many expressions of anger included ideas about how Aron should be punished:

"Let this Monster rot in hell!!!!!! Lock him up in a box and have a painful death."

Two specific forms of punishment were discussed – vigilante justice and the death penalty. Discussions about vigilante justice reflect Ben-Yehuda's (2010) work on the way ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel respond to communal threats by engaging in deviant and even violent behaviour. For example, they employ Modesty Guards who sometimes use violence to enforce strict modesty codes on nonconforming visitors to ultra-Orthodox communities (Ben-Yehuda,

2010). This may explain why although vigilante justice is inconsistent with Torah laws and values, some readers expressed a desire to behave in this way. As one reader exclaimed:

“it is not at all befitting of klal yisroel (the Jewish people) to be so vengeful and enthusiastically awaiting revenge. Spewing hate and nastiness and stooping to writing so many ugly statements”

The inconsistency between vigilante justice and Torah law can also explain why readers were divided about this topic.

Readers were united in thinking that Aron deserved the death penalty even though New York State does not practice this form of punishment. Since it is not practiced, discussing capital punishment seems absurd. However, this discussion brought community members together in their strong feelings about how Aron should be treated. These results demonstrate solidarity and unity when it comes to punishing Aron which is consistent with the view that crime is useful in drawing communities together.

Comments also labeled Aron as a ‘deviant’ which further strengthens community boundaries by making him an outsider (Erikson, 1966; Smith 2008; Becker, 1963). Even though this was Aron’s one and only crime, readers compared him to serial killers. Readers’ speculations as to Aron’s previous crimes also put him in a deviant position. Though evidence showed that Leiby was his first victim, readers were united in thinking that this was not so: *“logic says that this was not his first murder”*. Similarly, readers discussed Aron in ways that made him into an ‘other’. In doing so, they identified Aron as one who does not conform to group values and norms. As Aron’s actions were outside of the behaviour of Orthodox Jews, comments sent the message that he was not one of them:

“What is clear, though is this: He was NOT Orthodox - and preferred McDonalds.”

Some even implied that Aron was a non-Jew because an ancestor did not properly convert to Judaism:

“he says he is jewish. guaranteed mistake- somewhere somehow either an improper conversion etc. somewhere back.”

These comments negate Aron’s membership in the camp of Orthodox Jewry, demonstrating how othering can be a useful tool to maintain cohesion (Kastoryano, 2010). Discussing Aron as someone who does not belong also addressed the community’s concern with how they were being represented to the public because of the actions of one of their own.

5.3 Representation:

Othering is related to the concept of representation and these are both concerned with identity. By othering Aron, community members distanced themselves from him so he would not be connected to them and so they would not be associated with his actions. It was unfathomable for community members that Leiby was murdered by one of their own and they believed this fact was shocking to others too. The following quote highlights this concern:

“The issue and concern here is that there was a murder and kidnapping by one of our own. A Jew someone people never thought would have done such terrible acts.”

Community members also feared that the term Orthodox Jew would become synonymous with Aron’s actions because that is how he was identified by the media. This mirrors Ramp’s (2001) work on how the actions of one individual group member can become representative of the entire group. Readers wanted the outside world to understand that Aron had little in common with Orthodox Jews:

“Some one should at least try to explain to the media that although he was jewish he was not observant”

Therefore, the findings are generally consistent with Ben-Yehuda’s (2010) understanding of the concern of the Orthodox Jewish community with how they are represented and perceived

by the larger public, as well as Ringel's (2008) idea that the behaviour of one Jew represents that of all other Jews.

Aside from the concern of representation through the media, readers also raised the issue of censorship. In contrast to Ben-Yehuda's (2010) finding that group representation is the reason why ultra-Orthodox Jewish publications censor what they print, readers were united in their desire for censorship so they could insulate themselves from the details of the murder. They asked, *"Do we need to know all this?"*

The concern with representation and censorship, then, stemmed from insularity. It is because they are insular that their sense of being watched or judged by the outside world is heightened. Their desire for censorship about the details of the case also reflects the insulation they maintain because they attempted to shield themselves from knowing information they felt was unnecessary or harmful. As will be shown, the community's insulation also affects their view of the outside world.

5.4 Outsiders & Insiders:

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Orthodox Jewish community insulates itself from the outside world and utilizes various sheltering mechanisms to protect its members from the outside world. However, the high profile nature of this crime, and the fact that it was committed by an Orthodox Jew against another Orthodox Jew, thrust the community into the glare of the mainstream media. The investigation forced the community to come together with outside agencies such as the police, courts, and the media. The online forums provided a place to discuss their opinions of those outside of the community, such as the defence team, media, and the police, as well as those within the community, such as rabbis and Shomrim.

The discussions about outsiders are reflective of the community's insularity and their views on outsiders. As Lightman and Shor (2002) point out, community members are hesitant to turn to outsiders for help when problems arise. The Kletzky murder, however, gave them no choice but to turn to outsiders, as police were involved in the search and the media reported on the story. Aron was also arrested and processed through the criminal justice system and the community was exposed to several criminal justice actors and agencies as a result.

The analysis of unity and division about outsiders shows some contradictions in readers' opinions. For example, readers were united in thinking that Aron should be afforded due process. However, they were divided in their support of the defence team. They could not understand how anyone could defend Aron. As one reader remarked:

"We know that in America the murderer has the right for defense, but as a human being I wouldn't want to defend him and cannot understand how someone with a conscience can do that."

Another example of contradictions is their view of the police. Readers were united in thinking that the police did not do a good job in the case. They were divided as to whether an Amber Alert should have been called; however, they were more united (63%) in understanding why one was not. Thus, although they understood why the police went about the search in the way that they did, readers maintained that they did not do a good job. They believed that the police did not do enough when they were called to assist in the search for Leiby:

"They did nothing when they WERE called - until Shomrim did their detective work for them! If they were called four hours earlier, they would have sat on their hands longer."

They were also disappointed in the time it took the police to uncover evidence in the case:

"they found more evidence of what? every day its in the news that they found "more evidence" and were is it? what is it? evidence of what? no one knows! BTW it took them over a week to discover this wow congratulations!!!"

