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Building blocks of emotional attachment: understanding the development of emotional intimacy between Israeli secular Jewish mothers and their children

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

2019

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Building blocks of emotional attachment: understanding the development of emotional intimacy between Israeli secular Jewish mothers and their children

By:

Alexandra Poll

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

The University of Sheffield
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May 2019

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Abstract

Through the utilisation of narrative research and semi-structured interviews this research explores the perceptions, values and beliefs held by eight Israeli secular Jewish mothers living in a society which centralises the family unit and its loyalty and commitment to its members. These are located alongside a strong belief in gender equality and an allegiance to the security of the state of Israel, culminating in a positioning of the role of the Israeli Jewish mother as central both to the family and to the Jewish state. This research, positioned within Vygotsky's social development theory and Bowlby's attachment theory, which signify the importance of reciprocal interactions between mother and child, aims to identify aspects of Israeli culture which may contribute to the formation of attachment between mother and child. The aim is to identify if, of the traditions, beliefs and customs identified in this research, there are any such features which can be taken out of their Israeli context and be utilised by practitioners working within educational settings supporting parents on issues relating to the attachment formations with their children.

By applying a thematic analysis to the transcripts, findings revealed the complexities which exist for the Israeli secular Jewish mother participating in this research and the conflicts, tensions and pressures she faces living in a society in which the 'lengthening shadows' of the Holocaust (Elon, 2010, p.232), the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and shifts in societal values play an important role in understanding society's expectations. Findings highlight the significance of the 'dugri' (open and honest) style of talk which exists in Israeli society and the open discussions of conflicts which result in reflectiveness and confident parenting. Furthermore, they emphasise the profundity of the human commitment and emotional bond between mother and child and suggest that to better understand the nature of this bond requires an outlook which expands beyond the realm of attachment theory; an outlook which embraces and signifies the sociocultural and historical experiences which shape this emotional and intimate bond.

Acknowledgements

The accomplishment of this research would not have been possible without the following people to whom I am for ever thankful.

Initially, I would like to thank the eight mothers who gave up their time to share their stories about motherhood. Your narrative, your honesty, and your beautiful descriptions about aspects of your lives have been the focus of this research and the findings which have come to light.

המון תודה על הזמן שהקדשתן והנבונות שלכן להשתתף במחקר. הבנות שלכן והסיפורים המרגשים ששיתפתן אותי בהם יצרו בסיס רכב של מידע חשוב ומעניין ותרמו לממצאי המחקר.

I have been fortunate to have started this amazing journey with Dr Jools Page who has taught me not only the art of critical self-reflection but with whom I shared both a personal connection and a mutual interest in attachment theory and motherhood.

To Dr Rachael Levy who has become not only my supervisor but who has enabled me to grow in confidence and to acquire the tools I needed to look deep beyond the surface. Your sensitivity, patience, wisdom and constant support have inspired me to push on when times were hard, and to reach deep into the data and discover both the amazing things about mothering in Israeli society today and about myself. To Professor Tom Billington, my second supervisor, thank you for your advice, guidance and insight which have given me the confidence to see beyond and appreciate the profundity and complexity of the emotional intimacy captured in this research.

To the two most amazing geeks, Jack and Therese: thank you for so many special times, for propping up and cheering on, and for the most wonderful conversations about anything and everything. You have been there right from the very beginning – through the good times and the tougher times; I love you both more than you will ever know.

Thank you to all my friends whose words of encouragement over the years provided a source of energy. To Dawn and Siobhan for the cheering words and ongoing support throughout this journey. To Deborah for our 'trial run' interview – a major contributing stepping stone in this research - and for the many interesting conversations about life in Israel, the Hebrew language and on being a Jewish mother.

I would like to thank Hillary for taking the time to find out and express an interest in my work – I have thoroughly enjoyed our walks – and skipping - our endless coffees and our fascinating chats about pretty much anything! To my wise friend Katie, with whom I have shared so many

conversations exploring family values, religion, motherhood and so much more - your intellect has been a source of inspiration.

I am particularly thankful to my very best friend Tal who has walked by my side for the last 40 years, thank you for the endless conversations offering advice, encouragement and understanding which at times were so badly needed. Your belief in me and your genuine 'firgun' have motivated me and inspired me throughout this research.

