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**Women in (Em)Power: A Qualitative Study of Orthodox Women
Principals**

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WOMEN IN (EM)POWER:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF ORTHODOX WOMEN PRINCIPALS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
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ABSTRACT

WOMEN IN (EM)POWER: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF ORTHODOX WOMEN PRINCIPALS

Yael Wakslak

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of Orthodox Jewish women who occupy the role of school principal in Orthodox Jewish schools. What distinguishes these individuals is that they are accomplished females who, in addition to overcoming the common challenges of women in leadership positions, as Orthodox Jews, their environments, both the ones they were raised in and the ones they currently work in, create a distinct expectation of gender roles, cultural identity and leadership characteristics. Additionally, this study explores how the shaping of their gender, cultural and leadership identities continue to manifest themselves and impact the way these women interact in their professional roles within that same community. There is currently not enough research about the experiences of Orthodox Jewish women in positions of leadership, which makes this such a valuable study. The present study contributes to our understanding of women's leadership in Orthodox society through analyzing the life histories of five Jewish women school principals. The interviews have been analyzed from the perspectives of gender, cultural, and leadership theories. By interviewing these women, this study explores the experiences of Orthodox Jewish female principals and uncovers how they have created a space in a culturally/religiously acceptable way for fulfilling their job requirements.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

In current times, the Orthodox Jewish community has changed in various ways as the broader society has supported the increased exposure of women occupying more public roles. This reflects a societal shift of the increase of women fulfilling more prominent roles in the workforce. US Department of Education (2016) reports that this shift has played out in schools, as well, with the number of female principals in public schools increasing from twenty-five percent to fifty-two percent between 1987 and 2011. In private schools, in general, while there has not been the same increase in female principals, the percentage of private school female principals almost always exceeded the percentage of public-school female principals during those years. These trends are attributed to an increased emphasis on the education of women and the increased appointment of women to professional roles.

Specifically, in Jewish private schools, Schick (2007) details that “[i]n line with societal and Jewish communal trends, nearly half (45%) of the principals (in Jewish day schools) are women.” Schick further comments that “[t]here has been a pronounced shift toward selecting women as day school principals, reflecting the changed role of women in society, as well as the expanding acceptance of leadership roles of women in Jewish communal life.” It is noteworthy that the subjects of Schick’s study include many non-Orthodox schools, as well as omitting many types of Orthodox schools. Thus, making this study, which focuses exclusively on Orthodox schools, all the more relevant. Orthodox Judaism subscribes to more conservative gender roles, while the non-Orthodox

sects of Judaism adopt increasingly more modern gender roles, which encourage women to take ever greater public roles (Ferziger, 2009).

Orthodox women in positions of leadership are presented with a dual challenge: ascend to the principalship and then redefine the cultural expectations and behaviors based on their religious and gender norms. They need to adapt the societal trend in a way that fits with their identity as Orthodox Jewish women and members of the Orthodox Jewish community. As Ferziger (2009) detailed, the ongoing discourse of how to create acceptable female leadership positions within the Orthodox Jewish community underscores the essential challenge for these principals: how do you carve out a position of female leadership in congruence with your gender identity, cultural identity and leadership identification?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Orthodox Jewish women who occupy the role of school principal in Orthodox Jewish schools. This study expanded on the prior research on women in positions of leadership, with a focus on Orthodox Jewish women who work in Orthodox Jewish schools in the United States. It further examined the unique dynamics they present both in their quest to become principals and their ongoing work as principals. The participants in the study were all female, Orthodox Jewish principals of either high schools or elementary schools, four of which have gender segregated classes with one elementary school with mixed gender classes.

Orthodox Judaism is a broad term that describes the community of individuals who adhere to the traditional practice of Judaism, adhering to the Torah law given to Moses at Mount Sinai and maintaining the divine and immutable nature of those laws regardless of the changing times. While the application of the laws may vary based on historical context, the essence of the laws never changes. Terms like *Haredi*, *ultra-Orthodox*, and *Modern Orthodox* are all strains of Judaism which fall under the broader category of Orthodox Judaism. However, categorizations such as *Open Orthodoxy*, *Conservative*, and *Reform* are not considered part of the Orthodox tradition, and their rulings would not be valid in Orthodox Jewish tradition.

The roles and expectations of women within this cultural tradition are described below under Cultural Identity Theory, however, it may be broadly stated that leadership positions are atypical. Further, women in leadership roles may have constraints on their autonomy in decision-making, as well as expectations to defer to male authority figures if differences of opinion arise. The traditional role definitions may have an effect within the school where a woman leader works, as well as spill over into the community where she interacts with individuals who are stakeholders at the school.

Schick (2014) delineates the differences between Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Community (a trans-denominational network of schools) schools. As of the publishing of Schick's most recent census of Jewish day schools in 2013-2014, Conservative schools were facing declining enrollment, having decreased around 45% since the last census was done five years prior. Reform schools comprise only about 1.5% of all enrollment throughout the country, while Community schools are on the rise with an increase of over 30% enrollment since the previous census. Differences between the

different sects of Jewish practice can be found in Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study explored the experiences of Orthodox Jewish female principals from three lenses: gender identity theory (Goffman, 1977), cultural identity theory (Kim, 2007) and leadership theory (Collinson, 2011). The theories are briefly summarized here, and an expanded discussion is included in Chapter 3.

Gender Theory

Gender Theory addresses the factors and determinants which facilitates the development of male and female infants into masculine and feminine adults (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). While there undoubtedly are a number of factors that contribute to this developmental process, there are three main approaches that are analyzed in attributing the sources of gender identity formation: psychologically-oriented theories which focus on the psychic processes which manage gender development, sociological theories which focus on the social structures and how they contribute to gender development and biologically-oriented theories which focus on the biological roles played by males and females in gender development (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

A perspective on the gendered nature of leadership roles is offered by Eagly (2002), based on numerous research studies based on perceptions held within cultures. Eagly (2002) posits a difference between the perception of women as “communal,” in that qualities such as nurturing, caring, and kindness are valued in them, while men are perceived as more “agentic,” where ambition, dominance, aggressiveness, and self-

sufficiency are valued. Society generally regards the latter as more characteristic of leaders, thus favoring the selection of males for leadership roles over females, and more harshly judging female leaders who may demonstrate more agentic traits.

Regardless of which approach is applied, there are two main contributors to the development of gender identity. They are the influences of the family unit and those of the social environment, i.e., the school, the community, etc. (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Goffman (1977) argued that there is a selection that occurs at birth which groups an individual with those of a common sex-link. This sorting sets the two groups, males and females, up for a different experience of socialization. The differing socialization has the ability, argued Goffman, to create a perceived difference in the genders, where a biological one might not exist. Since the socialization has people believing that the difference exists, then the difference has been experienced. Thus, a child's environment plays a prominent role in determining gender identity and the roles that accompany that identity. The critical role of early childhood experiences places a tremendous amount of influence that one's family unit has on determining gender roles and what the expectations are from those roles. The way that the parents divide labor and the expectations that they have for their children all factor into how a child perceives the behaviors that are identified with their gender. The same can be said for a child's social environment.

For example, in Orthodox Jewish early childhood education, boys and girls are taught to reenact the traditional Sabbath roles of male and female with boys as the "*Abba shel Shabbat*," the "Sabbath Father" and recite the prayer traditionally recited by the man of the house. The girls are taught how to light the Sabbath candles, a role traditionally

performed by the woman of the house (Gorsetman & Sztokman, 2013). This example serves as an illustration of both the familial and social influences, where the mother and father occupy certain roles in the household and these roles are reinforced by the educational environment. These influences further cement the defined roles for males and females in the Orthodox Jewish community where there is a significant religious overtone on both the familial and the educational environments which has very well-defined religious gender. These constructs are modelled at home and are part of the educational curriculum in Orthodox Jewish schools.

This paper examines both the familial and social influences, within each of the three theoretical constructs, and how Orthodox Judaism impacts these environments. Understanding the impacts of familial and social influences gives insight into the prominent factors that play a role in the development of women Orthodox Jewish school principals who are taking on non-traditional roles as school leaders.

Cultural Identity Theory

Cultural identity theory studies the different dynamics and circles of influence which contribute to a person's sense of identification and belongingness within the culture and society in which they live. This term includes a broad range of ideas which include, but are not limited to, national, ethnolinguistic and racial identity (Kim, 2007). Ibrahim and Heuer (2016) further define the elements which impact cultural identity to include ethnicity, gender and gender identity, spiritual assumptions, age and life stage, ability and disability status, family, community, and nation. The cultural identity that forms as a result of these areas of impact "is conceived as a communally shared system of communicative practices that are unique to the community and enduring over time, a

phenomenon that cannot and should not be understood either as discrete variable or an individual choice” (Kim, 2007).

In the patriarchal Orthodox Jewish community, a major factor in determining identity is the code of religious laws and the gender roles that are the outgrowth of the laws and customs as proscribed in religious texts. There are numerous Jewish laws and practices which differentiate between men and women and those differences communicate to women the message that it is inappropriate to hold positions of leadership in a public domain. In the Orthodox Jewish culture “communally shared system of communicative practices” (Kim, 2007), stems from teaching of Torah Law derived from texts that interpret the Talmud. One of the most authoritative texts is the Shulchan Aruch written by Yosef Karo in 1565 which is a comprehensive and organized collection of Jewish laws. Some of those laws set forth the expectations in regard to gender roles within the culture. For example, one law states that women cannot count towards the necessary quorum of ten for synagogue prayer services (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 55:1, Friedman Edition). Similarly, women should not read from the Torah during the communal Torah reading during the services, (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 282:3) and women may not be a judge on a Jewish court of law (Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 7:4) nor be a witness in a court case (Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 33:1). Furthermore, while an Orthodox Jewish woman lives in her father's home she is under his authority (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 234:1), and once she marries, she then becomes bound by her husband’s customs (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 234:2). These laws highlight the communal expectations, services and priorities and create an environment where children receive the message as to which behaviors are appropriate

for specific genders. It is this cultural understanding of Orthodox Jewish women, that the public domain belongs to their male counterparts, that highlights the importance this cultural identity had on their pursuit of leadership roles and the principalship. There is a dissonance in how women leaders are expected to conduct themselves when interacting with both female and male community members, particularly the latter, who may expect deference on their part. The roles they actually play of management, assertiveness and decision-making can lead to internal conflict, as well as potential discomfort with the norms and traditions they are expected to pass on to the future generation of female students under their care.

Leadership Theory

Leadership theory explores the traits and aspects of what makes an effective leader and identifies different types of leadership styles and qualities, while focusing on what defines a good leader and which characteristics enable one to gain, wield and effectively maintain power. Collinson (2011) details two major schools of thought when it comes to leadership theory: those who seek to identify definitive traits that are common to all leaders and those who claim that leadership is relational to the people being led and heavily dependent on context. This fluid understanding of leadership renders the crucial leadership traits highly variable. A number of school leadership models have been proposed, some with overlapping characteristics. For example, Avolio and Gardner (2005) list qualities of authentic leadership, and Eagly and Carli (2007) describe leadership styles as being transformational, transactional, or laissez faire.

Collinson (2011) further details several aspects that researchers often overlook when conducting leadership studies. Of those, gender is a prominent overlooked aspect.

Collinson stressed how these overlooked dynamics between the leader and those in the leader's charge need to be taken into account when evaluating which characteristics make an effective leader. This commonly overlooked aspect obligates researchers to be evaluating male and female leaders differently. Specifically, in the principalship, women and men typically display very different leadership traits (Helterbrand & Rieg, 2004). This difference in leadership traits between men and women also requires a focus on exploring the way that female principals interact with their male staff. This sensitivity to the male female workplace interaction is especially heightened in the Orthodox Jewish community, where men and women tend to have more traditional gender roles. This balance between adhering to the traditional gender roles of the Orthodox community while exercising leadership is an integral point of interest in this study.

In Orthodox Jewish schools, the principal is not only the educational leader, but is tied very closely to the religious atmosphere of the entire community. Often, the students are from the same community and the principal is, in essence, responsible for the religious education of the local children. This places standards and expectations on principals in Orthodox Jewish schools that might not be otherwise present in other types of school environments. When women are principals, this places these women principals in very prominent leadership roles, as they are the ones who ultimately bear the responsibility of the education for the next generation. Focusing on these women principals in these types of schools, where they are tasked with religiously educating the next generation, is of particular interest, as traditionally men have been the ones to pass

on religious education from generation to generation, placing these women in uncharted territory.

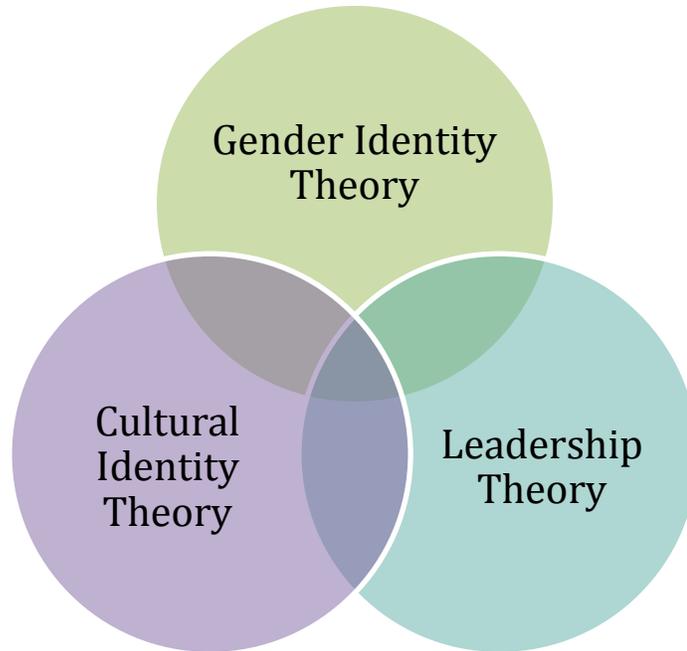


Figure 1 Venn Diagram of Triangulation of Theoretical Constructs

Significance/Importance of the Study

This study is significant because the Orthodox Jewish community is severely understudied although they have been part of the fabric of American society for over 100 years, and are represented in every major region of the country. Even the studies which have been conducted that include aspects of the Orthodox Jewish community, place a more macro emphasis on the Jewish community as a whole, focusing on issues such as intermarriage and Jewish identity. They also focus more on demographic changes, without focusing on more micro issues like the nature of Jewish education and the prominence of women in the community as a whole. Kadushin et al (cited in Saxe & Tighe, 2013) explained that despite the many demographic studies, there fails to be a

stress on understanding the varying dynamics and differing sects and attitudes within the Jewish community.

Even though schools within the Jewish community have expanded in recent years, based on census reports from 2014, enrolling over 255,000 students at almost 900 sites (Schick, 2014), studies on that population are still scarce. In contrast, public schools collect significant amounts of data on student outcomes, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress database, as well as staffing concerns through the National Schools and Staffing Survey. Even some of the other religious school systems like the Catholic schools under the Archdiocese have a central organizing body. Orthodox Jewish schools, in general, however, do not collect a lot of data and do not utilize or implement policy based on data. Additionally, each school runs as an independent entity, without the existence of a supervising district or other organization. Consequently, since the Orthodox Jewish school system is so understudied, any insight into that system is valuable.

Marvin Schick's studies run under the auspices of the Avi Chai Foundation, are some of the only published studies on the Orthodox Jewish school system. The funding for those studies is set to sunset in 2020 (Schick, 2014). Another study the "Educators in Jewish Schools Study (EJSS)" (2006) analyzes the characteristics of Jewish day schools and their staff and indicates that only 23% of their respondents are from Orthodox schools. This small Orthodox response percentage requires there to be a focus specifically on Orthodox Jewish schools and their staff to evaluate how they are faring relative to society as a whole.