Many comments compared the role of the police to that of Shomrim. Here too, there were different opinions, as some believed the community should turn to police when crime occurs, while others maintained that Shomrim are effective in working alone. However, there were those that felt a combination of the police and Shomrim would yield the best results.

The discussions about insiders and outsiders created categories of ‘us’ and ‘them’ which is part of the boundaries that many religious groups form (Kastoryano, 2010). This too contributes to community cohesion (Erikson, 1966). The following comments demonstrate how in the mind of readers, not being Jewish impeded the ability of the outsiders to help the community:

Regarding the media, one reader posted:

“I know u can't explain a goy (non-Jew) too much but at least we should try to minimize the wide brush that they paint us with”

Regarding the police, one said:

“Shomrim does this all dayn they are very well equipped to search for a child. The police just think, all the kids look alike.”

And in discussions about the defence lawyer, a reader remarked:

“but really who cares what she thinks, she doesnt and will never understand us cause she is not jewish or remotely jewish, so whatever she says is stupid.”

It would appear that outsiders were characterized as being unable to help the community because they did not understand it. It is therefore important for community members to feel understood by those on the outside before they accept outside assistance.

The discussions about insiders, those within the community, all engendered unity as readers were united in thinking that the actions of Lipa, Shomrim, and Yaakov German, the civilian who assisted police, were positive. However, though readers were united in their

discussions about rabbis, their unity was in thinking that rabbis protect pedophiles within the community from the police. This negative opinion of community authority will be discussed further below.

Durkheim (1912) explained the approach of religious life is to separate oneself from prohibited things. In the Orthodox Jewish community, individuals insulate or separate themselves from modern life (Fader, 2006) or participate in its modified form (Deutsch, 2009; Lightman & Shor, 2002; Fader, 2006). Readers reflected on how to best contend with the outside world through discussions about their involvement in secular society and the benefits and disadvantages of using particular technologies, such as cell phones. They also discussed whether Aron's lack of insularity and participation in secular society, such as his use of Facebook and the television shows and celebrities he followed, influenced him to commit the murder. They were, however, divided on this issue.

Readers also discussed providing children with cell phones as a safety measure. These discussions reflect the community's insularity because though they were united about this topic, they specified conditions that the cell phones should meet which reflect communal boundaries, which is similar to the idea of participating in a modified form of the modern:

“EVERY child should have a Kosher phone with Shomrim, parents & 911 numbers only”.

Technologies such as cell phones with Internet capability are portals to the outside world making them dangerous and destructive to community ideals (Deutsch, 2009). Its ability to access the Internet encourages “individuation among users, while circumventing communal surveillance,” which is contrary to community cohesion and protection from negative influences (Deutsch, 2009, p. 8). The Orthodox Jewish community deals with this by using phones that cannot access the Internet.

Rabbinic Authority:

Another sheltering mechanism that was discussed in the topics was deference to authority, specifically the discussions on seeking rabbinic approval or advice:

“When the gedolim (great rabbis) are gone we must listen to the gedolim (great rabbis) that are still with us, that is what HASHEM (G-d) wants.”

As noted, readers were united in thinking that rabbis protect pedophiles within the community from becoming known to police by advising or prohibiting community members from coming forward about their victimization. Readers debated the norm of deferring to rabbinic authority following the commission of a crime by a community member. Comments about the way rabbis address cases of molestation within the community correspond with earlier work by Hartman and Kaufman (2006) on the rabbinic power to ostracize non-conformists. Comments revealed this is one of the reasons community members do not report such crimes to the police:

“the fear of mesira (the prohibition of reporting another Jew to the authorities) and from powers rebbies (rabbis) who have and threaten people who say they will go to the police.”

Readers found the Internet useful in overpowering the rabbis’ ability to protect molesters and expressed satisfaction in the fact that the websites were not censoring their reports of the crime:

“Let every ugly detail be posted. This way maybe, just maybe it will prevent one rabbi from protecting just one kidnapper.”

Campbell (2007) believes the Internet has transformed “religious authority and power relationships” (Campbell, 2007, p.1044). The Internet allows voices that challenge traditional discourse to be heard as people contest religious teachings and traditions in conversations they have online (Campbell, 2007). The online forums were a way for community members to

override the authority of the rabbis and how they direct community members to respond to crime.

Deference to authority is seen as a condition for the Orthodox Jewish community's survival (Lightman & Shor, 2002), however, the way in which readers discussed rabbis makes one wonder whether the willingness or desire to defer to rabbinic authorities is changing, and if so, how it will affect the community. The discussions suggest that the murder led to conflicted feelings about authority and the traditional way for many community members. It also suggests that the crime may have given readers pause about deferring to authority or caused a shift in leaders' ability to maintain control. The findings reveal that the insularity of the community and the fact that communal authorities make the apprehension of criminals difficult or impossible leads to a difficulty in acknowledging or addressing communal problems. It also raises concerns about the community's ability to implement change.

5.5 Addressing Problems:

In insular communities, when censorship is strong, problems can remain hidden (Ben-Yehuda, 2010). However, the commission of crime within such communities has the potential to force previously unacknowledged problems within the community to the surface. This study examined topics of conversation in an effort to see what community members thought were problems in their own backyard because the community generally shies away from difficult topics (Lightman & Shor, 2002). The online forums gave community members the opportunity to address difficult issues. One reader explained the consequences to ignoring community problems:

“When you "stick your head in the sand" it's not only a denial of the truth, but rather results in an active affirmative endangerment by neglecting to take the appropriate action.”

As I hypothesized at the outset of this study, the results show that the murder allowed community members to discuss contentious topics, specifically mental illness and child molestation. The opinions regarding mental illness were contradictory. Though readers were united in thinking that Aron was mentally ill or insane, they were divided as to whether he should be allowed to use an insanity defence with more readers (63%) thinking that he should not be allowed to do so. This contradiction may be due to the community's difficulties in recognizing, acknowledging, and appropriately addressing mental health issues:

“Which leave open a real question, as to how our community can care for members of our community who are seriously insane. Being proud that we usually do a good job of caring for our “village idiot” isn’t enough when the person is potentially criminally insane.”