Finally, to my family, to my sister Daphna for appreciating the effort and commitment of this journey and for sharing my ups and my downs. To the most wonderful and supportive parents, who have provided me with a strong sense of identity and the basis and confidence to try out new things and embark on new challenges. To my mum, for being by my side every step of the way. Your guidance, support, our endless conversations and your unconditional presence throughout my life and throughout this research, have been a source of inspiration and comfort and have enabled me to believe in myself and in my abilities to achieve and fulfil many goals and dreams.

To the best daughters ever, Sophie and Dani, my biggest supporters and best studying companions who provided silences and distractions when needed, a listening ear - always, perspective and incredibly wise words – continuously, much appreciated encouragement when needed and your pride – thanks to you I never felt I was doing this on my own! Finally, to Nigel, the most amazing husband and best friend one could ever wish for. Your endless support, ongoing encouragement, wonderful and incredibly insightful conversations, enduring patience, and most loyal friendship I could have ever wished for – thank you; this is dedicated to you all.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Preliminary Thoughts

The philosophies and concepts that guide attachment theory 'have a long developmental history' (Bretherton, 1992, p.1) during which researchers have come to appreciate the significance of environmental experiences and the quality of the relationship between the mother – or primary caregiver - and child in influencing the development of the child's emotional and social wellbeing (Bowlby, 1969). This appreciation further includes the influential role which the emotional and social wellbeing have on aspects such as the child's conduct, their approach to learning and their performance within educational settings (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, NICE, 2016).

In addition, researchers have acquired a better understanding regarding the role of the sociocultural context in shaping and defining the role of the mother and the interactions between mother and child (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Gauvain, 2005; Burman, 2008). The sociocultural context and the values and standards that exist within it are often influenced and subject to prevailing social conditions and the groups' adherence to traditions and expectations established by previous generations. Indeed, the level of regard given to established traditions and expectations will influence the clarity of the roles of the group members, including those of women and mothers (Giddens, 1991).

The complex history of Israeli society, its societal ideologies, prevailing conflicts and a commitment to the security of the state, have created 'tensions' for Israeli women and mothers and a difficulty in establishing clear and defined guidelines regarding what is expected of them as women and mothers in today's Israeli society. Following deep level interviews with eight Israeli secular Jewish mothers, this research will reveal how despite these tensions, sociocultural mannerisms and traditions have resulted in confident parenting practices and the formation of close bonds between Israeli secular Jewish mothers and their children. It will highlight the intricacies of the human commitment and emotional bond between two people which reaches beyond the realm of attachment theory alone. Findings further emphasise the importance of the sociocultural and historical context in understanding both the individual and their relationship with others and the importance for practitioners and professionals to look beneath the seemingly even surface (Elon, 2010) when working on relational issues between parents and their children.

In this introductory chapter I provide a summary of my background, sharing personal and professional experiences which have shaped my views and thoughts regarding the research topic.

This locates my positionality and my perceptions of the area being researched and my understanding of how reality and knowledge are constructed. Furthermore, this chapter will describe how the idea for the research came about, including the choice to explore this topic from the point of view of the Israeli, secular, Jewish mother - the chosen participant. This will include a more detailed consideration of who this woman is, noting the importance of sociocultural context in providing an understanding regarding perceptions and world views of the individual and of their social group. The section which follows provides an in-depth analysis in which I consider my positionality as an Israeli – an insider - researching in Israel and the potential issues this position may bring. Matters relating to subjectivity, validity and integrity are discussed and strategies to mitigate the risk of bias are considered and addressed both in this chapter and throughout the research. Finally this chapter provides an overview of how the research questions were formulated, outlining the impact findings will have on the work of parent practitioners like myself, working with parents in school settings, on attachment related issues between them and their children.

1.2 Personal Background

On a personal level I have a strong sense of identity with, and a belief in my role as a mother, and in the desire and need to develop a strong and secure relationship with my daughters, as I passionately believe that the strength and quality of our relationship plays a vital role in shaping their emotional and social welling (Bowlby, 1952). Although I was born in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, I spent my childhood in Israel and I have a strong sense of identity to my Israeli/Jewish cultural heritage, which is combined with a strong connection to a supportive immediate and extended family unit. I have a great deal of respect for and appreciation of this family unit as it has provided me with confidence and reassurance, a sense of belonging and much support throughout my life. Since becoming a mother myself and through my work as a parent practitioner, I have come to value and respect Bowlby's work (Bowlby, 1952; 1982) regarding the importance of forming a secure attachment between parent and child, and I appreciate the significance of the harmony, unity and strength which this bond provides.