What perhaps is most distinguishing about this study is that it presents an insight into the rise of female leadership within a community where men traditionally occupy places of power in Orthodox Jewish circles. As detailed by Ferziger (2009), the appropriate implementation of female leadership is an ongoing debate in the different sects of Orthodox Jewry. Breuer (as cited in Ferziger, 2009) traces this debate back to an earlier fundamental societal question as to whether Orthodox Jewish females should receive any formal education at all. Nadell (as cited in Ferziger, 2009) highlights more recent debates as to whether women should serve in the capacity of rabbi and whether women should be allowed to hold their own prayer services.

By understanding the experiences of the women who have successfully navigated the gender/cultural constraints, this study provides valuable insight as to how to balance the encouragement of female leadership while maintaining the traditional values of the Orthodox Jewish community. The goal is to provide education to the Orthodox female leaders of tomorrow and to provide them with infrastructure as to how they can succeed and navigate the balance of communal expectations and leadership responsibilities.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of the lived experiences of Orthodox Jewish female principals?
2. How do gender norms and cultural identity shape the experiences of Orthodox Jewish female principals?

Definition of Terms

Orthodox Jews - People who describe themselves as Orthodox Jews follow traditional interpretations of Jewish law, or *halakha* and on numerous

levels of religious belief display higher levels of religious commitment than do other Jews (Pew Research Center 2013). Romain (as quoted in Lewis, 2014) further details that Orthodox Jews believe that the Torah and its Revelation at Sinai were dictated by God. Since Torah is the word of God, this renders its laws immutable, despite changing times and situations, demanding that the situation conforms to the Torah and not vice versa.

Rebbetzin – wife of a Rabbi

Shul – synagogue, Yiddish word referring to a typically Orthodox Jewish house of worship

Torah – (1) the law of God as revealed to Moses and recorded in the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures (the Pentateuch).

(2) a scroll containing the Torah.

CHAPTER 2: Review of Related Literature

Introduction

In the following chapter, I will elaborate on the theoretical frameworks outlined in chapter one, as well as the relevant literature which discusses female leadership in increasingly more specific details as it pertains to female Orthodox Jewish school principals. These three theories intersect and provide a construct by which to analyze the experiences of the female Orthodox Jewish principals in this study.

Once those constructs are defined, the review of related literature focuses on an overview of women as leaders, followed more specifically by research on women as school principals. As the review becomes more specific, it focuses on the research of minority female principals and, finally, the cross-section of all the theoretical constructs, Orthodox Jewish female principals. This development helps to paint a picture of the depth of the challenge that Orthodox Jewish female principals are faced with, as they need to navigate the dynamics present in all these groups and subgroups, including those which are shared by many others and some which are unique to their own group, to successfully and effectively carry out their roles as school principals.

Theoretical Framework

Gender Identity Theory

In studying gender identity theory, there are several different perspectives that provide a framework for the prominent factors that contribute to the formation of a child's gender identity. These differing perspectives stress different aspects of a child's development and attribute differing amounts of significance to their role in creating a child's gender identity. These aspects will help focus the present study by highlighting

key moments/impacts in the lives of the interview subjects and how they might have contributed to the formation of the people they are today. Please see Table 1 for a summary of the prominent theorists and theories in gender identity.

Table 1

Gender Identity Theorists and Theories

Theorists	Theories
Freud	Psychoanalytic Theory
Kohlberg	Cognitive Development Theory
Maccoby and Jacklin	Stress the differences within-genders, as opposed to between genders
Mischel, Bandura	Role of adults in gender development
Brofenbrenner and Morris, Magnusson and Stattin	Role of schools and society in gender identity
Bem	Both men and women possess traits that are typically attributed to each gender
Eagly and Karau	Role Congruity Theory
Bussey and Bandura	Triadic Reciprocal Causation

In psychoanalytic theory, boys and girls are believed to initially identify with their mother (Freud as quoted in Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Once they reach the ages of three to five years, they begin to more associate with the same-sex parent: boys begin to associate more with their fathers, while girls continue to strengthen their identification with their mothers. This identification with the same-sex parent leads to the adoption of that parent's attributes which forms the basis of their gender identity. Children define the epitome of being male/female with behaving like that same-sex parent. This phenomenon means that regardless of gender the mother plays a prominent role in gender identity

formation, but an even stronger role in female gender identity formation. Accordingly, the women interviewed in this study are asked about the role their mothers occupied both in the home and in the community at large and what impact their mother's roles had on their career choices and trajectory, as well as how they define themselves in their own roles in the home and community.

An alternative approach to gender identity theory is cognitive development theory, which posits that children develop a sense of what is gender-appropriate from what they see and hear around them (Kohlberg as quoted in Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Once children identify their gender, they subsequently develop gender constancy, which is the belief that their current gender is immutable and will remain the same throughout their lives. This belief in gender constancy leads them to desire and to engage in activities that are identified as being appropriate for their gender. This choice of engaging in gender-associated activities is made as a means of affirming their gender identification. Engagement in female associated activities reaffirms that are female, and vice versa with males. In addition to focusing on the interview subjects' mothers, this research will focus on the role women played in the community at large as the participants were growing up, as well as a focus on the family dynamic in terms of prominent family role models and the career paths of parents and siblings, especially sisters. The present study will explore the environment that these principals grew up in as contributing to their own gender identity and how that guided their career development.

Maccoby and Jacklin (as cited in Zosuls et al, 2011) highlight the fact that although there certainly are differences between the genders, "within-gender differences are often larger than those between genders" (p. 827). They argue that the adoption of

stereotypical gender behaviors is a child-directed process, where the social environment of children plays an active role in shaping gender identity. Others (Mischel, Bandura as cited in Zosuls, 2011) argue that parents and adults play the prominent role in gender identity formation. A third group (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, Magnusson & Stattin as cited in Zosuls, et al, 2011), argue for the role of the school or broader social environment.

Bem (as cited in Zosuls et al., 2011) argues that both males and females have qualities associated with each of the two genders. Furthermore, Bem argues that having a healthy mix of masculine and feminine qualities was ideal for psychological adjustment.

Eagly and Karau (2002) explore the phenomenon of the lack of women in elite leadership positions and challenge the “pipeline problem” explanation that posits that there are fewer women in elite position because fewer women choose that path because of family responsibilities and lack of motivation to attain elite leadership roles, resulting in a smaller pool of women to choose from for elite leadership roles. Instead, they suggest the Role Congruity Theory, which posits that women and men exhibit different types of traits as leaders. Leadership traits common to women are typically communal characteristics such as being affectionate, sensitive, helpful and sympathetic. Leadership traits common to men are typically agentic such as being assertive, controlling, aggressive and dominant. Essentially, argue Eagly and Karau, the problem is not with gender, but that society associates agentic qualities with “real” leadership, while communal qualities are overlooked.

This traditional association of male leadership traits as being “true leadership” places women who pursue leadership positions in a bind: if they display exclusively communal qualities, they will likely not be selected for their roles, however, if they

display agentic qualities, they will be looked at negatively for breaking the stereotype associated with their gender. Women are then twice at a disadvantage: both when seeking leadership opportunities and when they are being evaluated for their work should they acquire leadership roles. This issue is compounded as this leaves fewer female mentors available to assist the few women who do seek elite leadership positions.

Bussey and Bandura (1999) provide a further nuanced explanation of gender theory, arguing for triadic reciprocal causation, where personal factors, behavioral patterns and environmental events all impact each other in forming one's gender identity. This socio-cognitive perspective posits the interactions of all these three elements in creating the unique gender identity for each individual. Interviewing these subjects and getting a clear picture of all three aspects in their lives and exploring how these aspects interacted, provided a more nuanced understanding of how these principals developed their own gender identities and how that shaped the school principals they are today.

Cultural Identity Theory

Identity is a sociocultural construct critical in determining how people interact and behave (Collier & Thomas, as quoted in Hall, 1994). Hall (1994) prefers to think of identity not as a completed process, but rather as one that is continually ongoing. As an individual continually interacts with their environment, their identity continues to form and develop. Since identity comes from interactions with one's environment, this never-ceasing process results in a never-ceasing evolution of identity. See Table 2 for a list of prominent theorists and theories in cultural identity theory.

Table 2

Cultural Identity Theorists and Theories

Theorists	Theories
Hall	Identity formation is an ongoing process
Collier & Thomas	Identity is a sociocultural construct
Al-Hazza and Bucher	Cultural literature helps breed cultural identity
Ajrouch and Jamal	Important traits that determine when one identifies as “other”
Pines	Culture is prominent in how employees navigate issues
Chen and Starosta	In the US, there are many cultural identity attributes to navigate in identifying self
Hecht, Collier and Ribeau	Identity is refined through ongoing interaction with their environment

Furthermore, Hall posits two ways of thinking about identity when considering one’s environment: focusing on that which is shared by the greater culture and focusing on that which is not shared by the greater culture. That which is shared by the community as a whole unites the members of the community and provides a shared identity amongst the members of the community due to that which they have in common. The second approach is focusing on what is different between the members of the culture and what has occurred to differentiate them. This approach, despite the shared communal background, provides for a more granular analysis of identity.

Al-Hazza and Bucher (2008) argue that incorporating cultural literature into school curriculums is an effective way to both help Arab Americans better identify with their own cultural heritage, as well as help the greater society develop a broader appreciation of the diversity and multiculturalism brought by Arab Americans. Ajrouch and Jamal (2007) studied Arab Americans in the Detroit metro area and tried to establish the determining factors for which individuals would identify as “other” and which would identify as “white.” This research focuses on the determining what factors encourage the retention of Arab self-identification. They found that the two most prominent factors were age, with the older people more likely to identify as “white”, and education, with the more educated people more likely to identify as “white.”

When focusing on the Orthodox Jewish community, Hall’s two lenses of identity analysis are particularly relevant to this study. The Orthodox Jewish community has very distinct features that are shared by the members of the community and contribute to a very strong united cultural identity due to the experiences and history that they share. However, what is apparent from the interview subjects in this study is that more recent times have impacted attitudes within the greater cultural community as attitudes toward women have changed in the greater society and this has impacted members of the Orthodox Jewish community, allowing these women to occupy positions of power, while there still exist many of the constructs of a traditional patriarchal society within the community.

This cultural dynamic in the Orthodox Jewish community is especially important considering the findings of Pines (2003) that culture plays a prominent role in how employees navigate issues. They found that cultures that are more modern and

individualistic result in individuals more willing to speak to a counselor, which reduces career burnout rate. Understanding the social support for women's occupation of the principalship is critical in helping women succeed in their roles and provide them with a system and added comfort to aid them in navigating whatever issues arise in their careers.

Chen and Starosta (cited in Shin & Jackson, 2003) put forth that in the multiracial and multicultural environment in the United States, the study of identity is very critical as it involves the negotiation of multiple identities in terms of race, religion and nationality in arriving at the definition of self. Shin and Jackson (2003) themselves posit that “[i]dentity is an overarching term encompassing multiple structures of ethnic, cultural, and racial identities, as well as any other socially designate identity label” (p. 214). They further the idea that “[i]dentity is a cultural representation of the self-concept or collective identity of the social group.” Hecht, Collier and Ribeau (quoted by Shin & Jackson, 2003) further argue that an individual's identity is created and refined through interactions and negotiations with their cultural community. It follows, that to better understand an individual's identity, you need to understand the culture they grew up in and the culture they currently exist in, as well as the positions that they have within those cultures.

Leadership Theory

Leadership is a complex process with multiple dimensions, multiple lenses to analyze it by and multiple theories to explain it (Northouse, 2016). The present study focuses on two aspects of leadership in the interview participants: what traits they exhibited that marked them for leadership and what traits they employ currently, now that

they are situated in their current educational leadership positions. See Table 3 for a list of prominent theorists and theories in leadership theory.

Table 3

Leadership Theorists and Theories

Theorists	Theories
Northouse	Leadership has multiple dimensions
Avolio and Gardner, Shamir and Eilam	Authentic Leadership Theory
Eagly and Carli	Transformational, Transactional and Laissez-Faire Leadership
Bass	Trait approach to leadership
Katz	Skills approach to leadership
Hersey & Blanchard	Situational Approach to Leadership
Evans	Path-goal theory
Dansereau	Leader-Member Exchange Theory
Heifetz	Adaptive Leadership Theory
Greenleaf	Servant Leadership Theory
Burns	2 types of transformational leadership
Collinson	Critical Leadership Theory

These two focuses, what traits marked them for leadership and what dynamics they navigate on the job, tap into two aspects of leadership analysis: leadership theory and critical leadership theory. While traditional leadership theory places stress on what traits, characteristics and policies comprise effective leadership, critical leadership

focuses on the dynamics between the leader and the group and how certain dynamics call for different leadership strategies and cannot be ignored when considering what makes an effective leader.

Avolio and Gardner (2005) promote the idea of authentic leadership theory, which posits that there is a common underlying theme to all forms of positive leadership. They argue that through “increased self-awareness, self-regulation and positive modeling, authentic leaders foster the development of authenticity in followers (p. 317).” Shamir and Eilam (as quoted in Avolio & Gardner, 2005) further elaborate on authentic leadership as “followers who follow leaders for authentic reasons and have an authentic relationship with the leader.” This perspective speaks to the ability of a leader to embody certain characteristics that connect with their followers and develop open connections based on “open, transparent trusting and genuine relationships.”

Eagly and Carli (2007) explore three types of leadership: transformational, transactional and laissez-faire. Transformational leadership is one “establishes oneself as a role model by gaining followers’ trust and confidence” (p.128). Transactional leadership is the type of leadership where leaders appeal to the self-interest of their followers in establishing a give-and-take relationship. Laissez-faire leadership is “marked by the general failure to take responsibility for managing” (p.128).

Another prominent approach to understanding leadership is the trait approach. This approach posits there are innate qualities and characteristics that were possessed by leaders in all aspects of society. These leaders were believed to be born with these traits, casting leaders as being born to lead. These traits are believed to be universal in

identifying leaders. In a sense, this approach casts leaders as pre-determined to lead (Bass cited by Northouse, 2016).

A similar approach to understanding leadership, the skills approach, is similarly leader-centric. However, it focuses less on what are the innate personality characteristics of a leader and instead focuses on the skills that a leader has acquired that enables them to effectively lead. Katz (as quoted in Northouse, 2016) identifies three broad categories of skills in effective leaders: technical skills, where the leader possesses a “knowledge about and proficiency in a specific area of work or activity,” (p. 44) human skills, where the leader possesses an ability to work well with people and conceptual skills, where the leader displays an ability to work well with ideas. The behavioral approach is similarly leader-focused, but focuses on the behaviors of the leader instead of their skills or traits.

While this absolute approach, where a common set of traits, skills or behaviors is viewed as applicable to all leaders, is challenged by many (Stodgill cited by Northouse, 2016), there are definitely patterns discernible in younger people that are identified as precursors to leadership. Students and beginner employees are selected to be mentored by more experienced and senior individuals based on the leadership potential the latter sees in the former. Clearly, there are traits that are commonly identified as being leadership traits. Especially since being a female leader has been against the cultural norms of the Orthodox Jewish community until recent history, it is worth investigating whether there were identifiers that either others saw in the participants or they saw in themselves that pushed them to go against this trend.

The situational approach to leadership (Hersey & Blanchard as quoted by Northouse, 2016), by contrast, takes into account the dynamics between the leader and

the followers. The situational approach requires the leader to take into account the situation and the competency level of the followers to properly cater their decisions and leadership style.

The path-goal theory of leadership focuses on how leaders motivate followers to accomplish a particular goal or set of goals. This theory makes the leader in charge of promoting an environment where follower performance and satisfaction are maintained in order to accomplish the tasks at hand (Evans as quoted in Northouse, 2016).

Leader-member exchange theory focuses on the interactions between the leader and the followers and breaks followers into two groups: the in-group who is willing to go above their specific responsibilities for the betterment of the group and the out-group who stick to their stated contractual responsibilities. The in-group is rewarded by the leader by giving them for flexibility, input and benefits, while the out-group is not (Dansereau cited by Northouse, 2016).

Transformational leadership is the type of leadership that creates change in people. It involves being able to assess the entirety of the followers and make decisions and create influence in a way that moves them to perform above expectations. There are two general types of transformational leadership: where the leader promises something to the followers in exchange for performance and where the leader is able to make a connection with the followers which motivates them to go above and beyond what they normally would do (Burns as quoted in Northouse, 2016). Adaptive leadership focuses on the necessary adaptations that people need to make in the face of changing situations (Heifetz as cited in Northouse, 2016).