Regarding molestation, readers were divided in their discussions about this topic and unsure if it was even related to the case. As noted above, they were united in thinking that rabbis protect pedophiles in the community. Readers explained the consequences of ignoring sex crimes. They point to the Kletzky murder as one of these consequences:

“This is why it's important to call the police when there is suspicion of a crime. Covering up for criminals, protecting them and punishing victims who are courageous enough to come forward makes cases like this inevitable.”

Discussing the issue of molestation may be an attempt for community members to redefine themselves and how these crimes are managed following the killing of an innocent child. Though the Orthodox Jewish community had been struggling with how to deal with cases of molestation in the community prior to the Kletzky murder (Friedman, 2013), the ability and willingness of community members to address this issue has widened since the murder (Eisikowitz, 2013). Support groups for victims of abuse have proliferated in almost every Orthodox Jewish community in the world and more victims are coming forward with their stories (Friedman, 2013). Parents are talking to their children much more openly about abuse and

“protecting children is a topic of conversation today in all parts of the ultra-Orthodox world” (Friedman, 2013, p. 11). Orthodox Jewish communities and schools have turned to professionals to help them deal with this issue and run programs and workshops that are pre-approved by rabbinic figures (Eisikowitz, 2013). Unfortunately, though, “sex abuse has reached epidemic proportions in Israel and abroad” (Friedman, 2013, p. 10).

Though some community members may now feel compelled to discuss this issue, the larger community may be divided as to how to handle cases of child molestation within the community. Perhaps the community will be able to prevent and manage crime within their midst in a way that is consistent with their religious values *and* the law of the land in a similar way that previously forbidden issues, such as the Internet, have been incorporated into communal life and contributed to its progression (Cejka, 2009; Campbell, 2005; Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005).

5.6 Implementing Change:

When society is unsure of how to remake and redefine itself, which may be the case following a crime within its midst, conflict can arise. This conflict is “between the ideal of yesterday and that of today, between the ideal that has the authority of tradition and one that is only coming into being” (Durkheim, 1912, p. 425). In fact, the very existence of the online forums used in this study may be reflective of change as they allowed community members to read, reflect upon, and discuss news matters and how they are affected by what is happening in their world and the world around them. This is contrary to the control exerted by rabbinic authorities on various media outlets to ensure community members do not become aware of deviant behaviour within their community (Ben-Yehuda, 2010).

It is possible that the topics that divided readers show how at times crime can pave the way for change and challenge the traditional way of life for a community (Durkheim, 1938; Ben-

Yehuda, 2010). For example, in regards to turning to the outside world for assistance, one reader commented:

“go directly to the police...and DO NOT go to Shomrim, because this Aron monster was KNOWN to Shomrim and they did NOTHING to protect us from him!”

This shows a desire to change the current way of responding to crime, which is to turn to insiders, and seek assistance from the outside world instead. Similarly, some questioned the authority of Shomrim to handle criminal cases at all, or on their own without the assistance of the police. These demonstrate the redefining of boundaries discussed in Erikson’s (1966) work. Community members debated whether it was time to respond to crime differently by turning to outside agencies and challenged the idea of bowing to communal authorities following the commission of crime.

However, 14 days after the murder, on July 27th one reader’s comment demonstrates how difficult and challenging implementing change will be for this community:

“I am hopeful that people will be more forthcoming now that the Agudah (Orthodox Jewish organization), RCA (Rabbinical Council of America) and Rabbonim (rabbis) in general are being more supportive about going to the authorities. Unfortunately it took Leiby's death to make this happen.”

Any change sought must be approved by the rabbis who respond to crime by covering it up (Ben-Yehuda, 2010). This response is similar to how other groups manage crimes within their midst.

5.7 Responding to Crime:

The Orthodox Jewish community responded to the Kletzky murder in a similar way to other groups experiencing crime by discussing topics about their moral boundaries, punishing the offender, and prosecuting him through the law (Erikson, 1966; Ben-Yehuda, 1980). Readers focused on increasing communal unity which reveals their concern with the divisiveness that

crime could bring, which is a concern for the Amish as well (Anderson & Autry, 2011).

Moreover, in a similar way that the Amish community accepted the West Nickel Mines shooting discussed in Chapter 2 as G-d's will (Kasdorf, 2007), the Orthodox Jewish community believed that Leiby's death was part of G-d's plan:

"This is a crazy story that happened because this was the will from above."

Some discussions about communal problems correspond with similar observations concerning how Amish communities deal with crimes of a sexual nature through silencing the victims (Lavoie, 2006; Kasdorf, 2007) or shaming them (Ben-Yehuda, 2010).

Readers describe the culture of silence when it comes to sex crimes:

"Instead of encouraging honesty, ethics, and protecting the vulnerable amongst us, they fan the flames to further stigmatize the victims and intimidate them into silence."

Similarly, readers imply that a cover up of a sex crime occurred in the Kletzky case:

"It seems that there is a very massive conspiracy to cover up, what most logical people can see clearly."

In spite of the similar responses to crime among the Amish and Orthodox Jews, there are also differences. The day on which the schoolhouse in Lancaster was razed, after the West Nickel Mines shooting, happened to occur on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement and forgiveness for the Jewish people. Several rabbis commented that the rush to forgive the shooter on behalf of the Amish was "morally inappropriate" (Kasdorf, 2007, p. 337). Readers' reactions to Aron were similar to the rabbis in Lancaster. Readers acknowledged that Aron may suffer from a mental illness, but that his actions were nevertheless inexcusable:

"Mental illness is not a excuse to abduct, murder and dismember children!"

Therefore, though readers related Aron's actions to his mental state, they found his actions unforgivable.

When community members commit crime, efforts are made to shield their deviant acts from the public eye and even from law enforcement authorities. The discussions readers had about rabbinic authority and molestation have supported this because readers discussed rabbis' ability to veto when and why community members turn to the outside world for help. The discussions community members engaged in support the notion that it is possible that insular communities have low crime rates because crimes committed within go unreported (Ben-Yehuda, 2010).