I have been fortunate enough to have lived in different countries and experience the values and traditions of multiple cultures: Israeli culture as a child, Italian culture as an adolescent, and British culture as an adult and a parent. This has enabled me to understand and learn about various 'Weltanschauung' …worldviews (Triandis,1990, p.34) and different ways of being. Furthermore I believe that these experiences have enabled me to appreciate and better understand not only myself but also those around me (Fantini, 1989).

My upbringing and life experiences have provided me with an opportunity to interact with people from different cultures, which I believe has expanded my view of the world. This point is echoed by Fantini (1989) who describes how 'contact with individuals of other languages and cultural backgrounds not only opens a door to exploring another worldview but also ultimately provokes questions about one's own values and assumptions' (Fantini, 1989, p.3). I believe that this has influenced the way in which I understand reality, perceiving it to be subjectively constructed and stemming from our sociocultural background, resulting in 'multiple realities, depending upon social positioning and life experiences' (Sikes, 2004, p.22).

In my professional role as parent practitioner at a local primary school, I work with parents (primarily mothers) to address issues regarding the relationships they have with their children. The focus of my work is often on building and strengthening the emotional component of the dyad, initially by working with parents on trying to understand the importance emotional wellbeing has on the child's social and emotional development, and then by focusing on practical strategies which support and enhance the quality of the interaction between the mother and child. This stems from an understanding that the nature of the attachment formation between a parent and child strongly influences the emotional and social wellbeing of the child, which in turn impacts aspects such as the child's behaviour, their approach to learning and their attendance at school (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, NICE, 2016).

My original thought for the research was to design a parenting course where the emphasis would be on introducing parents both to the theoretical aspect of attachment formations, and to the more practical elements which would help build and strengthen the emotional relationships and the attachment formations between them and their children. This led me to consider what views and beliefs the parents with whom I work have on mothering and on the manner in which the sociocultural milieu shapes and influences perceptions and expectations of this role. I reflected on my own culture and on my relationship with my mother, my daughters and other family members, seeking to identify what factors contributed to shaping these relationships and the attachment formations I have with these people. I recognised that since becoming a parent I have come to better understand the importance placed by Israeli society on the family and on the central role the Jewish mother has within the family unit (Berkovitch, 1997). I questioned how Israeli Jewish mothers felt their relationship with their children developed and if there were any cultural traditions, mannerisms and beliefs which they believed impacted and shaped those relationships. I understood that the idea of writing a parenting course about attachment formations was somewhat premature and that initially I needed to explore and gain a better understanding of the aspects, components and practical strategies which play a role in enhancing the development of those family formations. I

realised that I wanted to discover if there were any specific cultural features within Israeli society which shaped and impacted on the nature of mother-child relationships.

This understanding played a key role in changing the focus of my research towards wanting to better understand the role of the Jewish Israeli mother and the impact this role has on the development of attachment formations between mothers and their children. I was curious to explore if understanding mothering and attachment formations within the Israeli context would help inform my own practices and benefit the work I carry out with the parents at the school where I work. Would this understanding enable me to identify specific aspects of this culture which would support parents with their own attachment formations?

This shifted the focus of the research to Israeli culture and to my wanting to explore the principles, opinions, beliefs and traditions of a sociocultural milieu for which the concept of the family and its socio-emotional relationships are highly valued and respected (Goldscheider, 2015). I wanted to understand whether of the philosophies, traditions and customs identified and set within the context of Israeli culture, are there any such elements which can be decontextualized – edited of their cultural context - and conveyed into a different culture, in this case that of the UK?

I also realised that I wanted to understand these aspects and features from the point of view of the Israeli, secular, Jewish mother, understanding how she perceives her role in a society in which the position of the mother and the family are held in high regard. I was curious to get to know this woman better and to find out more about her perceptions and views of her role as a woman and a mother in this family oriented society.