Servant leadership is a conceptualization of leadership that requires leaders to be sensitive to the needs and concerns of their followers and to empathize with and nurture them (Northouse, 2016). In a way, it is an understanding of leadership which runs counter to traditional perceptions of leadership: it obligates the leader to place the needs of the group in the forefront of leadership decisions and activities. This means that the prime goal of the leader is to serve, that is, the leader is motivated to see that those being led are being taken care of and growing mentally physically and spiritually (Greenleaf quoted by Northouse, 2016). This is especially prominent when considering a principal leading a school, as the principal is tasked as being the servant not only of the teachers, by coaching them and providing them with professional development opportunities, more importantly, though, they are tasked with looking out for the welfare of their students to help them become the leaders of tomorrow through the education provided for them under the principal's watch.

This is even more prominent with principals of Orthodox Jewish schools, as the religious continuity of the community is dependent on the education provided by the school system. School principals of Orthodox Jewish school need to view themselves as not only the servant of the students, but of the community and the entire religion, as well. This places a heavy burden on these principals, as they are the servants of a much greater cause, yet they need to apply that attitude to the mundane-like activities and decisions of the day-to-day responsibilities of their jobs.

Critical leadership theory seeks to move beyond a list of absolute traits or practices that make effective leadership, instead preferring to focus on the often-complicated dynamics between the group and its leader to determine what is the best way

to lead in a given situation, taking into account those dynamics (Collinson, 2011). Critical leadership theory moves away from a leader-centric focus on what will be effective leadership, instead choosing to focus on the relationship between the group and its leader.

One prominent dynamic is the interaction between the genders and how it impacts what leadership choices and styles are appropriate. A possible expression of this dynamic is how members of one gender react to their leader being of an opposite gender. Specific to this study is the question of how male group members react to a female leader who is in a position of power and how the female leader adapts her leadership style and decisions to effectively lead given this possible dynamic.

In exploring the paths these women took to becoming principals, it is important to focus on when they knew they wanted this type of role, what traits they displayed that encouraged them and others that becoming a principal was a good fit for them and how those traits are put to use for these women both in helping them secure their job as principal and in enabling them to carry out the responsibilities of their job.

Impact of Gender and Culture on Leadership

Eagly and Chin (2010) stress the importance of analyzing the impacts of diversity on leadership. They argue that by analyzing the two bodies of theory together will serve to better inform both fields, as analyzing how different minorities lead will provide insight into both the minority characteristics and give insight into distinct leadership qualities and characteristics. This makes the analysis of female school principals leadership techniques all the more relevant, as it will shed light both on women and on leadership.

Ayman and Korabik (2010) claim that understanding gender and culture are essential in understanding leadership. Especially since, in more recent history, there has been a greater stress on varied leadership skills, they argue that being able to identify what leadership traits are more common in different genders and cultures will allow for better identification of leadership and hopefully allow us to better define and understand effective leadership. This argument further stresses the importance of understanding the leadership qualities of these female Orthodox Jewish principals, as that knowledge will serve to broaden what traits allow them to best lead in helping broaden our overall understanding of leadership

Review of Related Literature

Gender Identity Within the Orthodox Jewish Community

Of specific interest in this study is the focus of gender identity within the Orthodox Jewish community, where gender roles are more traditional and women are not generally encouraged to occupy public positions as compared with other religious communities in the U.S. While many outsiders may consider the Jewish community to be somewhat monolithic, there exist several distinct sub-groups, varying in their adherence to the traditional norms and values laid out in ancient texts.

In the Orthodox Jewish community, in particular, there are more strictly defined gender roles within the family setting and in the community at large. Focusing on the role models the participant women had as they developed their own sense of identity, especially within the Orthodox Jewish community will be especially telling, as these women seem to fly in the face of traditional gender identities despite having themselves

grown up in the Orthodox Jewish community. Other points of interest include personal motivators, family perspectives and support, opportunities to grow as leaders, and cultural acceptance.

Orthodox Judaism is the most traditional sect of Judaism, with the longest history of practice. Other sects developed as an outgrowth of the desire to adapt religious practice to changing times and environments. Klaff (2006) explains that the Reform movement was formed in the mid-1800s by German Jews who immigrated to America in an attempt to reconcile being Jewish with the ideals of American life. While in Germany there was no room for compromise, either one was Jewish or German, in America this compromise was believed possible. The Reform movement, therefore, rejected anything that they deemed outdated in ritual, practice and belief (Greenberg, 1984).

The Conservative movement actually developed as an outgrowth of those who viewed the modern concessions of the Reform movement as too extreme and sought to broker a compromise that although still modern, was more traditionally acceptable (Klaff, 2006). The Conservative movement granted women the privilege to be called up to the holy Torah scroll and allowed families to drive to synagogue on the Sabbath (when driving and other forms of labor were traditionally prohibited).

The Modern Orthodox, are essentially Orthodox Jews, except they “relaxed certain prohibitions against sexual mixing and lauded the American democratic way of life” (Greenberg, 1984 p.2). The farther away from traditional Orthodox practice, the more liberal of a view adopted on gender roles and women’s participation in religious events and ceremonies.

Goffman (1977) argued that the stereotypical unmarried female publicly acts “in a retiring manner, by projecting shyness, reserve and a display of frailty, fear, and incompetence” (p. 312) so that she can present herself as one needing a male’s helping hand. A married, female acts in the same manner, but for a different reason: to avoid giving other men any potential encouragement of sexual interest. Goffman (1977) decried the way in which small physical differences between men and women (height, musculature) have translated to large disadvantages to women in many spheres where these differences are irrelevant, such as intellectual pursuits, running businesses, or engaging in decision-making. He noted that discrimination against women is seen in all cultures, and perpetuated by various “rules” set down to advantage men and preserve their dominant roles, while placing women in a position of serving them. While society has changed considerably since the mid-1900s in terms of women’s presence in the public sphere as well as their ways of relating to their male counterparts, Orthodox communities still continue to hold structures and practices that preserve male dominance and exert penalties for those who challenge them.

While there certainly are more women in school leadership than there have been in the past, women still face great challenges in becoming school principals. Shakeshaft (2006) finds that Goffman’s stereotype has not changed all that much despite the time that has passed, as women are still faced with multiple barriers to becoming school principals. They need to overcome gender discrimination, domestic expectations and responsibilities, as well as a lack of built-in networks to help them with their careers. Women who occupy very high-profile public roles, like the participants of the present study who are tasked by the entire community with educating their children, and who

portray poise, expertise and competence, would be breaking the mold on stereotypical female behavior.

Gaunt (2012) applies the theory of Glick and Fiske (1996) of ambivalent sexism to identify Jewish religiosity and especially Orthodox Jewish practice as having the three domains of a patriarchal society: paternalism, gender differentiation and heterosexual intimacy. Ambivalent sexism is a set of attitudes about women that view them stereotypically and in need of male guidance and assistance that results in behaviors that are prosocial (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Essentially, ambivalent sexism results in men feeling the need to extend themselves on behalf of women since they view women as needing the help. Gaunt identifies Orthodox Jewish society as one that has a high prevalence of ambivalent sexism. This also casts the Orthodox Jewish community as one that has very well-defined gender roles, where men might treat women favorably and with a caring attitude, yet exclude them from positions of decision-making and authority. Further, men and women may be separated in many areas of the public sphere including educational settings, places of worship, and even community events. Yet, even in this almost-textbook patriarchal environment, with such well-defined gender roles, the Orthodox Jewish women who are participants in the present study have carved out a leadership position for themselves as primary to, not subservient to, the greater patriarchal society.

This idea is captured by Moore (2000) in exploring the gender identities of the religious and irreligious Jewish and Arab women in Israel. Eisenstein (quoted by Moore, 2000) maintains that most conservative religious ideologies are patriarchal. Additionally, El-Or (quoted by Moore, 2000) and Sered (quoted by Moore, 2000) argue that “a salient gender identity among religious individuals may indicate acceptance of the gendered

division of labor, preservation of the social order and resistance to change” (p. 7).

Essentially, they are arguing that women who are more religious are more at peace with a gendered division of labor and more traditional gender definitions. The women principal participants buck the trend; they are occupying a role that had formerly been occupied almost exclusively by men, yet find a way to coordinate that position within the constructs of their Orthodox Jewish community.

Leadership Identity Within the Orthodox Jewish Community

As outlined by Ferziger (2009), women’s place in Orthodox Jewish society has long been a topic of discussion; within the last forty years their appropriate leadership roles have been heavily debated. It was only in 1972 that the Reform faction of Judaism ordained their first female rabbi. Prior to that, it was clear that the rabbinate was the male domain.

With the passage of time, there has become more of a debate between those voices who seek to innovate the Jewish tradition and those who seek to maintain the status quo and stick to tradition. This trend toward expanded public roles for women can also have a pushback effect, where women become further limited from the public domain. For example, Gorsetman and Sztokman (2013) discuss a trend in Orthodox Judaism where women’s pictures are not being published in magazines. This would seem to reflect a further removal of women from the public sphere in a clear push to maintain the traditions that have been for so long. Gorsetman and Sztokman also argue that from Jewish children’s first classroom experience, they are taught of the different roles of men and women as modelled during the weekly pre-Shabbat party where the boys making Kiddush, the declaration of the holiness of Shabbat over wine (or grape juice), while the

girls light the Shabbat candles. This sets the tone very early on that each gender has separate and distinct roles.

While non-Orthodox strains of Judaism, such as Reform and Conservative Judaism have since welcomed women into leadership roles, such as female rabbis (Nadell as cited in Ferziger, 2009), Orthodox Judaism, has maintained its tradition of male-only rabbis, while attempting to find acceptable ways for qualified, educated and articulate women to occupy leadership roles in the community. As Jewish women's education has evolved and women have become more and more knowledgeable about Jewish laws, custom and practice, there has become an increasing push within the greater Jewish community at large for women to have a stronger representation in Jewish practice. This includes women's prayer groups, women serving as rabbis and advisors on Jewish Law and women occupying prominent leadership roles in the community.

Interestingly, Lebental (2015) found that in Jewish secular high schools in Israel, women are occupying close to or more than half of the principal positions in various regions in the country. This quantitative study used public records and analyzed the prevalence of female principals by geographic region in the country. The important distinction that can be made is that these schools are not Orthodox Jewish schools and it is not yet known if those phenomena are present in Orthodox schools as well.

Cultural Identity Within the Orthodox Jewish Community

It is important to understand how Jewish cultural identity is formed and what factors are prominent in identifying someone as Jewish and what connects people to the larger Jewish community. Semans and Fish (2000) conducted forty-eight interviews with Jewish families of varying religious observance with the goal of better identifying what

role a family's Jewishness has on their lives. Their goal was to determine what being Jewish practically means to these families. Jews in the past, when suffering religious persecution would use that persecution as means of connection with their traditional Jewish identity. They were externally stimulated to cleave to their communities and their religious identification. However, that is no longer true in modern society. With today's environment and political freedoms, the question remains: what does being Jewish mean today?

Semans and Fish (2000) concluded that a universal theme that was found in all the families was "making sense of the world from a Jewish perspective" (p. 127). This means that every interaction of all the participating families' lives is viewed through the prism of their Jewishness. This causes them to analyze every situation through the lens of their Jewish identity and their place within the Jewish community. This identity of being culturally Jewish, argue Semans and Fish (2000), has eleven main categories: responsibility towards others, oppression, culture, roots, identity, traditions, ethics, family, children: transmission to the next generation, opportunity to question and debate and the Jewish community.

Friedman, Friedlander and Blustein (2005) conducted a phenomenological study where they interviewed six women and four men from a single community in the Northeastern United States and asked about their experience as a Jewish person. They identified six universal themes of Jewish identity: dynamic nature of self-identification, early formative experiences, desire to increase religious practice, generativity, feeling marginalized, and awareness of discrimination. These themes serve as a unifying factor amongst the participants, feeding into their united Jewish identity.

Langman (quoted by Altman et al, 2010), explains that Jewish identity is not only about observing the Jewish religion, as Jewish identity also incorporates a people, an ethnicity, a culture and a civilization. This is underscored by the fact that there exist many varieties of practiced Judaism and even a significant portion of Jews who don't engage in religious practice, yet they continue to identify culturally as Jews and as part of the larger Jewish community. This is confirmed by Boyarin and Boyarin (1993) who state that “Jewishness disrupts the very categories of identity because it is not national, not genealogical, not religious, but all of these in dialectical tension with one another” (p. 721).

History of Women as Leaders

All societies have gender systems (Moghadam, 1992) and these systems bring with them a set of values and expectations that come along with being identified with a particular gender. Children from a very young age find themselves searching for cues as how to properly behave and which sets of activities are appropriate for their gender (Martin & Ruble, 2004). With that being said there have been jobs that have been associated as “traditional male” or “traditionally female” jobs. To that point, it has not been that long since being a female principal was an aberration, as the position was typically reserved for men. In 1987-1988 only 12% of experienced principals were female (US Department of Education, 2016). This trend was so strong that Shakeshaft (1987) argued that the entire structure of school administration and the methods for teaching and encouraging effective school administration have only been set up considering the male perspective. One explanation given for this occurrence is role congruity theory which posits that there are differing societal expectations of what is

appropriate for men and women in a given position or situation (Eagly & Karau, 2002). When considering school principals, there was an expectation that “women take care, men take charge” which casts men as desirable leaders, leaving women, even qualified ones, on the outside looking in.

While women have certainly made tremendous strides in the thirty years since Shakeshaft, it underscores what was once a reality for the general public: that women were not becoming school leaders despite the overwhelming majority of school teachers being female. This phenomenon still persists to some extent, as women are still not becoming high school principals, where they were found to occupy less than a third of the available positions in 2007, which remained the same in 2012 (Digest of Educational Statistics, 2007; NCES, 2013), as compared with 63% for Elementary schools.

Additionally, Kerr et al. (2014) found that among school districts with little to no existing female administrators, there was no progress and that the districts that hired more females were the ones that already had a significant percentage of females employed. Using public data available from the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, this study found that although there certainly has been progress made and there continues to be progress made, the progress is not being accomplished uniformly.

Addi-Racah (2002) furthers this perception of women needing to overcome greater obstacles to attain the principalship. Doing a multi-variable quantitative study, Addi-Racah found that females achieving the principalship followed the “queuing” cycle: that candidates who had the more desirable employee characteristics were hired for the jobs with the more desirable employer characteristics and that being female was viewed as being undesirable in that model. Although these findings are mitigated by the

fact that its impact is dependent on many other factors and that there are nested conditions that can affect the extent of this dynamic such as the gender makeup of the school's teacher, as well as political indicators and the socio-cultural structure of the school (this study focused on Arab and Israeli schools in Israel), however the dynamic is certainly present.

Qualities of Women in the Role of School Principal

Quite the opposite from societal congruity expectations, argues Shakeshaft (1987), women innately possess four qualities (1-the centrality of interpersonal relationships, 2-teaching and learning as the major focus, 3-the importance of building community, and 4-the marginality of daily work life) which make them particularly suited to educational administration and these qualities should be encouraged, nurtured and utilized in effective educational administration, with women acting based on their natural female tendencies (Gilligan as cited by Shakeshaft, 1987). Shakeshaft's argument makes it a priority to encourage women to seek principal roles and provide them with support when they encounter challenges both along the way and once they are in administrative positions, as their unique contribution is already disadvantaged in a system designed for men. These priorities obligate a closer look at the road women navigate to become principals and the unique challenges that they are faced with as they try to offer their unique skills to educational administration.