5.8 Implications & Recommendations:

The criminal justice system uses the concept of deterrence to prevent people from committing crime. However, when crime goes unreported, such as in insular communities, it cannot be addressed let alone deterred. As a result, there are several implications to the findings of this study regarding how the Orthodox Jewish community deals with crime. The community's insularity affects their ability or desire to report crime. They therefore rely on insiders, such as Shomrim, for crime prevention and control. Their suspicions of outsiders cause them to minimize the role those outside of the community can play in assisting community members. Furthermore, communal authorities do not encourage individuals to come forward when victimized. This is consistent with their belief of the right of the people not to know (Ben-Yehuda, 2010). However, crime occurs in the community and, more often than not, it is ignored. It is, therefore, important for insular communities, leaders and members as well as criminal justice actors and other outside professionals to work together to effectively prevent and control crime.

For example, many Orthodox Jewish communities have the Shomrim to protect them and, depending on the size of the community, Shomrim may be more or less connected to the

local police department. Members of Shomrim should be well versed in their role and in what they can or cannot do according to the law. They should also be encouraged to see the police as adding to their effectiveness in protecting the community instead of detracting from their power. Community policing could work in tandem with Shomrim to better understand and protect the community they serve.

For this to occur, it is clear that a bridge must be built between insiders and outsiders. The community is very protective of its boundaries and feels misunderstood by those outside of their inner circle. Furthermore, the culture of silence is an endemic cultural barrier when it comes to addressing crime. Therefore, a common language amongst community liaisons, scholars, and professionals must be found to initiate the dialogue of addressing crime. This dialogue should be rooted in Jewish beliefs and social values, as well as human rights and laws.

The focus should be on crime prevention, intervention, and restitution. Orthodox Jewish institutions and communities should be taught about the importance of current policies and laws, such as the responsibilities of mandated reporters. Mandated reporters, such as teachers or principals, should face the appropriate consequences when they are willfully blind and complicit when they become aware of victimization but do not report it. Creating a system in which Jewish agencies are accountable to the people they serve will build trust between community members and Orthodox Jewish organizations. Protocols for organizations to follow in the event of future victimization should also be developed because community members are endangered when crime is covered up.

Outside professionals, such as the police, should be educated about the community and its values. They should also educate community members about criminal laws and their rights, and victims should be encouraged to come forward without fear of communal repercussions.

Many members of insular communities are unaware of the outside resources available to protect and assist them (Lavoie, 2006). Agencies, such as victim services, should have individuals that work with the community in a way that is non-threatening and understanding of the importance of communal values. Victims' resource centres can be created within the Orthodox Jewish community similar to those that exist in the secular world. Individuals within and outside of the community could work with and advocate on behalf of victims, offering services such as counseling, court support, and legal intake. Victims are hesitant to turn to the criminal justice system because of experiences where victims were further victimized by the reporting process (Friedman, 2013). They also fear losing their anonymity and respect for privacy (Friedman, 2013) which is fiercely guarded in the community. These issues must be taken into account when considering how to deal with victims of crime in insular groups.

It is clear that the current system of crime control within the community is weak or broken and that change is hampered by communal authorities. If community members do not feel understood in terms of their religious ideals they will continue to turn inwards when crime is committed. This will make change more difficult to implement. As the study results show, community members appear to be looking for change, however, their efforts and desire may be thwarted by the leaders' need to control how community members respond. If change is not implemented, victims of crime will continue to be silenced, crime will continue to go undetected by law enforcement, and offenders will continue to prey on vulnerable individuals. Those involved in implementing change must consider that in this community, community members often live side-by-side (Coleman, 2007) and therefore victims and victimizers will frequently cross paths. It is, therefore, easy for the cycle of crime to continue and difficult for victims to get away from those who victimize them, a situation that is exacerbated in insular communities

where members interact frequently. Though there have been attempts at discussing crime prevention or intervention regarding the protection of children following the Kletzky murder (Eisikowitz, 2013; Friedman, 2013), these are focused on the present and the future. The community is struggling, however, with how to address past instances of crime and they will have to decide how to go forward in this regard as more victims come forward (Friedman, 2013).

5.9 Limitations:

By shining a light on the particular insular community of Orthodox Jews and the way in which they reacted to the Kletzky homicide, this study has generated useful information that is of potential interest to other sociological research on insular communities. The research questions posed are worth studying because much is unknown about insular communities. It is possible that these communities can teach the larger world something about how best to respond to threats. It is also possible, however, that these communities do a disservice to their members by responding to threats and crime in the way that they do.

Despite its contributions, there are several limitations to this study worth addressing. Since only one insular community was examined, the findings of this study are not generalizable to other insular communities. As readers' comments were individualized responses to the articles they read, they are non-transferable, making it questionable whether the findings can or should be applied to implement changes in other insular groups (Im & Chee, 2006).

Several limitations are also apparent in the type of data used. When using data from online forums one must consider the issue of authentication. This is particularly important when the comments are made anonymously and where there is no guarantee that participants are who they say they are, which can occur on online forums (Im & Chee, 2006). It is the assumption of this study that the comments have been posted by Orthodox Jews as that is the target audience of

the websites used in this study. However, it is possible that some comments were made by secular Jews or non-Jews and, therefore, would not be reflective of how the Orthodox Jewish community reacted to the homicide. For example, one reader wrote, “*Don't blame goyim (non-Jews) and don't blame us secular Jews. This was one of your own who committed this atrocity!*” This demonstrates that people outside of the community may visit these websites and comment on the articles they read.

There is also the issue of deleted posts as both websites have moderators to ensure that only acceptable comments are posted. As a result, this study is limited in its inability to capture posts that have been deleted due to inappropriate content. It is also possible that only particular types of people engage in posting comments on online forums and, therefore, the results of this study may only be reflective of the reactions of those particular types of people to the murder. In a similar vein, I have only monitored the comments of a component of the community. I am missing the reactions to the murder of those who are not online, as not all community members use the Internet, which could potentially alter the results.

Additionally, the themes that the topics were divided into were subjective in that they were based on my understanding of the data's meaning. As I was the only researcher who analyzed readers' comments, this study's objectivity is threatened as other researchers may have classified and categorized the comments in a different way than they have been sorted here (Im & Chee, 2006). Another limitation is in regards to selection bias because not all comments in response to the articles about the murder that appeared on the two websites were included in this study. Only the comments responding to articles that were the same or similar were included. However, some of the comments in this study related to something a reader read in articles not included here. For example, an article on VIN that was not included in this study discussed

Shomrim in a negative light suggesting that they keep a list of suspected pedophiles instead of reporting them to the police. The comments to this particular article may have resulted in different findings regarding how the community felt about Shomrim and whether they were united or divided in their views. Therefore, the conclusion I arrived at regarding communal unity or division may be misrepresented due to my having selected only some of the articles and comments to be included in this study.