1.3 Who Is This Woman?

Roer-Strier and Rosenthal (2001) describe how parenting views, traditions and beliefs are moulded by the sociocultural environment and the culture of the cohort. The unifying value of the position of the family and the central role it holds in Israeli society is positioned against the complexity of a society which, in practical terms, embraces a 'vast diversity in family patterns' (Lavee and Katz, 2003, p.213). However, regardless of this diversity, and regardless of the realisations of equality concerning gender-related matters, Berkovitch (1997) highlights the fact that 'the Jewish Israeli female subject is constructed first and foremost, not as an individual or a citizen, but as a mother and a wife' (p.606). Berkovitch (1997) refers to shared 'ideologies and practices' (p.606) which have influenced Israeli society and signify the position of the Israeli Jewish mother in the family, along with the reality of a strong belief in gender equality and a strong commitment to the security of the state, as 'tensions' which exert different pressures on the way the role of the woman is perceived by Israeli society. This has positioned the Israeli Jewish mother as central not only to her family but also

to her position as a Jewish mother in the Jewish state. It is however important to consider that claims for gender equality in Israel are masked by the fact that family matters are subject to the halakhah – the body of Jewish laws set out in the Torah (Rich, 2011) - which positions the woman as a possession of her husband (Brandow, 1980) which enforces male-controlled standards and norms. Furthermore, both marriage and divorce are subject to Jewish religious laws and courts rather than civil ones (Fournier e al, 2012). It is interesting to note that in Hebrew the words 'yoledet' – a person who gives birth – and 'moledet' – the homeland – share the same word root (Lieblich, 2001, p.244).

I knew that I felt a strong sense of identification with those women and, although I appreciate that I do not share some of their 'tensions' and pressures – probably as I don't live in Israel - I do share the strong sense of commitment to my family and a strong emotional connection to Israel, its culture and the family values it holds. I realised it was the voice of this woman, the one who embraces an allegiance towards Israeli culture and the familistic and militaristic responsibilities expected of her by that culture, that I would like to represent in this research.

I recognised that the decision to carry out the research in Israel felt 'just right' (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007, p.38) as it appealed on both a personal and professional level, triggering an emotional reaction and strong level of excitement I hadn't experienced before. Indeed this led me to reflect on the depth to which sociocultural context and experiences shape the emotional connection between people. I did however appreciate that my identification with the Israeli Jewish mother, my strong emotional connection to Israel and its culture, and to the image I hold regarding the family and the role it plays in the development of attachment between parent and child, could place me in a position of being 'inherently biased… too close to the culture…to raise provocative questions' (Merriam et al, 2001, p.411). As a researcher researching in Israel, this positionality presents both weaknesses and benefits which are further explored and addressed in the following section.

1.4 Positionality and Researcher

I recognise that 'feeling just right' presents issues regarding bias and subjectivity, and how having an emotional connection to the context and content of the research may raise questions regarding data validity. It is important to clarify that for this research the term 'validity' is understood to reflect honesty and truthfulness, both in the way the research is conducted and in the accuracy in which the findings of the research truthfully – faithfully - represent the data shared (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982).

Stenhouse (1981) relates to concepts of 'values' and 'interests', describing the latter as the angles and viewpoints assumed by the researcher towards the research topic which are regarded as 'the impulses behind all research' (Stenhouse 1981, p.109). As such it could be argued that being biased

or having a personal interest in the context and content of the research may be necessary and could be considered 'a prerequisite to generate the energy needed for the research activity' (Jones, 2001). Wolcott (2005) refers to bias as:

> 'a well-thought-out position from which a researcher feels drawn to an issue or problem and seeks to construct a firmer basis in both knowledge and understanding' (Wolcott, 2005, p.178).

I was aware that my own prior engagement with literature surrounding the topic of my research may confine and limit my exploratory and investigative 'field of vision' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.14) as attention and efforts may centre around more specific aspects within the narrative whilst marginalising others. Indeed Tuckett (2005) describes how a prior exposure to literature concerning the research area may result in 'a shutting down of the author's openness to themes emergent from the data' (p.79) which may risk findings being representative of a less broad and generic nature. However Corbin and Strauss (2015) assert that 'familiarity with relevant literature can enhance sensitivity to subtle nuances in data' (p.50) thus strengthening the data analysis process. This view is shared by Yardley (2000) who describes how having a deeper understanding of the literature, themes and matters which form part of the research topic provide the researcher with additional 'scholastic tools' (p.220) which enable a more complex and involved analysis of the data. This point is reflected by Jones (2001) who refers to bias as a means through which the researcher describes positionality in an open and honest manner, contextualising the aims and intent of the research.

Regardless of the above, with bias being a strength or a hindrance, this does highlight the need to maintain clarity, reflectiveness and ongoing self-analysis regarding the true origin of the emergence of themes within the data. In other words, as a researcher I realised that I would need to maintain a dialogue with myself from the outset, questioning if indeed the findings and interpretations are emergent from the narratives or whether findings have been manipulated and enforced due to positionality, prior knowledge and familiarity of the researched field.