Eckman (2004) bolsters this idea that men and women have differing approaches to the principalship, as well as different challenges and different paths to get there. Conducting a study with both a quantitative and qualitative aspects, Eckman first administered three surveys to 564 principals pertaining to role conflict, role commitment

and job satisfaction. From the group that responded to the surveys, eight women and eight men were interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of role conflict, role commitment and job satisfaction and to compare and contrast how these dynamics played out with men as opposed to women. Amongst the findings were that while men followed a more planned transition, had a stronger group of mentors and became principals at a younger age, women were just the opposite. Additionally, women's careers were impacted by their familial obligations, which challenged them in terms of the time commitment necessary for being principal, as opposed to men who did not have the same need.

Kleine (1994) mailed out questionnaires to 480 women nationwide with principalship certification. One of the patterns that Kleine found was that the category which the respondents had the most to contribute was the "What to Do to Be a Principal" category, with the bulk of the responses focusing on what women should not do such as "Don't neglect your home life" and "Don't try to act like a man". Kleine concluded that "[i]t was as though the respondents felt a particular need to give advice which emphasized careful and deliberate action" (p. 11).

Experiences of Female Principals

Of course, the fight is not over once a woman has become principal. Now that she has overcome all of the obstacles in her quest to becoming principal, she must occupy a role which has been traditionally male, and, as Shakeshaft (1987) has indicated, brings along with it an expectation of typical male behavior and carve out behaviors that will be successful for women, utilizing typically-female skills to lead and run the school. Perhaps the most prominent of challenges is dealing with men, specifically subordinates who now

need to answer to the superior female principal and who need to accept feedback, both positive and negative.

Apparently, the deck is stacked against female principals. This idea was discussed in Chen and Addi (1992) where a quantitative analysis of survey responses on the effect of principal and teacher gender on school climate. A questionnaire was administered to 415 administrators and teachers and determined that the gender of the principal, more than the gender of the teacher, has a tremendous impact on the attitudes of the teacher. Whereas male principals have a staff with greater seniority, female principals have an overall more positive attitude of their teachers. Male teachers without an administrative position were found to have the most negative attitude toward their work environment under both male and female principals. This places female principals in disadvantageous position, where they need to overcome an already built-in preference for male supervisors, causing them to perhaps need to work twice as hard. This is relevant for any discussion of female principals, as there seem to be built-in attitudes toward female principals which will need to be navigated and accounted for.

Of further note is that the way that male teachers respond to female principals seems to differ from the way that they respond to male principals, especially within a patriarchal society. A'li and Da'as (2017) conducted a quantitative study on 240 teachers from ten Arab elementary schools in Northern Israel and gave the teachers questionnaires using a Likert-like scale to gauge the acceptance of the teachers of the authority of the principal. Using an ANOVA analysis, when the principal was a man, teachers of both genders were more inclined to accept his authority, while when the principal was a female, women tended to accept her authority more than males. This article has an even

stronger relevance to my research, as the research was done in Arab schools in Israel, an area which has a very similar patriarchal dimension to its society, rendering it particularly relevant.

This gap in perception appears to be widespread, as further highlighted by Nichols and Nichols (2014) who gave 847 teachers a questionnaire using a five-point Likert-like scale to determine their perceptions of effective leadership in their school. While their findings are in line with those of A'li and Da'as (2017): that female principals were ranked significantly lower than their male counterparts, what distinguishes this study is that the schools' academic performances were comparable between male-led and female-led schools despite the disparity of perception of effective leadership. This study underscores that it is merely a perception and certainly not a reality that females are in some way less effective, in general, as principal. As students in female-led school are just as successful, this showcases the complicated dynamics of female school leader and the battle they need to wage to be seen as effective and competent principals.

This issue is further explored by Dunshea (2006) who reported on a qualitative study interviewing a small group of beginning women principals in rural and regional areas and found that there was significant friction between both male subordinates and peers with female principals. This phenomenon is believed to be exacerbated due to the small and communal nature of these environments. This research has significance for my study as often Orthodox Jewish schools are communal and the same people who work in the school comprise the school board, send their children to the school, and live in the

same community as the principal. The authors discuss the “magnification factor,” where all issues become magnified due to the communal nature of the educational environment.

As female school leadership is a relatively new phenomenon, it is less likely that women who are established leaders today had an abundance of female role models to look up to when they were in their formative years. Additionally, encouraging female leadership was certainly not the norm, as traditional values cast the men as the leaders. This would also exacerbate the reluctance of males to work for females. Lack of female role models is indeed one of the reasons given to explain the lack of female principals. Others reasons given are 1) little encouragement to assume leadership roles, 2) resentment of males working for females, 3) reluctance to relocate, 4) long hours (Helterbran & Rieg, 2004).

Minority Women Leaders

The above issues raised with regard to challenges in women’s leadership in the Orthodox Jewish culture have also been observed for women who are members of other minority groups. Reed (2012) studied three African-American, public, urban secondary school principals and discussed their experiences leading up to their becoming principals and their unique experiences as principals. Reed studied how the combination of being both female and African-American affected the leadership practices of these women using the four assumptions set forth by Bloom and Erlandson (2003): historical and lived experience, commonality within lived experiences, variance within identities and black women may not all identify with oppression. Through these four assumptions, Reed found that these women had varying experiences, but each had experienced instances,

whether it be in reaching the principalship or practicing it, that they were discriminated on based on the double whammy of being African-American and female (p. 42).

Arar (2010) interviewed two Arab female principals about their background and how they became principals and the role that their family and social environment contributed to their current position. This qualitative study focused on these women as they were identified as “pavers of the way,” women who are trendsetters, as they have achieved roles which are atypical in their social circles. This study highlighted the dearth of opportunities that were available to these women in their youth, despite the clear indications of their leadership potential. Seeking to identify predictors for future women leaders from these social circles, these women were found to have had tremendous family support, a factor which not only bolstered their resolve, but also opened up doors for them which might not have otherwise opened. This supports the research of the study of Orthodox Jewish female principals as it highlights talented women and how they navigated societal expectations to achieve their goals.

This idea is furthered by Shapira, Arar and Azaiza (2010) who interviewed four women who attained senior principal positions in Arab schools in an attempt to determine their career path and their managerial style. This study found that the defining characteristics of the successes of these women was their family support, especially from a young age, and the connections and relationships that they forged throughout their career. They followed up this first study with a subsequent one (2011) which analyzed seven Arab female principals in Israel and focused on the social reaction to their careers path at different steps along the way, but, in addition to analyzing the obstacles they faced, the paper argues that these women and female leaders like them are a positive

influence on the entire society and have contributed greatly to the progress made in these clearly developing societies. A third qualitative study by these authors (2010) found that the women principals in Arab schools in Israel interviewed for the article all attained their positions both through determination despite social expectations and through tremendous support both by family and other parties to assist them to achieve and maintain their roles as principals. These articles seem to be taking Shakeshaft's (1987) argument one step further: not only are women the ideal principals, their lack of installation in leadership roles in society might be exactly what has kept certain societies in the developmental stage. This will be important in my paper as it has clear implications both in women's roles in educational leadership, as well as their potential impact on societal progress.

As Mahmoud (2011), Shapira (cited by Shapira, Arar and Azaiza, 2010) and others have shown, there are similarities in attitudes toward feminism between the Muslim and Orthodox Jewish worlds which are both "dominated by a collectivist patriarchal hierarchy" (Shapira cited by Shapira, Arar and Azaiza, 2010). This also should serve as an important comparison point to Orthodox Jewish women to explore their experiences and what challenges they faced and what role their family played in helping them overcome.

Conclusion

Orthodox Jewish women principals are presented with a unique blend of challenges as they are part of so many subgroups who need to overcome challenges to attaining and maintaining positions of school leadership. As described above, understanding the indicators for successful women in these positions, what type of

mentoring and training to provide them and what common issues/ solutions have been present greatly help inform the underlying dynamics in this understudied segment of the population. The responses of the participants in the present study will be analyzed with reference to Gender Identity, Leadership, and Cultural Identity theories to formulate a holistic picture of women who assume leadership roles in the community under study.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

Introduction

As a qualitative study, the goal of this research is to deepen our understanding of women's leadership in Orthodox Jewish schools, as narrated by 5 women principals who have navigated the Orthodox Jewish cultural norms and, simultaneously lead educational institutions. This research focused on understanding who these women are, how they became who they are, and what impact that may have on the way they do their jobs and direct their schools. Detailed probes into the environment these women grew up in, who their role models were, how they navigate their current roles within the cultural norms of the Orthodox Jewish society help to understand how they came to attain their leadership status through the lenses of gender identity theory, cultural identity theory and leadership theory. This chapter will highlight the way in which the research was done to analyze the career arcs of the participants within the three critical lenses.

This research was structured as a qualitative phenomenological study which “describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experience of a concept or a phenomenon” (Creswell & Poth, 2018 p. 57), where five Orthodox Jewish female principals were interviewed to develop an understanding of their experiences as Orthodox Jewish female principals. Additional constructs used to understand these experiences included the roles of gender and cultural identity in defining these women and the roles they occupy. Another construct used research of non-Jewish women leaders from other minority cultural backgrounds to compare similar struggles and analyzing

leadership styles of women leaders in general. A third construct explored women's roles in the Orthodox Jewish community.

Procedures

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of the lived experiences of Orthodox Jewish female principals?
2. How do gender norms and cultural identity shape the experiences of Orthodox Jewish female principals?

Setting

On-site School Observations

There were three types of data collected for this study: (a) interviews, (b) on-site observations and (c) documents describing the nature of the school and its mission, rules and procedures. The setting for the on-site observation is described below.

On-site observations were done in one all-girls Orthodox Jewish high school with a student body of 111. According to Schick (2014), the average size of an out-of-town (outside the New York/ New Jersey area) Orthodox Jewish school is less than 100 students. The observed school has an affiliated all-boys high school located approximately ten minutes away. This setup of one school with separate girls' and boys' divisions is fairly common for schools out-of-town, as the schools try to best cater to the needs of the entire Jewish population, which is usually smaller in these out-of-town

communities. The boys' and girls' divisions have mainly separate staff, but share a male Head of School and have the same Board of Directors which is comprised of both male and female members. The observed principal reports directly to the Head of School. The school building was small and consists of nine classrooms and a larger multipurpose room. There was a courtyard outside the building where students eat lunch and spend their breaks. There was a small, yet attached part of the building behind the school building where the administrative offices and support staff were located. While the structure of the building was not typical, the presence of a multi-purpose rooms for assemblies, prayers, and other school events is fairly common.

During observations the researcher observed the structure of the separation of administrative offices afforded the principal a certain degree of privacy when having interactions that were best held outside the purview of the students like meeting with parents, following up with teachers and planning general school programming. The structure of the administrative offices also provides a certain separation from the students and their classrooms, necessitating that the principal “*go out there*” in order to interact with the students and get a finger on the pulse as to what is happening inside the world of the students. In this school, the interviewee is both the Head of School and principal responsible for the religious studies; the researcher is responsible for the general studies. This is typical of the structure in most Orthodox Jewish schools. Most schools have at least two administrators: one in charge of the general studies and another in charge of the religious studies. Some schools have this set up with one principal who carries the title “Head of School” or “Dean” and who is responsible for the total school and with the general and religious studies administrators having the title “assistant principal,” while

other schools can collapse some or all of these roles into one, with administrators taking on multiple responsibilities.

The school staff was predominantly female, with all of the administrative support staff being female, as well as most of the teachers. Only 12 of the school's 38 teachers were men. Both the male Head of School and the male executive director have their offices in the boys' building. More often meetings regarding admissions, budget and events that pertain to both the boys' and girls' schools are held in the girls' school as the role of Head of School and executive director provide more flexibility and they are not required on site in the same way as the principal is. The day-time janitorial staff is female, while the security guard and night-time janitor are male. All-girls elementary schools typically have all female staff. All girls' high schools can vary, however, and while female teachers are preferred, men will be hired if they are more qualified with more advanced degrees or more experience.

Interviews

Interviews took place between March 2019 and October 2019. Interview transcripts were then sent to the interviewees for member checking to review the transcripts for accuracy and a follow-up interview was conducted via email for clarification and reaction to the transcripts.

The interviews with the five study participants were all conducted on the phone. This was necessary, as the interview subjects have full schedules and scheduling the time to conduct these interviews required significant flexibility on the part of both the researcher and the interviewees. Additionally, there were geographic constraints as the researcher is located on the West Coast and the interviewees are scattered throughout the

United States with only one participant located on the West Coast. Participants were not provided with the questions ahead of time.

The interviews were scheduled with the participants according to their convenience. Some interviews were conducted from home after work hours, while others were conducted in school depending on when the interviewee was available. Some even interviewed while driving. Depending on timing, some of the interviews were conducted in multiple sessions. The interviews were conducted over a web-based phone call using www.freeconferencecalling.com. Interviews were conducted by the researcher and lasted between forty-five and seventy-five minutes. No notes were taken during the interview as the researcher relied on the audio recording. Using this web-based software, each interview was recorded as an audio file, and transcribed using www.speechpad.com.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was utilized in selecting study participants (Palinkas et al., 2015). The participants in this study were selected because they met the inclusion criteria in that they were each an accomplished female school principal of Orthodox Jewish schools with over five years of experience as a principal. They were located in different geographic locations across the United States and were in varying stages of life with a broad range of life experiences. This variation was done to best explore whether there was a common theme amongst principals with diverse personal characteristics whose common denominator was their position in Orthodox Jewish schools, or whether new dimensions would be revealed by individuals who experienced different paths to their leadership role.

IRB approval was obtained before beginning any research. Participants were recruited initially through direct emails sent to ten school principals who were deemed to be a good fit for the purposes of this study. The five participants are the five candidates who responded affirmatively. All participants are English speakers and are currently married. All candidates for participation were known to the researcher through various professional development and networking opportunities.

Table 4

Description of Participants

Participant	Age	Highest level of education	Geographic region	Years of experience	Grade levels in school	School religious affiliation
Principal A	60-69	Bachelor's degree	Mid-West	20+	Preschool-8th	Other: Community
Principal B	40-49	High School diploma	West Coast	5-9	9th-12th	Orthodox
Principal C	40-49	Master's degree	East Coast	10-14	Preschool-8th	Haredi/Ultra Orthodox
Principal D	50-59	Bachelor's degree	East Coast	10-14	Preschool-8th	Orthodox
Principal E	40-49	Master's degree	East Coast	5-9	9 th -12th	Orthodox

Data Collection Procedures

Bogdan and Biklen (1997) identified five main features of qualitative research: naturalistic, descriptive data, concern with process, inductive reasoning, and constructing meaning. The way in which the present study addresses these features is described below.

Observation of a School Leader

The study included observing one of the school principals throughout her daily routine over the course of three days using the process of shadowing, (McDonald, 2005) which includes following the principal everywhere she went in the school during the day, and recording all of her activities and interactions. These observations fulfilled two of the definitions set forth by McDonald (2005) as it was used as both a means of understanding the roles and perspectives of these principals, as well as a way of recording their activities.

The observation provided insight into the way in which a woman leader interacts with staff (both male and female), addresses issues that arise in the school as related to curriculum and management, and interacts with various members of the school community. Meetings observed included meetings with students, a parent, administrative assistants, teachers as well as the Head of School. Six different meetings were observed during the school day. This allowed for broader perspectives on who the participant was and how she exercised leadership and navigated the challenges of her day-to-day job in a way that an interview would fail to capture, as well as adding greater color to the responses that were offered over the course of the interview, which could now be corroborated and supported through actual observed experience.

Interviews with School Leaders

Interview techniques were based off of what Seidman describes as “in-depth, phenomenologically based interviewing” (2006, p. 15). The three-part interview focused on the focused life story, the details of experience, and reflection on the meaning. This is done to paint a sufficiently clear picture of what the driving forces are that got these

women to this point in their careers and what are the current forces that continue to shape it.

The questions presented in the interview were organized according to the three theoretical constructs that are the focus of this study: gender identity theory, cultural identity theory, leadership theory. (See Appendix B)

Document Procurement

Documents were also obtained from the participants' schools relating to their mission statement and faculty handbooks. The documents were used to illustrate and interpret the leadership narratives provided by the participants.