Many of the limitations of this study, particularly the ones related to design decisions, had to do with the time and resources available in conducting an M.A. thesis. These limitations can be addressed in future research.

5.10 Future Research:

Regardless of the above limitations, this study has generated important information that can be useful for the Orthodox Jewish community and for other insular groups. It has also left the door open for future research. Further research could use the findings from this study to compare the comments responding to articles that appear on the Orthodox Jewish websites to those of the mainstream media. This would show whether or not there is a true difference in the way Orthodox Jewish people perceived the crime that was committed within their community. Regarding other insular groups, this study could be compared to a less serious crime committed in and among members of another insular community. In this way, one could examine whether or not the seriousness of the crime committed in the Kletzky murder elicited a particular response amongst community members when compared to a less serious crime. Future research can also focus on community leaders' ability to maintain control of community members and examine what causes their level of control to fluctuate, as demonstrated in readers' opinions about deferring to rabbis following the commission of crime. Similarly, additional research can

examine what happens when the informal mechanisms of social control in insular communities break down and whether or not the community decides to turn to the outside world for assistance. Since community members are hesitant in turning to the outside world for assistance (Lightman & Shor, 2002), one can examine the role played by cultural brokers who serve as liaisons between the community and outside agencies.

Since the temporal issue of the evolution of the discussions was outside of the scope of this study, future research can examine how the earlier and later discussions were impacted as information about the murder was being released to the public. Isolating the topics of discussion that arose from YWN and comparing them to the topics that arose on VIN was also outside of the scope of this study and future research could focus on this to reveal how different topics arise based on the information to which readers are exposed. As the results of this study revealed that the community was divided on several issues, such as molestation and the rabbinic response to molestation cases, future research could examine what change, if any, has occurred in the community since the murder in regards to this issue and whether the murder was the catalyst for that change.

Other questions have arisen from this study that require further research which can be conducted on the same community or another insular community. For example, if crime is normal and expected to occur in all societies as Durkheim (1964) and Erikson (1966) believed, one can study what types of crime are normal occurrences in insular communities. Further research can also examine whether social constructionism can compliment or challenge the functionalist approach to shed light on how the members of insular communities construct their identity when they are confronted with a threat. These are just a few of the many possible

avenues for additional research that could further develop existing ideas of insular communities and their response to the commission of crime.

5.11 Conclusion:

The findings of this study show that the Kletzky murder was functional to the Orthodox Jewish community in several ways. Community members turned to Orthodox Jewish online forums and in some ways, their discussions brought them together. They communicated with other members and sought advice and drew comfort from their religious beliefs. They came together to express their anger towards Levi Aron and characterized him as deviant. They also separated him from the group and distanced themselves from him. These discussions stemmed from their concerns about how Orthodox Jews were perceived by the public. They also created boundaries between themselves and the outside world, especially outside individuals involved in the case.

However, the crime also engendered division within the community. Several communal problems were raised in their discussions and they questioned the community's traditional response to these issues. They also questioned the ability of communal authorities to address crime. The crime may have paved the way for change as several suggestions were raised regarding changing the way the community responds to crime and to the outside world.

On August 29th, 2012, Levi Aron was sentenced to forty years to life in prison. He pleaded guilty to kidnapping, killing and dismembering Leiby Kletzky and admitted to binding, drugging, and smothering the boy. He will be eligible for parole in 2051.

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Appendix A: Ethical Considerations

As this study did not involve human subjects, ethical approval was not necessary.

Appendix B: Articles Examined

Article	YWN Comments	YWN Original Source	VIN Comments	VIN Original Source
1	7	WCBSTV	46	WCBSTV
2	0	NY Daily News	11	Daily News /NY Times
3	14	NBC New York	42	NBCNY/NY Daily News
4	2	NY Daily News	12	NY Daily News
5	1	NY DAILY NEWS	26	NY Daily News
6	5	NY Daily News	15	NY Daily News
7	0	WABC	6	WABC TV
8	3	WPIX	29	WPIX
9	18	NY TIMES	37	NY Times
10	1	NY Times	16	NY Daily News
11	1	NY Post	16	NY Post
12	11	NY DAILY NEWS	40	NY Daily News
13	1	NY POST	46	NY Post
14	11	WABC	71	WABC TV
15	10	NY POST	116	The NY Post
16	8	NBC NY	45	WNBC TV
17	1	NY POST	26	NY Post
18	3	NY Post	25	NY Post
19	19	NY1	96	NY 1
20	18	NY DAILY NEWS	44	NY Daily News
21	9	NY TIMES	46	VIN News/ NY Times
22	2	YWN Desk – NYC	24	VIN News Staff
23	13	YWN – NYC	106	AP
24	2	NY DAILY NEWS	10	NY Daily News
25	3	NY Daily News	23	NY Daily News
26	14	Journal News	49	The Journal News
27	10	NY 1	58	NY 1
28	4	WCBS TV	31	WCBS NY
28 Articles	191 Comments	2 Original Sources	1112 Comments	1 Original Source

Appendix C: Summary of Articles

To give the reader a better idea of how the comments arose or in relation to what they arose, below is a summary of the content of each of the articles included in this study. The first article that is the same on both websites appears two days after Leiby had gone missing.

Article 1. July 13, 2011- The search for Leiby continues and the article reports that Leiby may have gotten into a gold colored sedan the day he went missing. The article describes the two surveillance videos that captured Leiby walking on the street and talking to a man whom the police believe he followed to his car.

Article 2. July 14 - Leiby was found dismembered two days after he went missing and this is every parent's biggest fear. He disappeared after a short walk from camp where he got lost and ran into a stranger who kidnapped and killed him. The article focuses on the issue of how to best keep kids safe as well as ensuring the need to be balanced and not scare them. It also mentions that what happened in this case is extremely rare.