In terms of my own positionality I consider myself Israeli and my emotional connection is with Israel, the country where I grew up and which has played a big part in shaping the person I am today. I also feel a sense of connection with the United Kingdom, the place where I have brought up my daughters and where I have lived for most of my adult life. These experiences have enabled me to identify with the position of the simultaneous 'insider-outsider' (Bonner and Tolhurst, 2002) in both Israeli and British cultures. This position adheres to the understanding that the status of the researcher being inside or outside is not absolute as, even within the same sociocultural cohort, differences amongst individuals exist in the 'ideational components of its culture' (Aguilar, 1981, p.25). Aguilar describes the inside-outside position of the researcher as one which indicates the level

of involvement 'with respect to a multiplicity of social and cultural characteristics of a heterogeneous population' (Aguilar, 1981, p.25) which provides the researcher with the ability to balance opportunities and liabilities (Aguilar, 1981). Indeed positionality, identity and the sense of commonality can be considered in relation to the researchers' views regarding their own 'insider and outsider' cross-cultural affiliation with the group (Merton, 1972). Banks (1998) refers to the 'insider' as someone who is sympathetic and understanding of the group's values, traditions, norms and mannerisms and is perceived by the group to be 'a legitimate community member' (Banks, 1998, p.8) of the group, whereas the 'outsider' is regarded as an individual who conforms to the norms and values of a different sociocultural group and is therefore perceived by the group members to have little knowledge and understanding of their group's sociocultural framework of reference.

As a note of caution, it needs to be considered that shared commonalities between researcher and participant could also risk the creation of a false reality, based on a perception that commonalities also extend to the manner in which experiences and events are perceived and interpreted, including the predication of the feelings associated and triggered by those experiences (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000). This emphasises a conscious need to safeguard participants' subjectivity (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006) ensuring it is not 'replaced by a fictional, non-existent world constructed by the researcher' (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p.2).

The above cautionary note led me to reflect that as an Israeli conducting research in Israel I consider myself more as an 'insider' as I believe I share the participants' cultural frame of reference - 'the correct or ideal way of behaving within a culture attitudes, beliefs, preferences and practices considered appropriate for members of the culture' (Ogbu, 1993, p.490) - particularly those relating to the family unit, family life and the relationships within. I am also aware that this outlook has meant that my perceptions regarding the data shared by the participants and my approach to the data analysis process may have been tainted by expectations and assumptions based on aspects of this shared cultural frame of reference.

One such assumption relates to the level of honesty shared within the narratives as it is linked to the cultural trend of 'dugri' - a style of talk portrayed by Katriel (2004) as a 'straightforwardness, bluntness, the sharpening of the edges' (p.146). Dugri talk signifies sincerity, and as such is characterised by honesty, openness and directness or, to quote a Hebrew proverb, this style of talk defines a person using dugri talk as one for whom: 'Piv velibo shavim - his mouth is equal to his heart' (Katriel, 2004, p.160). As such I am aware that my assumption and expectation is that the narrative shared by the mothers will be characterised by the dugri style of talk which therefore – in my eyes – places the data gathered as an open and honest account of events and at a certain level of

honesty and sincerity. This reinforced an understanding that I needed to approach the interpretative process with an open mind, prepared and ready to both challenge and be challenged by the data.

I acknowledged that regardless of the identification and understanding of sociocultural boundaries and frames of reference, tuning in to another person will still result in what Schutz (1967) describes as a perceived understanding based on the manner in which verbal and non-verbal communication of events experienced is shared and interpreted by the researcher. This perceived understanding and allocation of meaning reflects the outlook and positionality of the researcher, which strengthens the need to implement rigour so that calls for authenticity and true representation of meaning given by the participant can be claimed.