Bowen (2009) stated that "As a research method, document analysis is particularly to qualitative case studies" (p.29) and that document analysis allows for data triangulation which provides "immense value for document sin case research study research" (p. 29). Some benefits of documents include the fact that they can provide context to the study participants environment, used to corroborate evidence of findings and add additional insights to a knowledge base (Bowen, 2009).

Participants were asked to fill out a survey detailing their background and the specifics of their length of experience as a principal and the demographics of their current student body. These surveys were administered using Google Forms which stored the survey responses. These surveys served to provide an overview of participants' background and school composition.

Summary of Data Collection Techniques

With regard to the five main features of qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997), research trustworthiness was supported in the following way.

- The naturalistic component of this study was accomplished by observing one of the school principals throughout her daily routine as she engaged in leadership activities.
- The descriptive data component of this study was accomplished through interviews with the various school principals, where the spoken and recorded words of the interview participants were coded and analyzed for themes and patterns.
- The process component was addressed through the researcher's eye on not only the collected results of the study, the product, but also with the process of how the data is collected and the way the process contributes to the understanding of the product. In collecting different types of data, the researcher recognizes there is a complex and nuanced "story" behind each of these school principals and seeks to best articulate that story through a range of collected data.
- The inductive reasoning principle requires that the research seeks to find out the truth, not seek merely to confirm the hypothesis. This focuses on letting the collected data guide the conclusions, instead of the posited hypotheses of the researcher. This was accomplished by asking the participants open-ended prepared questions and allowing the flow of conversation to see what comes out in conversation. This allows for the

course of conversation and collection of data to have a more natural feel and prevents the responses from being limited to the researcher's preconceived hypotheses.

- The aspect of constructing meaning was done by using a two-level sorting cycle of code chunks to group them according to the prominent three lenses of this study: gender identity theory, cultural identity theory and leadership theory. These groups were further refined to reflect whether they were reflective of current feelings and experiences that the participant encounters on a day-to-day basis (“current”) or whether they were experiences that the participant encountered growing up, while on their path to becoming school principals (“previous”). This sorted data were placed in an Excel workbook with corresponding tags for the text chunks. This allowed for patterns to be more easily discerned, as the data were being filtered and tagged to better allow for the creation of a narrative that would inform on the collective experiences of the interview participants.
- Lastly, my interest as the researcher in understanding the subjects of the study is critical in enabling the study to arrive at effective conclusions. As a female school principal in the Orthodox Jewish community myself, I had a very deep interest in understanding what contributed to the successes of these women and what trials they had to endure and how they persevered. Not merely intellectual curiosity drives this study; it is with a keen interest to best understand what has driven and helped these women throughout their lives and careers as school principals. The potential benefit of this

understanding would be to enhance my own leadership, as well as serve as a mentor and facilitator to other women aspiring to leadership positions in Orthodox Jewish and other minority community schools.

Trustworthiness

To promote validity in this study triangulation, member checking and peer-review methods of verification were utilized:

Triangulation

“Triangulation is a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (Creswell & Miller, 2000 p. 126) Being able to draw conclusions based on multiple sources or multiple points of view adds validity to a study’s findings as they have multiple supporting sources. While conclusions drawn from any one source can be questioned if they are thorough enough, triangulation addresses that question head on. To accomplish this, this study utilized both theoretical and data triangulation.

In achieving theoretical triangulation (Johnson, 1997), the recorded data were analyzed through three different theories: gender identity, cultural theory and leadership theory. Utilizing these three lenses help paint a more complete picture of the study participants, as they each, as female Orthodox Jewish school leaders, embody the intersection of those three lenses.

Data triangulation was accomplished by collecting three types of data: interviews, in-school observations and the collection of school documents relating to the mission, guidelines and procedures, faculty handbook. This allowed for further validity of

findings, as results can be backed up by illustrating how the principal said it in the interview, planned to implement it in the school documents and actually carried it out during the observational periods.

Member Checking

Member checking was utilized to ensure that the conclusions reached in the study are accurate and there were no miscommunications. Each school principal interviewee received a copy of their interview transcript to make sure that their experiences were accurately represented and reported (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). While there is often more communicated by a live conversation than by reading a transcript (tone, environment, etc.), member checking allows for the participants to review the written documentation of their conversations to ensure that there was nothing misunderstood about their responses and that the interviewer did not “read-in” any intentions that they did not have during the interview.

Follow-up interview

A follow-up interview via email was conducted to allow for any necessary adjustments. This is especially important due to the natural tone of these interviews. Sometimes the conversation moved on to different topics and the researcher realized that she did not get a complete response to a particular question. Also, this allowed the researcher to learn from the interviews about what stuck out and what was significant for each interviewee, and pose those questions to the other interviewees, even though they were not included in the original interview questions.

Peer-debriefing

Peer debriefing was employed, with a twice-ordained Orthodox Jewish Rabbi with expertise in Talmud and Jewish Law and Practice to offer perspective on the cultural and Jewish Law perspective and an individual with a Ph.D. in Psychology and expertise in women's studies and qualitative research gave perspective on gender studies. This allowed for the methodologies, conclusions and assertions made in this study to be checked by those who have expert knowledge in their respective fields and to correct any misunderstandings or unclear representations.

Research Ethics

The participants were chosen through purposeful sampling and recruited via email. Participants received information about the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and assurances of confidentiality. They signed a consent form, which they received via email and emailed back signed, indicating their understanding the purpose and scope of the study and interview process. Confidentiality was achieved by the use of pseudonyms for the participants and by giving only general details about the schools and the principals to maintain a cloak of anonymity. The observed site is the school where the researcher is employed as a General Studies Principal, so accessing the site was not an issue.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the template method, where all of the data were compiled and sorted into Microsoft Excel to group like text chunks together and tagged according to the themes that formed out of the conceptual framework, gender identity

theory, cultural identity theory and leadership theory. This first cycle of coding served to sort the patterns of what needs to be analyzed based on those three critical lenses (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). To accomplish this sorting, code chunks were labelled “gender”, “cultural” and “leadership” to discern which point of interest of the study was relevant to a particular chunk. These sorted chunks were then placed into an Excel workbook with each category placed in its own column.

These three groups were further segmented into a second cycle of coding to reflect patterns of which chunks of data is reflective of data currently being experienced by the interviewee through each of the three lenses and which chunks of data are indicative of data they experienced on their path to becoming a principal and growing up (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). This resulted in the three columns in the Excel workbook being broken up into six columns, as each column (“gender,” “culture” and “leadership”) now had a “previous” tag to indicate that this chunk referred to experiences that occurred along the participant’s journey to the principalship and “current” to indicate that this chunk refers to experiences that are currently relevant to the job that the participant does daily and reflects the experiences that are more current to her day-to-day responsibilities.

This process painted a clear picture of what common threads and ideas were most commonly occurring, developing a pattern helped guide what my coding categories should be and allow me to fine-tune the focus areas for the code and allows for a filter to be set up to more clearly identify the patterns that emerged from the multiple data collection methods.(Crabtree & Miller, 1999).

Researcher Role

The researcher is herself a female Orthodox Jewish principal in an Orthodox Jewish school. This made her sensitive to the dynamics and challenges that the interviewees potentially have to deal with. Coming from the same background also allowed for a certain rapport with the participants, as they had a common reference point and could relate to each other's experiences. It also allowed for the use of an "emic" vocabulary, one allows for a shared list of jargon or expressed ideas, that facilitated smooth communication without the need to explain some key terms.

While an intimate knowledge of the Orthodox Jewish culture may create preconceived notions about the nature of the dynamics and challenges that these principals experienced, the researcher was very mindful and asked open-ended questions to ensure that the interview process could be guided by what the participants spoke about and that ultimately their responses are what guided the course of the interviews. Her path to her present role differed in some ways from that of the participants, as influenced by age, geography, family structure, and educational background. She used these areas of contrast to guide against preconceptions and assumptions.

Several strategies to increase validity and trustworthiness were employed to add confidence to the interpretations. Additionally, though the researcher conducted observations in her own place of employment, the researcher was mindful to keep an open, unbiased mind about what she was seeing and its greater significance in the context of the study.

Conclusion

This study was constructed to gain an unbiased understanding of the journey these women principals have travelled. Efforts were made to maintain the integrity of this study and respect the data collection process, allowing the observed data to speak for themselves. This ensured that the results are an accurate representation of the facts and will contribute insightful information about the lived experiences of these principals through the three critical lenses discussed.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Introduction

These research methods yielded very rich and informative results. When speaking to and observing these school principals, one thing became clear: they are very conscious of their roles as women and as leaders who exist in the Orthodox Jewish community. The convergence of these three factors occupied a place of prominence both in their development as leaders and as a major guidepost in their day-to-day jobs as school principals. The participants articulated strong and thought-out opinions on the challenges of occupying their roles, the experiences and people that paved the way for them and the key components necessary for the next generation of female school principals to succeed in the Orthodox Jewish community. While the study participants might not have researched gender identity theory, cultural identity theory and leadership theory, many of their responses touched on important theories and ideas discussed in the research. These responses are also reflective of principals who are very in touch with what they represent and the short and long-term ramifications of their actions and decisions within the greater community.

Results/Findings

The interviews covered a broad range of topics and solicited ideas from the participants that could be grouped into a few broad categories. See Figure 2 for a summary of the prominent themes in this chapter.

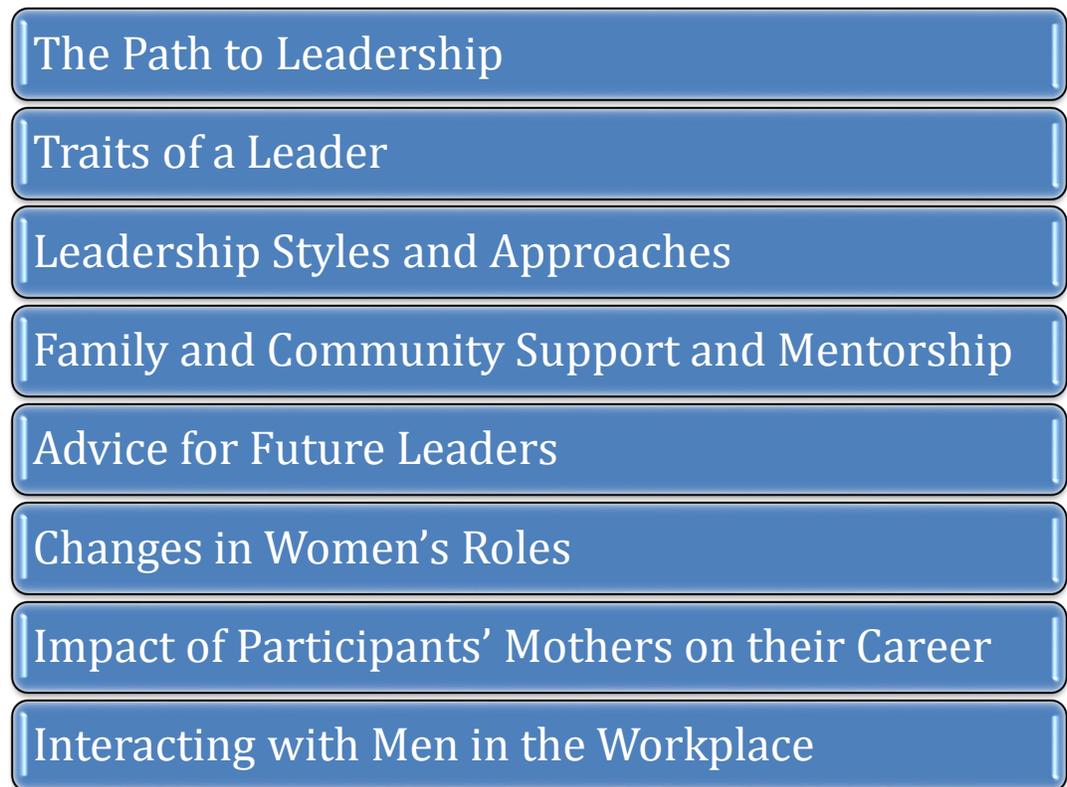


Figure 2 Themes discussed in Chapter 4

The data gathered from researching this study portrayed a group of women with varying backgrounds, ages, experiences and geographic locations, yet found a lot of common ground amongst these Orthodox Jewish female principals.

All participants are English speakers and married at the time of the research. All candidates for participation were known to the researcher through various professional development and networking opportunities. Table 5 below provides a general description of the participants. Principal B was observed, using a “shadowing” technique, where she was followed through her activities over the course of several days.

Table 5

Description of Participants

Participant	Age	Highest level of education	Geographic region	Years of administrative experience	Grade levels in school	School religious affiliation
Principal A	60-69	Bachelor's degree	Mid-West	20+	Preschool-8th	Other: Community
Principal B	40-49	High School diploma	West Coast	5-9	9th-12th	Orthodox
Principal C	40-49	Master's degree	East Coast	10-14	Preschool-8th	Haredi/ Ultra Orthodox
Principal D	50-59	Bachelor's degree	East Coast	10-14	Preschool-8th	Orthodox
Principal E	40-59	Master's degree	East Coast	5-9	9th-12th	Orthodox

Portrait of Principal B

Principal B speaks directly and deliberately, unafraid to say things exactly as she sees them. A 5'3" blond-haired woman in her 40s, she never fails to command respect. Passionate about education and with a vested interest in today's youth, Principal B holds people accountable and looks to find "teachable moments" for her students. From the moment she arrives at school until the minute she leaves, she is a whirlwind of activity, going from task to task, without pause to rest. It is clear from the way she conducts herself that she feels an ownership of and a responsibility to the entire school. Never afraid of confrontation, she asks direct questions, putting students and staff members alike on the spot. She gives rapid-fire instructions and walks around the school building with purpose. She phrases her opinions as questions and seeks the ideas and input of

teachers and other administrative assistants to help make her vision a reality. Always looking for third-party corroboration, she avoids having meetings alone. She delegates all menial tasks, including writing emails to her administrative assistant. When passing students in the hall, she speaks warmly and affectionately. Her office is surrounded by glass windows, which overlooks the school's courtyard, giving her a view of the students on their break.

Research Question 1

What is the nature of the lived experiences of Orthodox Jewish female principals?

The Path to Leadership

One of the most prominent patterns that emerged from this study is that many of these principals never planned to enter a career in administration, even after beginning their teaching careers. Many of them had their hearts set on teaching and derived tremendous satisfaction from their teaching. Principal B expressed her passion for teaching as follows: “my first love and probably my ever-lasting love is going to be the classroom and the connection with the students.” Principal D initially wanted to become a sign language interpreter, but “headed into teaching and it was a passion of mine.”

Principal C never planned on going into education at all, claiming: “I had no intention of going into education ever. It was actually almost by accident.” Principal A had a variety of interests: “I was very interested in marketing, creativity, that type of thing, as well as history, archaeology.” Education, however, was never on her radar: “[i]nterestingly, I never saw myself as a teacher and certainly never imagined that I would be a principal.” She admitted that once she started as a teacher that “I found a real passion for teaching.” Principal B expressed how far becoming a principal was from her

mind in very strong terms: “[n]ever ever, ever. Never. Never ever did I want to be a principal.”

Even those women who planned on going into education, none reported aiming on becoming a principal. Principal E explained that becoming a principal “kind of happened,” as she never planned on becoming a principal and that she became a principal as a natural outgrowth of the roles she had been taking on already as a teacher:

I was influencing a lot of the programs, you know, a lot of facets of the program. I was interacting with students. I also, along the way, was the director of college and seminary guidance for many years ... I was beginning to go from the micro to the macro.

Principal E was the outlier of the group, as the only one to have received leadership training, having undergone a one-week leadership training program at Harvard, while the rest of the participants either gravitated toward or were encouraged to take on roles of leadership, yet have not received any formal training.

Principal C similarly explained how her career naturally took a more administrative turn:

I did other administrative work, like for the school district. I actually developed a spelling curriculum also, just out of necessity, something I used in my own classroom, and before I knew it, I was doing like work for the district in curriculum development and like teacher training.

Principal D echoed a similar sentiment and shared that “I guess after about 18 years, I decided that maybe I could do more than my 25 kids each day and I decided to go for administration.”