Article 3. July 14 – The article explains that Aron was charged with murdering Leiby and that he gave the police a graphic confession of how he suffocated Leiby and carved up his body after he panicked. He claims he offered Leiby a ride to a bookstore and then invited him to a wedding in Monsey. He explains that they got back from the wedding late so he took him to his house where the boy watched television and fell asleep. The next morning Aron reports that he went to work thinking he would take the boy home later, and when he saw the fliers about the search he panicked and was afraid to take him home. When he returned home, he made Leiby a tuna sandwich and then smothered him with a towel. He then carved up the body and put some parts in the freezer and some in a suitcase which he threw in a garbage dump. Then he went home to clean up. He understands this may be wrong and is sorry for the hurt he has caused.

Article 4. July 14 – The police confirm that Aron went to the wedding of a relative but they do not think he took Leiby. Guests have confirmed they saw Aron but not Leiby. The police were reviewing video footage from the wedding hall. The hall manager said that Aron is related to the bride saying, “I know the groom personally. The piece of venom was related to the other side, not the groom side”.

Article 5. July 15 – Leiby's parents posted a statement on their building door thanking thank G-d, their community, friends, neighbours, volunteers, and federal, state and local agencies for all their help through the tragedy of losing their son.

Article 6. July 15 - Yaakov German, an Orthodox Jewish property manager, helped the police uncover clues that led them to Levi Aron by knocking on doors and scrutinizing video footage. His son was Leiby's teacher and Mr. German lives a block away from Leiby's camp, which is where he was last seen.

Article 7. July 16 – New York City parents want Mayor Bloomberg to lift a ban that has been enforced since 2006 on cell phones in schools. Following the murder of Leiby Kletzky, he stated that cell phones are the best way to keep tabs on children. However, he will not reverse the ban.

Article 8. July 16 – The article reports on the evidence removed from Levi Aron’s home including a mattress, box spring, and bags of other evidence. It also states that there is a lot of outrage at the allegations.

Article 9. July 16 – Some of Aron’s co-workers report that Aron came to work on Tuesday July 12th, a day after the boy was missing, and that he participated in prayer services on behalf of the missing boy. Levi Aron even corrected the pronunciation of Leiby’s name during the services.

Article 10. July 17 – Stanley Patz, the father of Etan Patz, a 6-year-old boy who disappeared in 1979, suggested providing every child with an emergency cell phone that could dial 911 if they are lost or in danger. If the phone had a GPS chip the police could track the child’s location. He suggested it could be known as Leiby’s Phone, because if Leiby had a phone he could have called his mother when he got lost. (VIN adds that modern technology could help parents like Stanley Patz and the Kletzky’s not suffer the way they have).

Article 11. July 17 – Leiby Kletzky’s father attended services on Sabbath, a few days after the funeral, and was comforted by his belief in G-d. This belief helps community members when something bad happens.

Article 12. July 18 – Police search for DNA in Aron’s living room in the home he shared with his stepmother, father, and uncle. The police commissioner said it does not look like Leiby was molested before he was killed. (VIN adds that Leiby’s father is thinking about how to make the community safer, possibly with security cameras).

Article 13. July 19 – The district attorney promises swift justice and dismissed the suggestion that Aron is insane. He will use every resource to make sure the case is dealt with properly.

Article 14. July 20 – Hasidic parents are considering having state issued identification cards with the child’s birth date, height, weight, and fingerprints. This would make it easy to track them if they ever go missing. Shomrim (the Orthodox Jewish community emergency patrol group), Hatzalah (the Orthodox Jewish community medical response team), and the NYPD met to discuss Operation Safe Child. A community member called the murder of Leiby Kletzky the 9/11 for the Jewish community. Officials are also discussing increasing privately monitored security cameras in Brooklyn’s Hasidic neighbourhoods.

Article 15. July 21 – One of Levi Aron’s defence lawyers, Gerald Marrone, resigned from the case stating he could not represent Aron in good conscience as the allegations are too horrific. He also stated that his co-counselor suggested Aron was insane and that they were considering an insanity defence. The co-counselor claims those statements are premature. Community members said an insanity plea would be an injustice.

Article 16. July 21 – Police discovered a surveillance video in a New Jersey gas station showing Leiby and Aron going to use the bathroom on the day the boy went missing. The footage shows Aron opening the car door and escorting the boy to the bathroom. They were in there for two

minutes and the boy did not appear pushed or frightened. That night they went to Aron's apartment and the next day Aron allegedly bound him up when he went to work.

Article 17. July 22 – Aron's defence team hired a new lawyer experienced in high profile murder cases and insanity defence because the previous lawyer had moral issues defending Aron. Aron was indicted on multiple counts including first degree murder and kidnapping. He was also accused of drugging, smothering and dismembering Leiby. Aron pleaded not guilty and his lawyers say he has hallucinations and hears voices.

Article 18. July 22 – More children's clothes were removed from Aron's home and police were looking into whether he had killed before.

Article 19. July 24 – A cell phone and computer were removed from Aron's home which will be searched for evidence. Boxes and bags were taken from the room where he "drugged, suffocated, and butchered" Leiby.

Article 20. July 24 – In his first public comments since the murder of his child, Mr. Nachman Kletzky appeared on WMCA radio to thank everyone for their support. He also told listeners that by donating to the memorial fund the family set up they could make sure Leiby's death was not in vain. The fund would go towards helping others experiencing a tragedy. Leiby always thought about others and that is why they are doing this. The goal is to raise one million dollars.

Article 21. July 25 – Levi Aron's new lawyer explains that she understands the outrage about the crime and the desire for punishment. However, though the public does not "appreciate anyone who wants to spend his rights," this is not "a country where we believe in shooting galleries and lynch mobs."

Article 22. July 31 – Aron's lawyers explain they are defending his rights and not his actions. They were asked by Aron's family to defend him and they must treat their client. The DA called the crime "the most horrific homicide of his twenty year tenure" and would seek life without parole. The defence team is described as "a former NYPD cop and a young overachiever with a total of only eight years experience as lawyers."

Article 23. August 4 – Aron's confession was part of the documents given over to the defence team by the prosecution. Aron stated he "was trying to get back into the Jewish religion" but would eat the non-kosher food the detectives give him as he does not keep kosher. (The VIN article adds that when asked about his knowledge regarding other sex crimes against kids, Aron claims that in his teens he was groped by a man on a subway but that he never touched a child because "he doesn't swing that way").

Article 24. August 4 – Aron has been found fit to stand trial and the DA says he will go to trial and not accept a plea bargain.

Article 25. August 4 – Aron pleads not guilty. He has been on suicide watch and claims he hears voices. Though he has been found fit to stand trial, his lawyers say it does not rule out an insanity defence.

Article 26. August 14 – Aron’s lawyers criticized the Daily News for interviewing Aron in prison because he is mentally unfit to give consent to an interview. They argue that the press is not treating the case with dignity, ethics, or justice as it just wants to sell papers.

Article 27. August 15 – Mr. Nachman Kletzky explains that Leiby Forever, a song composed by Orthodox Jewish singer and songwriter Lipa Schmeltzer, has helped him cope with his son’s death. The singer later said that the father’s comments countered criticism he received from those believing he was trying to profit from the tragedy.

Article 28. August 23 – The judge in the case is concerned that the defence lawyers do not have enough experience to ensure Aron gets a fair trial. They cannot be replaced as they were hired privately. He is responding to complaints made by the defence team about disclosure, Aron’s incompetence, and the media coverage of the case. Aron’s psychological evaluation was illegally leaked to the press and the judge implies that the defence may have leaked it themselves. The defence lawyers denied this. The judge explains that the public has a right to know about the case.

Appendix D: 45 Topics that Emerged from the Data

Below is the response to the first research question, what topics did members of the Orthodox Jewish community discuss because of the murder? The list of topics that arose following the articles on YWN and VIN is presented in alphabetical.

1. Amber Alert - 25 comments - Comments discussed the fact that no Amber Alert was issued while Leiby was missing. Some readers believe an Amber Alert would have helped find Leiby, while others explain why none was issued.
2. Aron as Liar - 27 comments - Comments discuss whether what Aron told the police is true. Comments also discussed whether Aron lied to Leiby in an attempt to understand why Leiby went with him to the wedding and to his house.
3. Aron as Jew - 22 comments – Comments were made about Levi Aron being Jewish. They were about Aron identifying himself as an Orthodox Jew and about his skullcap (which Orthodox Jewish men wear at all times). Some of the comments discuss the difference between identifying as Jewish and identifying as Jewish Orthodox.
4. Aron's Family - 46 comments - Comments were made about Aron's family. Readers discussed whether they felt bad for his family, what they knew about Aron, their hiring of Aron's lawyers, and the family's religious observance.
5. Aron's Mental Health - 43 comments - Readers commented on Aron's mental health and whether he is mentally ill or insane. Comments were also made about the voices Aron said he hears and about his psychiatrist.
6. Aron's Previous Crimes - 8 comments - Readers speculated as to whether or not Aron had previously committed crimes or if Leiby was his first victim.
7. Cell Phones - 50 comments - Readers commented on Mayor Bloomberg's cell phone ban in schools and Stanley Patz's suggestion of a 'Leiby Phone' which would ensure kids had emergency phones for safety purposes. Readers discussed various types of emergency phones, Orthodox Jewish schools' attitudes towards phones, and kosher phones (phones that cannot access the Internet).
8. Children's Safety - 89 comments - Readers discussed how best to keep kids safe and offered various ideas on how to do so. These included cell phones, GPS technology, education about strangers and molesters, identification cards, cameras, and Shomrim. They also suggested business incentives for store owners to make their business a safe place for kids who get lost. Readers also discussed balancing safety fears and kids' freedom.

9. Civilian search - 24 comments - Comments discuss Yaakov German's assistance in locating Levi Aron. Readers discussed the reward money that was offered while Leiby was missing and supporting all those who searched.
10. Communal Responsibility - 53 comments - Comments discussed the community's role in, or responsibility for the murder. Readers felt responsible because of the ways the Orthodox Jewish community deals with mental illness, molesters and reporting, the way kids are educated about safety and strangers, how someone like Aron had been treated in the community all his life, and about how the community identifies psychopaths. Readers also discussed whether or not Leiby bore the brunt of communal sins. Readers commented on the lessons they learned or wanted to learn from the murder. Other comments were made about the crime being extremely rare and unpreventable.
11. Confession - 17 comments - Comments discussed Levi Aron's confession and whether or not he is guilty. Readers also discussed the Torah (Jewish Bible) view on the confession and that the confession makes no sense.
12. Death Penalty - 40 comments - Comments were made regarding whether or not Aron should get the death penalty. This was connected to whether or not he committed a federal crime. Comments were also made about the Torah's view on the death penalty.
13. Defence Team – 240 comments - Readers discussed whether they supported the lawyers defending Aron, whether they were court appointed or privately hired (21 comments), the lawyer from the defence team who quit (25 comments), the judge's comments to the team about their lack of experience, and the interview Aron gave to the Daily News while in prison.
14. Derogatory Classification - 130 comments - Many comments classified Levi Aron by calling him names such as monster, animal, and butcher. Some VIN articles also referred to Aron as 'butcher' in the article headlines. Comments compare and contrast Levi Aron to other criminals including Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, Son of Sam, Casey Anthony, Charles Manson, and Marvin Grossman.
15. Due Process – 87 comments - Readers commented on whether or not Aron has rights and if they should be upheld. They also discussed the lawyer who quit, the judge's comments, and general information about due process.
16. Emotional Reaction - 24 comments - Readers wrote about their emotional reactions to the content of some of the articles. Readers expressed fear, sadness, depression, hurt, anger, trauma, feeling appalled, disgusted, and sick.
17. Evidence - 17 comments - Comments about the evidence in the case include comments about the video surveillance, Aron drugging Leiby, the items removed from Aron's home, and whether police or the media were withholding information about evidence.