Principal A, on the contrary, became a principal in a more surprising way. She described how she was a parent on the search committee for a principal of her children's school. When the search committee was unsuccessful in finding a principal "the committee turned to me and said 'Well maybe you could try this or you would do this for a year.' And I explained to them that I really had no background in elementary education." She took the job.

Principal B took a more hands-on approach to her entrance into administration and explained "when I saw that things were not working out in [a local high school], so I reached out to them and I said, 'Do you know what? Maybe I would join your team and maybe I would be dean of students.'" Subsequently, the school decided it was going to make an administrative change and instead asked her to run the entire school.

The above responses indicate that, for the most part, the female principals asserted and made themselves visible as leaders within their context, rather than finding encouragement or support from other individuals. In comparison to public schools, within this community system it is not required that educators and leaders hold official credentials or certifications. In contrast to public schools, in Orthodox Jewish schools, there is a preference for a female administrator in all-girls schools, thus making female principals in these schools more prevalent. It appears that school decision makers and Board members turned to them to take on the principal's position after observing their engagement in the school in various leadership roles.

Traits of a Leader

In terms of leadership traits, the majority of the participants identified themselves as natural leaders, as most of them gravitated toward leadership activities despite not

having any leadership training. Principal A described how she was always giving lectures to adult women within her community, even at the very young age of eighteen. She elaborated “I feel I always was a natural leader. I’m an oldest [child]. I think anybody who has an “oldest” personality... I feel strongly that the mantle of responsibility, that aspect of leadership is something I inherited spiritually, through my parents.” She described her ascendance to the principalship: “I consider myself, so to speak, to be self-made in the sense that neither my educational nor my experience certainly prepared me for the elementary [school] world.” She did not have the experience nor the education that would have qualified her for the job, yet she was identified by the search committee nonetheless as a potential candidate.

Principal C explicitly identified as a natural born leader: “You know, like there’s this whole concept of there are people who are natural born leaders. So, then I’m a Leo and I’m the first child, so like all the stars are aligned up in my favor.” This may be attributable to the phenomenon that the oldest child takes on a lot of responsibilities in the house, especially in Orthodox Jewish families where the families tend to be larger, sometimes acting like as a parental figure to younger siblings, which lays the groundwork for leadership skills. She tempered that approach by recognizing that there are skills that people need to work on to achieve: “I don’t buy into the myth that there’s natural born leaders. I buy into the myth that everyone has a personality that is suited for something else but needs to be cultivated.” This tempered approach brokers a balance between the abilities people are born with and the work they need to put in to acquire the relevant skills to succeed at their leadership posts.

Principal B identified herself as a naturally strong woman who has a built-in strong sense of self: “I would say that I come from a line of very strong women who do not need careers to feel actualized and did not see themselves as diminished in the eyes of the world, men or anyone else.” Principal B was brought in to her current position to revitalize a floundering school. She described how she had an innate sense of how things needed to be done and how that clashed with certain staff members who were already there: “I came in and I was like everything screeched to a halt and it was like, ‘This is not professional and this is how we do it and this is how we do it and this is how we do it.’” She further elaborated that “I guess I have innate leadership vision and there were certain things to me that were clear and that was it.”

Overall, responses indicated that the participants felt that it was in their nature to be leaders, honed by family experiences of taking on responsibility as an oldest child, the presence of a mother as a role model of strength, or by community activities where they were educators. It appears that they put themselves in positions of being recognized by the community as candidates suitable to lead the girls’ schools.

Leadership Styles and Approaches

While not directly asked to state their leadership styles, participants were asked to provide examples of some of the situations they encountered as principals and how they dealt with them. Their responses, as well as the observations of Principal B were analyzed to construct inferences regarding their style.

At the same time that Principal B has very well-defined ideas about how things should be run, she was observed often seeking the input of others. Whether dealing with parents or other school staff, she habitually requests the feedback and opinions of others.

When observing Principal B meeting with a mother of a student who was recently suspended, she told the mother: “I want your perspective as a parent. You know these girls better than I do.” While Principal B was taking a very strong stand on the behavior of this student by meting out a suspension, she still sought the input of the mother on how to best communicate with her daughter and how to help the student improve and avoid her past mistakes.

Another instance where a collaborative or distributive leadership style was apparent was when Principal B was meeting with the Student Council Advisor about an upcoming school event, where Principal B made her opinion known, but in such a way that she deferred to the expertise of the Advisor and allowed her to exercise her own judgement: “I want to make the event a little more ‘wow!’ I’m not even sure what that means. I’m leaving it up to your creativity. So, make a plan and then we can discuss it.” Here, Principal B gave the Advisor space to exercise her judgment and creativity, while still not relinquishing her own control over the event’s planning.

A collaborative leadership style is also apparent in some of the school handbooks that were analyzed for the present study, where there is a balance between the responsibility the principal places on the teacher and the responsibility the principal reserves for herself and does not give her staff the authority to make themselves.

An example of the above relates to discipline practices. Principal C has a tight leash on her employees when it comes to the written materials they distribute, requiring that “all assigned reports ... [and] all newsletters must be pre-approved” (p.2). At the same time, she places the responsibility of discipline firmly on the shoulders of the teacher stating in the teacher manual, “Referral to the principal with a note as a last resort

only” (p. 5). This teacher responsibility is also present in Principal B’s Faculty Handbook which states that “All staff members are responsible for discipline issues and/or bullying and exclusion, should it occur in their presence. If a teacher or staff member is unsure how to handle an incident, he or she should ask for assistance” (p. 26).

Placing the disciplinary responsibility on the teachers is echoed in Principal D’s school’s teacher handbook stating “Teachers are responsible for continually monitoring the progress of their students. This includes academic, as well as the social and emotional development of each child” (p.2).

This desire for partnership and shared responsibility is also stated in relation to the students’ parents. Principal B’s Parent Handbook stresses that “A strong partnership between parents and school is the basis for a strong education” (p.4). The end of the handbook asks the parent to affix their signature stating that they “agree to partner with the school on this policy, as well as all the other policies stated in the parent-student handbook” (p.18).

Principal D’s school’s Parent Guide stresses the shared responsibility between parents and school employees stating that the Parent Handbook “will assist you in your role as an educational partner with the school, so that together we can share in the growth and development of our children, for they are our future!” (p. 1). Principal A’s Parent Manual gives a list of ways that parents can help make an environment conducive for learning (p.3) and ends the manual with the following important summary:

We encourage your participation in many areas of the school: PTO, library, kitchen, field trips and in the classroom. We welcome your input. We are all part of an extended family whose mission is to provide our child with the tools

necessary for a productive and successful life as a Jewish adult. We look forward to working with you to achieve this noble goal. (p. 8)

Broadly speaking, the participants all exhibited a leadership approach that was collaborative in nature. Since all but one did not have any formal leadership training, they did not tend to label their approach as such, but collaboration was evident in their handling of issues within their schools.

Family and Community Support and Mentorship

Often, in addition to leading the local community school and educating the community's children, the principals themselves are residents of the community, leaving the potential for challenges and complications that arise from being both a community member and someone who services a prominent community need. The participants were asked whether they ever found themselves in this situation and what impact, if any, it had on the way they carried out their roles as school principals. Their responses were that, in general, there was no negative impact, with some principals reporting a positive reaction.

Principal D reported that when she first became a principal, there was no reaction from the community at all, conveying a message that Principal D interpreted to be of "Okay, Cool." If anything, she has found that now that she has been a principal for a while that there is a measure of respect she is afforded in the community: "I think there's a little more respect... there's a little more of a reverence."

Principal E related that when she first became a principal while still single, "people were pretty like in awe." However, this was not a positive reaction as this feeling of awe stemmed for the fact that "[t]hey felt that I was perhaps complicating my life." The unspoken message she was feeling was "Why in the world did you complicate things

and take on a leadership role and kind of like inhibit the pool of [dating] candidates that will come your way because they will be intimidated?” Currently, she is not so involved in her community claiming that “I have a lot of community at school and then my own little family, you know.”

Principal C reported about the challenges of being a member of the community she serves: “The funny thing is I don’t find it challenging at all. I know a lot of people do. I honestly do not.” She further reflected on how positively she views the fact that she lives within her students’ community: “I think that being a part of the community where you live really offers a unique opportunity to get to know your students and their families in a very different context and I think that it has tremendous advantages. I love it.”

Principal A declined to go into details, but acknowledged that being in a public role is “clearly an issue that affects all of us [principals].” She reflected how it is “definitely a stressor” how principals and their spouses “deal with the constant, public, and 24/7” exposure that comes as a part of their jobs. It does not seem to impact the way she performs her job, rather a stress that accompanies occupying such a public role.

When it came to having support from their family, some of the principals identified that support they got from their husbands, while others were more deflective or did not explicitly mention the role their husbands played in their success.

Principal C when asked about how her husband feels about her leadership role replied: “That’s actually a good question. I don’t think I can answer on somebody else’s experience, right? ... Like it would be presumptive for me to answer for somebody else’s experiences.” Perhaps she felt that her husband’s feelings were a private matter and did not want to share them for this study.

Principal E described how her husband is incredibly encouraging of her leadership activities, always assuring her that she is capable of doing more. She related: "He's very proud and he's a big cheerleader and he takes a tremendous interest." She continued that "He just wants me to do more. ... It's like no rest for the weary with him." Principal A recounted how both she and her husband have public roles (he is a communal Rabbi) which forces them both to accommodate the fact that their spouse has a public and private side which needs to be allowed for and respected. Principal D reflected how "my stress is always on my marriage," indicating that she only performs this role as long as it is supported by her husband.

This study's participants did experience tremendous support from family members and from other relationships they developed similar to the participants in Arar (2010) and Shapira, Arar and Azaiza (2010) reports of Arab women principals. Principal A identifies the (male) principal who hired her in her first teaching position as the one who played prominently in shaping her educational philosophy and approach. Principal B identified herself as follows "I had always become a close friend with my administrators at every single school I worked for my whole life... Every single one of them had a different gift that they left me. They were role models; they were the most wonderful people."

Principal D describes that she when started her first job as an assistant principal, "I got along well with the incoming principal. I came in with a principal that was forming his team and we really spoke the same language and we were very close." Principal E describes a male mentor, who was her own principal from when she was a student, who would reach out to her when she was first starting out as a principal. "He was a male

principal and, you know, he would call... you know, I was 25, 26, 28 and he would randomly pick up the phone. I'd get a phone and say 'how are you doing? What can I be helpful with?'" These recollections are representative of the support that these principals received along their path to the principalship.

Advice for Future Leaders

As a way of further understanding the participants' lived experiences as leaders, a hypothetical question was posed as to what advice they might give future leaders. In terms of practical leadership advice, the participants had varying ideas of what was essential for principals in Orthodox Jewish schools. Principal A argued that:

Everybody who goes into administration really has to be doing it in terms of being a person of vision. You have to be able, simultaneously, to see the forest and the minutia and the organizational details for follow through. 'Think it through then follow through' are the six most important words in education, certainly for an administrator.

She further states that "you know, something that I feel the intuition that is needed as a leader, particularly as an instructional leader, comes with that vision as well as organizational skill."

Principal B cautioned "I would say know what you're getting into and one hundred percent have mentors, don't go it alone, and make sure that you know that you don't know everything." Upon further clarification, she identified the principal at her first teaching position as someone who played a prominent role in shaping her leadership style. This advice provides an interesting contrast with one of the "Core Beliefs" identified in Principal B's School Handbook, that a graduate of School B "Believes that

she has an integral role in contributing to the Jewish community and strives to make a difference.” This balance between believing strongly that you have something important to contribute and the awareness that what you alone have is not enough is reflective of the leadership approach of Principal B.

She further advised that “If you do not walk with humility and with God then you are lost from minute one because if you think you know everything that’s the first problem and if you think you have all the answers, that’s the next problem.” This leadership advice for principals to practice humility is reflected in her leadership style: “my leadership style is definitely collaborative, I don’t wanna be the single voice,” as she recognized that the views and opinions of her employees are valuable and can provide perspective that she might not have herself. She elaborated while speaking about a specific employee that: “if people feel loyal, happy employees feel loyal and dedicated, if she feels that she has a voice and she could tell you what’s going on.”

Principal C advised that leaders really need to “learn and develop a style of leadership.” She argued that while there can be multiple ways to be a leader, a leader needs to identify their strengths and plan to apply them in their leadership approach: “You need to develop systems, and you need to develop an approach to leadership.” Principal D has similar advice, urging potential leaders to take the Myers-Briggs personality course so a prospective principal can “figure out how she picks.” This obligates a leader to “do some real soul-searching to be a good leader.”

Principal E advised potential leaders not to jump into to being a principal, but to rather first “take the steps up to leadership ... you can’t jump before you learn how to walk, before you learn how to stand.” She chronicled her own progression of

responsibilities and described how “[e]ach of the smaller leadership experiences were essential in the skill set that I acquired when I stepped into leadership.” She “can’t overstate” that the prominent skills that a leader should have are communication skills and organizations skills so that a leader can handle “a range of communication abilities to a range of people and a range of settings.”

The advice shared by the participants was consistent with their stated values. They spoke about the importance of collaboration, having an ability to effectively manage the various tasks and responsibilities, and the need to continuously communicate with other stakeholders. Though not formally trained in educational administration, each participant provided some example of taking on smaller leadership roles before moving up to the principalship. The advice indicated that they had acquired through experience some of the skills and practices that are discussed in leadership textbooks such as transformational leadership (having a vision), collaborative leadership (asking others’ opinions), situational leadership (getting things done), and servant leadership (humility).

Research Question 2

How do gender norms and cultural identity shape the experiences of Orthodox Jewish female principals?

Changes in Women’s Roles

Although the participants are from a variety of age groups, they each expressed how much the role of women within the Orthodox community has changed, from their perspective, from the time they were growing up until now. This is manifest both in the own experiences and the roles that their mothers occupied when they were growing up. One aspect of change was the access to advanced formal education for women, which

had not been present in earlier times. The educational opportunities, however, were still largely restricted to the traditionally female occupation of teaching.

In illustrating how times have changed since she was young, Principal B explained that she never even got a teaching degree explaining “[t]hat’s like a little bit of a dark secret about my background is that wasn’t being done in my stage of life, girls weren’t going to college.” She further detailed that “[i]t was not a thing in my day and age to receive an education, that was not the thing.” Principal C explained that she never wanted to go into teaching, instead preferring to enter psychological testing, however, she didn’t because “at the time that was a very unpopular decision for women. So, I did what every good Jewish girl was supposed to do and like teach. And really, when I started, I had no interest whatsoever.”

Impact of Participants’ Mothers on their Career

Gender identity theory asserts that females often develop gendered traits that they observed in their mothers, and seek to replicate them through their lives. Mothers may be seen as the epitome of a female role-model. Cultural identity theory posits that an individual’s sense of self is partially defined by the people and society in which they were raised, where cultural norms are transmitted through example, and violations of norms may be punished. Participants were asked about the maternal influences in their lives, which was particularly interesting as they were on a professional path that differed from that of their mothers, as well as challenged their cultural traditions and values.

Although none of the participants’ mothers were school principals or held formal leadership roles, and many did not hold any professional role outside the home, they each cited their mothers as having a profound influence on them, albeit in different ways. They

mentioned the nurturing they received as children, as well as the exemplars of management and strength. In fact, the interplay for the participants between their own roles as mothers and their roles as a principal was a recurring topic.

Principal C described her mother as “a stay-at-home mom. She did not work at the time we were growing up.” She felt that both of her parents were “all in” and that every day when she came from school as child she was greeted with the “equivalent of cookies and milk every day of my life.” She expressed how she feels challenged to balance the two responsibilities of being a mother and a principal, making the extra effort by occasionally taking her kids out for breakfast in the morning and by making a point of being home for dinner. She expressed how since there is no bus service in her city, she drives her kids to and from school “which I am pretty crazy about doing.”