18. Federal Crime – 26 comments - Readers discussed whether Aron committed a federal crime in the actions leading up to the murder of Leiby (and is therefore deserving of the death penalty). General comments about federal crimes, the criminal code, and the federal government getting involved were made as well.
19. G-d - 67 comments - Readers had various things to say about G-d. They discussed sanctifying G-d's name, that G-d wanted this to happen, G-d as ultimate provider of justice, and more.
20. Insanity Defence – 81 comments - Readers speculated as to whether or not the defence team would use an insanity defence and whether or not this would be appropriate. They also discussed whether or not they believe Aron is insane or was insane at the time of the murder.
21. Investigative Information – 27 comments - Readers asked for or suggested information about the investigation.
22. Irrelevant Comments- 168 comments - These are comments that were not relevant to this study. Examples are when readers denigrated each other or asked for clarification about the articles.
23. Jewish Beliefs – 89 comments - Readers commented on particular Jewish religious ideas and values. Examples include comments about the redemption, forgiveness, and atonement.
24. Jewish Texts - 88 comments - Readers often referred to or quoted Jewish texts, verses, or biblical commandments in their comments. Readers discussed the following:
Biblical figures – Readers compared Aron to evil people in Jewish history.
Laws – Examples include the prohibition of mourning on the Sabbath; prohibition of gossip; and the four methods of capital punishment in the Jewish court.
Verses – Examples include 'good things happen through good people and bad through bad' and 'any person can repent and has a portion in the world to come'.
25. Leiby's Family - 37 comments - Readers discussed the Kletzky family. They wished them strength and comfort, complimented their faith, courage and acceptance; felt sadness and grief for them; said they are a special family; said they sanctified G-d's name; and said they must want justice.
26. Lipa - 12 comments - Readers discussed the singer/songwriter and the song he composed in memory of Leiby Kletzky. They also discussed comments made by Mr. Kletzky about the song.
27. Media - 76 comments - Readers discussed the media's coverage of the case. Some readers request censorship from YWN and VIN in posting pictures of Aron or in publishing details of the case, while others argue against it. Other comments were about the accuracy of the reporting; comments made to the media by the DA and

the defence team; the media's relationship with Jews; comments about Jewish and mainstream media; Aron's interview with the Daily News; and media bias.

28. Memorial Fund – 13 comments - Readers discussed the memorial fund the Kletzky family established in Leiby's memory. Readers also discussed the reactions to the memorial fund in the mainstream media.
29. Mental Illness - 32 comments - Readers discussed mental health and commented on treatment, the Orthodox Jewish community/religion and mental illness, mental health laws, danger and mental illness, and Aron's mental health.
30. Molestation – 44 comments - Readers discussed molestation/sexual abuse and reporting practices of these crimes in the Orthodox Jewish community. Comments were about the ramifications of reporting on communal marriage/matchmaking practices; reporting to police and/or rabbis; educating kids; the way the OJC deals with abuse; cover-ups; whether or not Aron molested Leiby and if so, how he should or would be treated.
31. Not Guilty Plea – 11 comments - Aron pleaded not guilty to the charges and readers wondered how he could do so after he had confessed to the crime.
32. Orthodox Jewish Community - 98 comments - Readers discussed the larger Orthodox Jewish community, the lifestyle, and how they deal with things. Examples include discussions about Orthodox Jewish establishments and organizations; the community's response to mentally ill individuals and to misfits; and change within the community..
33. Police – 50 comments - Readers discussed law enforcement professionals and their role in the case. They also discussed what role they should play within the community. Comments were about Amber Alerts, reporting molestation to the police, comparing the police and Shomrim, and Yaakov German's assistance to the police.
34. Politicians - 20 comments - Readers discussed various politicians. Mayor Bloomberg was the most discussed politician because of the cell phone ban he had instituted in schools. Other comments were about Barack Obama, the DA Charles Hynes, and Dov Hikind. Comments were also made about councilmen not using the laws they make (like the Amber Alert), and that politicians will exploit the tragedy
35. Prayer - 40 comments - Readers asked people to pray or offered a prayer in their comments. Prayers were for Leiby to be found; that the Kletzky family should be able to move on; for the redemption; for the prosecution to succeed; for G-d's protection and salvation; for the end of cover-ups; for Leiby's soul; and that the unity seen during the search should continue. Comments discussing praying for Aron were also made and that Leiby's soul should pray for us in heaven.

36. Prior Knowledge – 23 comments - Readers discussed whether or not Aron and Leiby knew each other before the day the boy went missing. Comments said they must have known each other, that saying Leiby got lost is a cover up, and that Leiby's behaviour implied prior knowledge.
37. Prison - 15 comments - Readers discussed Aron being imprisoned. Most comments suggested he would be killed in jail. Other comments were about taxpayers' money and imprisonment versus institutionalization.
38. Prosecution – 23 comments - Readers discussed Charles Hynes, the District Attorney in this case. Comments were generally supportive (5), while some were related to statements Hynes made about a potential insanity defence (3). Others (4) were about the charges; state versus Torah law; the trial location; and the U.S. attorney general.
39. Rabbis - 28 comments - Readers discussed rabbis and their role in the Orthodox Jewish community. They discussed rabbis as guiders; that listening to rabbis is what G-d wants; the importance of rabbinic rulings and advice; the rabbinic view on the death penalty; and Aron's connections to rabbis. They also discussed the community's practice of reporting instances of molestation to rabbis, how rabbis deal with this crime, and why. (17/28 comments are about molestation).
40. Secular Society – 13 comments - Readers discussed whether Aron's lifestyle and association with secular culture influenced him or contributed to his actions. The focus in these comments was on his Facebook profile and the celebrities he followed.
41. Shomrim - 15 comments - Readers discussed the volunteer patrol group of the Orthodox Jewish community who were first called when Leiby went missing and searched for several hours before involving the police.
42. Technology – 11 comments - Readers discussed technology such as cell phones, Facebook, and television. They discuss technology as useful in locating Aron, the need for kosher technology (i.e. phones, television shows), Facebook (in general and Aron's profile), and cyberbullying.
43. Victims in Other Cases – 16 comments - Comments were made about other crimes and the victims in those crimes. 11 comments discussed the disappearance of Etan Patz whose father spoke to the media about the Kletzky case.
44. Vigilantism - 27 comments - Readers discuss exacting vigilante justice on Aron and whether or not it would be appropriate to do so.
45. What Happened - 43 comments - Readers speculated on what happened between Aron and Leiby. They stated that the public does not know what happened, or questioned elements of the story, such as why Leiby did not run from Aron. Readers discussed

whether anyone saw Aron and Leiby together at the wedding in Monsey or going into Aron's home.