Principal A described her mother as, “she did not work outside the home. She was a Rebbetzin, and a consummate Rebbetzin, which in fact, obviously, it does involve quite a bit of, you know, communal work of constant hostessing.” She elaborated that having a woman be a full-time mother “no longer exists, obviously, as a model.” She remembered fondly how her mother “was an incredible cook, baker, all those type of things” and “who was there for us for four or five hours” when they got home from school. This made a profound impact on her own choices when trying to balance her career with her family: “[w]hen I became a principal, I had very young children at the time ... I took half of my salary and paid the world’s best housekeeper who did everything for me, except cook. Every errand, every everything. So, when I came home from school at 4:30-5:00, I was a mother completely to my children.” She explained: “I made a real, calculated decision, through my mother’s modelling for me.”

Principal D attributed her mother as playing a major role in her own development, but in a very different fashion: “ I had a mother with mental illness and my parents got divorced when I was little ... [s]o a lot of my perseverance, a lot of my personality, a lot of my determination and passion comes from just having it hard and developing things along the way.” Her desire to be available as a mother to her own kids lead her to only work part time as an administrator and, even then, “[I] had to be out of the house longer than I ever thought I would.” After working part time, “I was given a choice of full-time or no time and I left.” She was unwilling to compromise her role as a mother in order to be a principal. She very strongly associates being a mother with education claiming that “the best mothers are teachers” and “I’m a mother of thirteen children. So somehow that experience has helped me” in her educational career.

Principal B, as well, took very strong cues from her mother. So much so, that she was initially opposed to being a career woman since her mother did not work when she was growing up. Even now that she is a school principal, she insisted that “my number one love as a woman is my home and my domestication, which I think shocks people, because when they see me and they see me at work, they don’t know how fiercely I enjoy being home.” She insisted that women do not need careers to define themselves and that “your family and who you are and how the world sees you really, to me is your legacy.” This idea is echoed in one of the “Core Beliefs” listed in School B’s School Handbook that a graduate of their school “Believes that one can find a healthy balance between pursuit of higher secular education and a career, while furthering Torah knowledge in preparation for a Jewish family.” While Principal B does not feel that a woman needs to

have a career to define themselves, being able to balance a career while being the mother to a Jewish family is a skill that her school seeks to instill their students.

Although Principal E's mother did work, "[s]he was not privileged to have any kind of higher education." This might even have been an asset to Principal E's career progression as her mother was "very, very proud" of her accomplishments and "was really a great cheerleader all the time." She also factored being a mother prominently into her current identity claiming "I'm able to be a lot more confident with [students'] parents now that I am married and also mothering four children." Her sense of being a mother also manifests itself when asked about her role in the larger community, she replied: "I'm not necessarily looking, right now in my life for a community. You know, I have a lot of community at school and then my own little family ... [s]o I have a community built-in."

The responses, overall, describe the way in which the participants have constructed a balance between the role of mother (ideally at home looking after the family and culturally valued) and professional educator (fulfilling, but stated to be of secondary importance). Several respondents mentioned that the skills and knowledge they acquired from being mothers assisted them in their professional roles. Many went out of their way to fulfil their family responsibilities. They were thus able to articulate values that are rooted in their culture, while engaging in actions that represent a new set of possibilities. These principals broker a new balance between traditional female roles and the evolving prominence of female leadership in society. They are powerful, authoritative female leaders, who represent a shift in the roles of women in Orthodox Jewish culture. While none of the respondents mentioned the support of their husbands or

extended families in terms of child care while they were at their jobs, it is reasonable to assume that such support was available, especially for those with many children.

Interacting with Men in the Workplace

Within the Orthodox Jewish culture, there are frequent times when gender segregation is practiced, and gender roles are more strictly defined than in other Western communities. In the traditional view, men hold many decision-making and leadership roles, whereas women typically take care of home and family as nurturers. However, many changes in the traditional structures have been evident in recent years in response to changes in the world more broadly, as well as within the Jewish community. This change and potential conflict may be exacerbated in the school setting where female educators and leaders are visible and articulate. Further, young women are now receiving more formal education than before, and the curriculum may be encouraging a break from the traditional views, even if it is not formally modified.

In terms of navigating their interactions with men in the workplace setting Principal A told over how, in her first role as a principal “the teachers were primarily male. And so, particularly, any number of them were uncomfortable with my role in supervising them regardless of the fact that I may have been ... far more of an educator than them,” adding that “I think they were uncomfortable to work for a woman.” She detailed how her male teachers would be not take well to constructive criticism when she would observe their classrooms and in general had a hard time treating her like a superior. However, more recently in her career “I’ve worked with a number of males even when we’re evaluating a girls’ school, so to speak. And that, I have not found yet, you know, certainly in the last ten, twenty years, to be an issue.”

Principal B has had extensive experience interacting with males in the workplace as the Head of School for her school is male and they have a corresponding boys' school with which they share a lot of administrative staff. She said plainly "I find working with men hard." She has developed the perspective that "strong women intimidate men" and that strong women find themselves in a Catch-22 as "you're always stuck between your strong personality which is what brings you to the job in the first place, and so if you diminish who you are for the sake of male intimidation and fragility or fragile ego so then you can't bring to the table what you should." Putting it succinctly, she says, "you're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't."

She has adopted the approach that "I don't have the need to dominate anybody, least of all men" and that men "need to be spoken to in a certain way that they need to feel that it was their idea, that their doing it, that it's coming from them." She expressed that she believes that "males need to dominate and I could let them so I'll let them." Sometimes, this results in her taking a back seat to the Head of School. As she explained: "I don't need to be at the front because that's my management style." Sometimes, she even avoids going to all-male meetings with the administration of the boys' school telling the Head of School "Anyway, you're a whole bunch of men, you think I would like it?"

This attitude is given greater perspective with the following occurrence while the researcher was observing Principal B in a meeting with the school's Director of Student Support. Principal B was discussing the programing that focused on developing students' social skills. She shared how the presenter had sent an email to Principal B's husband (whom the presenter has a professional relationship with because he works in another institution which is unaffiliated to Principal B's school) and the Head of School praising

them for having selected such a strong woman as a principal. Principal B described her reaction: “It didn’t feel like a compliment. Why are you emailing these two men to take pride in me being a strong woman? That is so undermining! Send me {emphasis} an email and tell me you think I am a strong leader! What does being a woman have anything to do with it!”

Principal B recounted another related incident where she was given a present by a mother of a student who was expressing her gratitude for the support Principal B provided her daughter. The wrapped gift contained a beautiful, engraved silver tray that read “The future is female.” Principal B made a similar remark stressing “why do people assume that a strong woman must be a feminist?”

The above attitude was further validated in another observation where Principal B was at an administrator meeting and was explaining the Orthodox Jewish perspective on wives taking on the customs of their husbands to the administrative assistant who recently converted to Judaism and is still learning the culture:

Men and women want different things out of marriage. Men want respect from their wives. One way that wives show that respect is by accepting the customs of the husband. I want {emphasis} to do your things. Religious women who are very clear about what they are doing don’t feel that drive for feminism. I’m not saying they never feel put down by men. They won’t feel like ‘why shouldn’t I be like a man?’ because they have comfortably developed themselves as a woman. If you are raised correctly in a religious Jewish environment, you have pure clarity. In a healthy relationship, a husband doesn’t want the wife to be upset by his customs; the relationship is one of mutual respect. She does for him and he does for her.

Principal B presented an explanation of how to navigate traditional gender roles while being a strong female leader: being accommodating and showing respect to her husband and to men in general is not contradictory to being empowered. On the contrary, Principal B argued that when properly giving respect to men, the respect will be reciprocated.

Principal C, on the other hand, reported not having any issues interacting with men in the workplace claiming: “I honestly don’t find that complicated at all. I worked in an all-girls school, so there’s not very men in the workforce. My direct supervisors were all men, but it’s an all-women environment for the most part. I mean, the men are more marginalized than the women probably.” She added that “I don’t see any gender differential in awkward situations” since “awkward is awkward.”

Principal D described how the Head of School for her school is male and she needs to interact with him daily and how “that is a little bit challenging sometimes,” noting how “men like to have a little more control.” She further described how she structures her teacher observations differently for men and women since “I had to give them a reaction right away, a very tactless reaction,” while the “women are much easier.” She described how she feels how integral she is to the running of the school, but she feels she can’t articulate that to the Head of School since “you can imagine a man doesn’t really wanna hear that,” forcing her to adopt a more subservient attitude to the Head of School to enable things to work. She explained how women have to be true to their nature and maintain the proper focus on being mothers first as “women are their own worst enemies because they take on the role of men and don’t go after having the family and don’t put themselves to be the best mother they could be.”

Principal E described that the men she dated were intimidated by her accomplishments and personality, her eventual husband being an exception: “I have to tell you he was one of the few men that I dated who was not only not intimidated by me but like took me on,” while a “good deal” of her other suitors were intimidated. In addition, being a woman who had to interact with men, Principal E had an additional dynamic to contend with, as she was the only one of the interview participants who was a principal while still single. She elaborated: “when I was single, I found some of the board of directors to be a little, really I can’t say ... and you’re dealing with a bunch of married men, so there’s some obvious differences in that dynamic.” When it comes to awkward instances when interacting with men in the workplace she replied “I don’t allow it. So, very cognizant. I have a desk in my office and I have a round table and there are some I meet with behind my desk and there are some I meet with at the round table. Sometimes my door is open in my office. Sometimes it’s closed.”

The participants’ responses revealed areas where the cultural context of the Orthodox Jewish community impacts their behavior and ways of thinking as women. The respondents who reported the least gender-based dissonance explained that they were in environments where few males were present for interaction or supervision. For those who were in position of supervising male staff, they expressed that they had to alter their leadership style, changing communication approaches and outwardly showing a deference to the males that was not necessarily merited. All expressed that males still held the ultimate decision-making as heads of schools or senior board members, and they did not openly contradict or challenge them, keeping within the established gender roles of the community. Some even went as far to acknowledge that they had to find a way to

have the male leaders feel in control of new ideas. They appeared to have found a rationalization for such actions within Jewish family and cultural practices, indicating that deference to males led to harmony and respect at home and outside.

Conclusion

Gaining information on the lived experiences of these women's professional journeys provides a great deal of insight into gender identity theory, cultural identity theory and leadership theory and how these three lenses interact in the Orthodox Jewish community. Learning about both what experiences these women had and what is occurring to them on a daily basis, as well as the specific makeup and values of the schools they currently lead, will help inform the next generation of Orthodox Jewish women leaders as to how best navigate the specific challenges that they will face in the climb to ascend to the principalship and the ones they will need to conquer once they have attained their roles. Recommendations that emanate from the present research are elaborated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Introduction

After speaking to all the interview participants and collecting all the data, it is critical to connect the study's findings to the research that has been done to this point. Especially since Orthodox Jewish women principals are severely understudied, this will allow for an integration of understanding as to where the study participants fall in line with previous research and where they differ and allow for the possibility of exploring the underlying reasons for those similarities and differences. This type of analysis will help to understand the roles that gender identity theory, cultural identity theory and leadership theory played in the development of these women principals and how these three lenses continue to impact their daily careers. Understanding these implications will provide two-fold support. First, it will allow current principals of Orthodox Jewish girls' schools to understand what type of issues are common to other principals and allow them a sense of comradery and collaboration in addressing their common challenges. Additionally, this research will better allow for the development and support of young Orthodox Jewish women seeking to enter the principalship and enable them to be better prepared for the challenges that await them along the way.

Implication of Findings

Gender Identity Theory

One prominent finding was that these all of the interview participants expressed advantages of female leadership. This means that in addition to supporting the trend of women increasingly occupying principal roles (US Department of Education, 2016), the

interview participants expressed their belief that women possess certain leadership characteristics that men do not and that, especially for girls-only schools, having a female administrator on staff was necessary for the students' sake. This is perhaps best encapsulated by Principal D's statements that "I find the best mothers are teachers" and her claims that she felt qualified to be a principal since "I'm a mother to thirteen children." As each of the participants cited the tremendous impact of their mother's influence on their careers and their lives, in general, this reflects the approach of Freud (as cited in Bussey & Bandura, 1999) as to the critical role that mothers have in the gender identity of their children, even more so in their daughters.

The qualities expressed as ideal for mothers in gender identity theory of affection, sensitivity, helpfulness, and sympathy as identified by Eagly (2002) were believed to translate into their leadership roles. It may be inferred that the principals saw themselves as surrogate mothers to the students in their care. It is noted that the girls' schools are typically small and serve children from within the bounded community where many members know each other socially. This is further reflected by Principal D who explains that since there is no bus service in her city, she drives her kids to and from school "which I am pretty crazy about doing."

Principal E echoed this statement saying "I do believe girls' education is best handled by women." She further claimed "it's what we (women) do. It's the way women breathe and hang and move." This aligns very well with Shakeshaft's (1987) argument that women possess innate qualities that make them ideal for school leadership, which men don't typically possess. This was echoed by Principal C: "You know, would I send my daughter to a school where there were only men in the administration? Probably not.

Probably not.” She elaborated: “I believe that girls need positive female role models.” Principal D adds that “sometimes girls like that authority (of a male principal), but they definitely have to have the woman assistant principal.”

Despite the above examples of adherence to a more traditional view of gender roles, Principal B most clearly articulated the bind that Shakeshaft describes women principals find themselves in where they are told they are excluded from leadership because they are not strong enough leaders, yet when they exhibit that strength they are viewed negatively exclaiming “You’re damned if you do and you’re damned if you don’t.”

The phenomenon that there is a preference to hiring women over men in certain positions in the school is also informative regarding gender theory. The very preference of one gender over another for different roles stresses the differences between the genders and runs in contrast to those theorists who seek to minimize those differences (Maccoby & Jacklin, Bem as cited in Zosuls et al, 2011), for example it may be believed that having a female principal would encourage girls to attain more female-typical qualities to take on eventual roles as wives and mothers. It also serves to protect the men from having to deal with the female issues of the students, while having a woman principal in place to carry out the day-to-day management work. In the schools where the participants worked, males continued to hold senior roles as head of school or board member, and the females had to ultimately defer to their decision-making. In many cases they had to pretend that the ideas emanated from the male leaders in order to maintain harmony. They shared that they were somewhat accustomed to interacting in this way in their homes as well.

The recognition of the ability of women educators to prominently factor into the development of the female students reflects a subscription of the belief in the very fundamentals of the school environment playing a prominent role in helping to form gender identity (Brofenbrenner & Morris, Magnusson & Stattin, as cited in Zosuls, et al, 2011). It speaks to the belief that the Orthodox Jewish schools have, in part, a mission to further the norms and values of the community. Furthermore, the belief that female students need positive female role models, gives credence to the broader application of cognitive development theory of gender identity development (Kohlberg as quoted in Bussey & Bandura, 1999) that claims that children develop gender identity based on what they observe in their day-to-day environment.

Cultural Identity Theory

When considering cultural identity theory, a few of the participants indicated that their career path had been impacted by what was considered culturally appropriate at the time when they were growing up, namely pursuing education beyond the basic level and working outside the home. Within their culture, working as a teacher was considered one of the few jobs acceptable for a woman. This aligns very well with Hall's (2014) two ways of thinking about identity in relation to environment. These women were clearly talented and looking for an outlet to express their talents. Since being a teacher was considered culturally acceptable, that is where they directed their efforts.

Principal C indicates that her path into education was not her preferred career path, however education was "what every Jewish girl was supposed to do" in her community. She had to put aside her first choice to conform with the community norms. Principal B indicated that she received no post-high school education since "It was not

like a thing in my day and age to receive an education, that was not the thing.” Even the respondents who began their careers in education did not envision themselves as leaders until certain needs in their community put them in that position.

This is reflective of one of Hall’s (1994) propositions where the greater culture of Orthodox Jewish community dictates what is appropriate for the (female) members of the community. This cultural norm held great sway over these women, as their decisions for life were directed by what was culturally acceptable at the time.

The second proposition of Hall (1994), where the different members within a culture are treated differently, can be further seen by other experiences of the interview participants. Many of the participants indicated how the current cultural environment in which they operate impacts the way that they carry out their responsibilities as principals. They treated male subordinates differently from females, and deferred to male decision-makers who were in higher positions.

Principal E expresses how she feels more empowered and more confident as a married woman than she felt when she was single and a principal. This is attributable to the social status accorded to married woman as opposed to single woman in the culture that Principal E operates in. The culture differentiates between women who are single and those who are married. She also reports feeling treated differently by the Executive Board of her school since she was single referring to a “little bit of an undertone” that manifested itself in the way she, a single school principal, interacted with the Board members who were “a bunch of married men.” She reported that she felt she was not taken seriously as a single woman, for if she was not “competent” enough to find a mate,

how could she hold her own in a conversation with a bunch of successful, married men who comprised the school's Board of Directors.

Leadership Theory

The respondents' ways of thinking about leadership was perhaps influenced by the fact that they did not have formal training prior to taking on the role of principal. Most of them did not use jargon that may be commonly found in leadership texts. It was also not clear from their responses if they had moved beyond seeing themselves as managers within the given structures to becoming agents of change. It was expected of them that they continue to transmit the cultural values of the Orthodox Jewish community, and they did not express any contention regarding these values. Instead, they reported changing their behaviors to be deferential to the male decision-makers.

One theme that kept coming up was that the principals, to one extent or another, were of the belief that they were natural leaders and possessed traits, skills or behaviors that made them well-suited for the position they currently occupy. This falls in line with those theoretical frameworks (Bass as cited by Northouse, 2016) that stress that a leader has to be endowed with certain characteristics which are innate to the leader.

This perspective is echoed when Principal A openly declared "I feel I am a natural leader." She bolstered this declaration by noting that even though she was not trained to be a school principal, she "felt very, very validated when initiatives that I developed I later found, 'Oh, this is what ASCD recommends and this is what, you know, the professional organizations do.'" When she utilized her natural abilities to deal with a challenge and found that the trained professionals recommend the same approach, that fed into her understanding of herself as a "natural leader."

Principal C offered a more nuanced understanding of her leadership qualifications while noting that “there’s this whole concept of natural born leaders but also recognized that so much of it still needs to be cultivated and spoke about seeking the advice of others. She argued that there certainly are natural aspects of a leader that will make her better suited to the job. At the same time, though, a leader needs to have an open mind to understand the situation they find themselves in and really listen to the people and environment to be best able to lead.

Principal D also struck this type of balance advising aspiring female principals: “I would make her take the Myers-Briggs personality course, so to speak. I would ask her to figure out how she picks.” She urged aspiring principals to be in tune with their natural-born talents so that they can understand how those talents need to be utilized and built upon when entering into the school environment as a principal.

Principal B echoed themes of servant leadership (Northouse, 2016) when she advised: “If you do not walk with humility and with God then you are lost from minute one because if you think you know everything that’s the first problem and if you think you have all the answers, that’s the next problem.”

All of the participants had advice for aspiring young principals as to what attitudes and skills should be present or cultivated in order to succeed in the principalship. This focus by the interview on what type of skills an aspiring school leader should have or should cultivate further supports the leadership theory that effective leadership is leader-centric (Bass cited by Northouse, 2016, Katz cited by Northouse, 2016, etc.) and a leader who has the necessary qualities, whether they be naturally

occurring or achieved through hard work, is the driver of effective and successful leadership.

Relationship to Prior Research

These women are all articulate, passionate and speak with authority. Yet, they all acknowledge conforming to the gender roles constructed within their culture (Goffman, 1977), which have been based in traditions that consistently place males as superiors. As Principal B expressed it to a colleague new to Judaism: “One way that wives show that respect is by accepting the customs of the husband. I want to do your things. Religious women who are very clear about what they are doing don’t feel that drive for feminism.”

Essentially, in their marriages these powerful, competent women adopt an attitude of deference to their husbands, which they define as this a method of showing respect to their husbands. This is way that these women balance the conflicting demands on them: they exercise their strong personalities when that is the necessary tool to running their schools, but the retrieve their inner feminine roles (Goffman, 1977) when that is the necessary tool to making their marriages run smoothly and when they find it necessary to defer to the make heads of school.

Interestingly, all of the interview participants expressed the tremendous amount of support they received from all the men in their lives. This is something worth putting into context of Glick and Fiske’s (1996) theory of ambivalent sexism. The men in their lives don’t appear to think that they are in some way incapable. Quite the contrary, they are treasured and appreciated by the men in their lives for the extreme leadership and competence they display. No man who felt he needs to view his wife as someone continually in need of his help would encourage her to undertake the running and heading

of an entire educational institution. Nothing would dispel that image of incompetence faster! While this might be true in regards to their husbands, these principals still need to contend with the male Heads of School and, at times adopt a deferential tone in order to get along.

This study further elucidates the ongoing process detailed by Ferziger (2009) of finding appropriate venues for Orthodox Jewish women to take on leadership roles. These women, who are very clearly part of the Orthodox Jewish community, have succeeded in occupying their roles as school principals and furthered the progress within Orthodox Jewish circles of navigating the sometimes-competing priorities of empowering women while maintaining traditional gender roles. However, the fact that the context is one of education, a traditionally acceptable female occupation, could be an influencing factor in supporting their ascent to leadership – things may be different in professions that have been restricted to the male domain.

The interview participants echoed a lot of the ideas found in Shakeshaft (1987) about the leadership skills that are more related to women and how natural feminine tendencies are looked at as an advantage in the field education, especially for educating girls, similar to Gilligan's (as cited in Shakeshaft, 1987) argument. The ideas of Eagly and Karau (2002) that women adopt a "more affectionate, helpful kind sympathetic, personally sensitive" (p. 574) leadership style is readily identifiable in the responses of the interview participants and is perhaps best captured by Principal D's continued emphasis on being a mother and being a good teacher and principal as being the same skill set.

There was some feedback that was similar to Chen and Addi's (1992) findings that reported that male teachers took issue with female principals. Principal A reports that when she got her first principal role, "At that time, the school was co-ed, but the teachers were primarily male. And so, particularly, any number of them were uncomfortable with my role supervising them." However, the majority of respondents did not directly supervise male staff, and sometimes actively avoided situations where they would be interacting with the faculty and leaders of the corresponding boys' schools, thus circumventing a potential break from the traditional female subservient position.

While Reed (2012) found that African American female principals were subject to discrimination for being both female and African American, this study's participants did not report that kind of experience. A possible explanation may be that they were not competing for leadership positions with men as one may in the public-school sphere, nor were they competing with individuals from other cultural communities.

Limitations of the Study

While the present study provides valuable insights into the career path and role negotiation of female principals in Orthodox Jewish girls' schools, there are several boundaries to widespread generalization of constructs. One of the limitations of this study is that only one of the participants was shadowed for direct observation. While shadowing allowed for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of Principal B and her school, this study did not gain that level of insight into the other principals as they functioned in their respective schools. Similarities and differences in leadership, communication, and interaction styles could not be analyzed. This is a limitation in

reliability as the data was not collected across the “full range of appropriate settings, times, respondents” (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014 p. 312).

A second limitation was that this study’s interviews were conducted via phone. This was done due to geographic distances between the researcher and study participants, as well as to best facilitate mutually convenient times for the interviews to take place. While many conversational nuances can still be captured in a phone conversation, it is possible that using a phone prevented the researcher from picking up on some of the facial expressions and gestures accompanying some of the interview participants’ responses, which may have served to elaborate on verbal responses or conveyed subtle contradictions. Phone conversations have an additional limitation, as some of the participants conducted the interviews while multi-tasking. It is not known the extent to which they perhaps might not have been completely focused on the interview, impacting their responses. This phenomenon would have been less likely to occur during an in-person interview. This too is a limitation in reliability (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

A third limitation is selection bias, as the study participants were not randomly selected; instead, they were selected from the pool of affirmative respondents obtained by the researcher from her group of professional contacts. This bias could have resulted in the participants not being fully representative of female Orthodox Jewish school principals. Additionally, none of the principals identified their schools as being Modern Orthodox in affiliation. This further leaves the sample of schools and principals not fully representative of the spectrum of Orthodox Jewish community. This is a limitation in

reliability as the data was not collected across the “full range of appropriate settings, times, respondents” (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014 p. 312).

A fourth limitation can be attributed to the fact that the participants were self-reporting on their own life experiences. This could have impacted which aspects of their experiences they chose to stress and what experiences stood out more prominently in their memories and skewed the reporting. This is a limitation in objectivity (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014), as the interview participants might not be able to offer objective views on their own life experiences.

Fifth, the researcher works together with one of the interview participants and possibly has preconceived notions about the participant and the school which she runs which could impact the interpretation of data in the study. This is a limitation of researcher objectivity (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

Additional interviews with other stakeholders in the educational process: community members, board members, and members of the parent body could have given the data a richer quality and provided greater insight and perspective into the outcomes of this study.

Recommendations for Future Practice

One recommendation for future practice is the need for women within the Orthodox Jewish community to have a more structured entry into school administration. Many of the participants stated that they never had any intention of going into administration and became principals almost by accident. This should not be how principals are selected. Potential leaders should be identified from the teaching workforce or the community early on based on their skills, traits and behaviors and willingness to

enter the principalship, then trained in leadership so that they should not need to rely solely on their natural abilities or experiential background to learn on the job. Creating such a program in the Orthodox Jewish community where leadership potential is identified, encouraged and developed will result in the future crop of female Orthodox Jewish school principals being considerably better-prepared to handle their jobs. Currently, there is no objectively collected data to assess efficacy of this program.

Since all the interview participants held strong opinions about the skills necessary to have and to develop to become an effective and successful school principal, these items should be categorized and formally assessed in the formation of a program to prepare the next generation to best educate the Orthodox Jewish youth and lead their schools. It may be that leadership skills need to be tailored to the specific context, as cultural norms and values hold a prominent status.

This program could also provide aspiring young Orthodox Jewish women with a support network to guide them and aid them to grow in to the roles that they aim to eventually occupy through small-scale experiences and opportunities. As Principal E expresses it: “to be an effective leader, you need to take the steps up to leadership.”

Another aspect of this program would be to train its participants how to interact with men incorporating both professional standards and standards that are acceptable by the norms of the Orthodox Jewish community. While it is not possible to prepare for every type of scenario, this training would give these women the benefit of the experiences of those that had to learn on the fly and better prepare them for the unique challenges that face Orthodox Jewish women in the principalship. This may include communication approaches, management techniques, as well as how to explicitly address

changes in traditional gender norms. The trend of women entering the principalship is moving in an upward direction; it is appropriate to set up this system to allow for all of these challenges to be properly addressed and empower and educate these women to enable them to best succeed in their pursuit of leading Orthodox Jewish schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study is hopefully the beginning of much research on leadership, culture and gender in the Orthodox Jewish community. One avenue of research might be to analyze how male school principals are selected in the Orthodox Jewish community and determine what leadership traits are significant from male principals' perspectives and compare and contrast those findings with the findings from this study on female leaders. This will help to paint a clearer picture of the path to school leadership in the Orthodox Jewish community and allow for the establishment of a more defined framework for how principals are trained and selected. While there certainly will be areas where male and female aspiring principals will need to be prepared differently due to the sensitivities of the community, there still is a lot in common which can be shared in formulating a more official system that will empower and enable for more effective, efficient and professional school leadership.

More research should be done on this population, Orthodox Jewish female principals, in a setting and a format that makes the data more comprehensive. More participants should be interviewed to get a better representation of the population and to also ensure that there are ample participants from all sects of the Orthodox Jewish educational community. These interviews should be conducted in person to best capture all of the nuances of expression being given over at the time of the interview. In person

interviews will also better focus the participants and allow them to be singly focused on the interview and enable them to give the most thoughtful, robust and comprehensive answers possible. All of the interview participants should be shadowed to allow for a richer understanding of the dynamics present in each participant's school and give greater perspective on their interview responses.

The researcher should not have any personal connections to the participants to avoid any preconceived notions and allow for the truest impression of the data to be captured, as it is conveyed by the interview participants. This will also eliminate selection bias, as the selection process will be made more randomized since the interviewer will not know any of the interview participants, to allow the sample to be more representative of the entire population.

Conclusion

This study focused on a severely understudied population: Orthodox Jewish female principals. Orthodox Jewish female principals exist at the nexus of three critical lenses for analysis: gender identity theory, cultural identity theory and leadership theory. In this study, the interview participants provided insights in to the challenges that they each faced in becoming school principals and the current challenges that they deal with on a daily basis in dealing with each of these three spheres. Participating principals gave insight as to how they balance their traditional gender roles with their very public careers, how they navigate inter-gender interactions while conforming to norms of the Orthodox Jewish community and what leadership skills possessed and had to acquire in order to achieve and succeed in their roles. This study's results can be used to help develop more formal training and leadership programs for the Orthodox Jewish community to better

identify, cultivate and train leadership talent to bolster the Orthodox Jewish community's schools and the ones that run them.

Appendix A



MEMO

Institutional Review Board
Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Date: December 17, 2018

To: Yael Wakslak

CC: Dr. Rene Parmar
Dr. Mary Beth Schaefer

Dr. Sandra Reznik
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Protocol # 1118-176

Approval Date: December 17, 2018

Expiration Date: December 16, 2019

Protocol Title: Women in (Em)Power: A Qualitative Study of Orthodox Women Principals

Please be advised that your human subject protocol has been approved as expedited by the IRB. You may begin your study.

IRB approval of research projects is valid for one year only from the original date of approval. This study expires on **December 16, 2019**. Approval of the continuation of the research is possible on a yearly basis. A new proposal must be submitted upon request for renewal.

You will not be permitted to collect data more than twelve months from the date of approval without an extension granted by the IRB. Mark your calendar today for November 17, 2019. You should submit your request for continuation on that date and no later.

It is imperative that you keep this memo and the email on file where it can easily be accessed. You will need to provide copies of this document when involved in further correspondence with the IRB.

Best wishes for successful pursuit of this research.

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Background Questions:

What is your educational background?

How many years have you been principal?

Where did you work before your current school? In what capacity?

When did you decide you wanted to become a principal and what spurred that decision?

Who gave you your first opportunity as a principal?

Did you have teachers who made an impact on you?

Who were your principals when you were in school?

Gender Identity Theory:

What advice do you impart to young women looking to follow in your path?

What did your mother do? Was she employed? What role did she have in the house? The community? Do you have sisters that you looked up to? What do they do?

Who was the Rebbetzin of the shul you grew up in?

Do you feel that you are a “natural” leader or is this something you needed to develop?

How does your husband feel about your leadership role? Do you occupy a similar role at home as in school?

Do you have daughters? How do they feel about your leadership role? Have any of them expressed an interest in becoming a principal or similar leadership role?

Cultural Identity Theory:

What type of reactions did you get from people (parents, family, community members) when you first became a principal and early in your career as a principal?

Who were your role models growing up?

Please describe the community you currently live in and the role you occupy within the community?

Do you feel that you get special treatment in the community because of your role as principal?

How do you navigate interacting with men in the workplace, especially those whom you have to deal with regularly?

Describe a situation you were involved in that was more complicated because it involved interacting with members of the opposite gender and how you handled it.

Do you ever feel out of place or awkward when dealing with a male subordinate (Jewish or not-Jewish)?

Do you interact differently with men and women in the workplace?

What are your thoughts on men being principals in all-girl schools?

As principal, do you have authority to make any decision or are there times you need to get approval from someone higher up (Dean/ Board)? Describe those types of interactions.

How do you compare your role as principal with your role in shul (synagogue) where women don't play a prominent role?

Do you feel that the role of women in the Orthodox Jewish community has changed? Please explain.

Have there been times where you questioned whether an activity (public speaking, a video ad, etc.) was appropriate for your standards of female modesty? How did you navigate these situations?

Critical Leadership Theory:

Describe your leadership style and how you developed it.

Did you encounter resistance when you tried to achieve a leadership role? Did you receive special encouragement? From whom?

What character/ leadership traits would you like your students to learn from you?

Is it more difficult to be a leader to men than to women?

Do you feel that the way you are perceived and related to as a principal has changed during your career?

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