I am aware that my positionality regarding attachment espouses the importance placed on the quality of the emotional relationship between parent and child, and on the ability of the primary caregiver to respond to the child's emotional, physical and social needs in a sensitive and empathic manner (Bowlby, 1952; Zilberstein, 2014). I am also aware that my positionality and beliefs regarding the nature of attachment formations between mothers and children in Israel stem from a positive outlook that I have assumed on to Israeli culture and its values concerning the family and the closeness amongst its family members (Lavee and Katz, 2003); I appreciate that this positiveness is not necessarily a universal viewpoint and my observations and assumptions, which are compounded by my personal and professional interest in the subject of attachment, might be different to those held by the participating mothers. Having this awareness highlights the risk of bias influencing the manner in which data is selected and interpreted throughout the research. The risk of bias may result in an 'unwitting selectivity in the acquisition and use of evidence' (Nickerson, 1998, p.175), also referred to as 'confirmation bias' - an outcome which can also occur from a weakness in the ability of the researcher to construct and identify 'negative discomfirmatory evidence' (Nickerson, 1998, p.180). This difficulty is driven by a need to present a conclusion which supports and confirms the theory and positionality held by the researcher, and the need to defend a belief or theory. As such I recognised that I needed to approach this research with an acceptance that my vision of what a secure attachment feels and looks like, and the assumptions of how it is created, might be challenged and changed during the process. I believe this recognition enabled me to ensure that outcomes and interpretations are a result of an open mind rather than a dogmatic attempt to confirm my opinions. This, I believe, reduced the risk of bias and limitations associated with researcher's positionality and better reflected and represented the views shared by the participating mothers.

The above highlighted the importance of implementing strategies throughout the research so that pre-existing beliefs and lack of impartiality did not manipulate the manner in which data was gathered and evaluated (Nickerson, 1998), thus strengthening the argument for validity and integrity throughout the research. Some of these strategies, which are discussed in more detail at a later stage, included maintaining a reflective journal, applying the process of respondent validation (Torrance, 2012) and ensuring that the findings encompassed a range of opinions, themes and beliefs that included the 'untypical' ones (White et al, 2003, p.290), rather than presenting only those which support the central viewpoint of the research.

I believe that the positionality reflected above, and the personal and professional interests I have in the role parents play in developing secure attachment formations with their children, have shaped the design of the research and the formation of the research questions.

1.5 The Research Questions

Formulating the research questions proved to be an ongoing process which forced me to revisit and clarify the focus of the research, its limitations and parameters and the kind of the data I was aiming to collate. I am aware that the manner in which I process my thoughts is by discussing them out loud – particularly with my husband – until the wording of the questions reflect the intended aims, and things feel just right. This process necessitated justifying both the instinctive and more rational procedures and decisions which formed part of the research. I was looking to identify questions which would address the issues and queries I intended to explore, positioning the research within the sociocultural boundaries and limitations in which the research would be conducted. This process of internal negotiation continued until I achieved clarity on the aims of the research (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007). The above process, and the thoughts and feelings that resulted, enabled me to formulate the following research questions:

- How does the Israeli, secular, Jewish mother participating in this research, raising her children in a diverse society such as Israel, define her identity as a woman and her role as a mother?
- Are there any aspects of Israeli cultural, values, beliefs and/or traditions uncovered in the narratives that contribute to the developmental process and formation of attachment relations between the mothers in this research and their children?
- Are there any common elements amongst the perceptions held by the participating mothers regarding the attachment formation process?

My belief is that there are aspects of Israeli culture which allow strong attachment formations between mothers and their children to develop which meant the primary emphasis of the research

was on identifying building blocks that relate to Israeli culture rather than Judaism. For this reason, the research was conducted in Israel, with Israeli Jewish mothers who considered themselves to be secular, or 'hiloni' (Elazar, 2015), rather than religious. It is important to recognise that the specific ways in which religious customs and traditions are observed by secular Israeli Jews, varies from person to person. As the focus of the research is specifically on cultural aspects rather than on religious ones it was important that for the participants, their identity with the Jewish religion was secondary to their identity as an Israeli. It was also imperative to ensure that although the emphasis was on identifying cultural influences, the research remained highly exploratory and as such I have, to the best of my ability, ensured that the mothers felt able and free to talk about any influencing issues and features of their lives.

1.6 Summary and Outline of the Research

In this chapter I shared personal and professional experiences explaining my positionality and the rationale behind this research. I signified the position of sociocultural context, defining perceptions and views on the role of the Israeli mother which influenced the decision to explore aspects of Israeli culture regarding attachment formations through the eyes of eight Israeli, secular, Jewish mothers, living in Israel.

Chapter two provides a review of the literature in relation to the focus of this research. This includes the theoretical frameworks within which this research is positioned, namely Vygotsky's social development theory referencing Feuerstein's theory of the Mediated Learning Experience and Bowlby's attachment theory. It provides an in-depth analysis of Israeli society, highlighting the importance of the family unit, of motherhood and the strong sense of national security located within the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and the legacy of the Holocaust. Finally this chapter reviews the position of the Israeli, secular, Jewish woman whose views and perceptions are the focus of this research.

Chapter three explores the methodology, the methods and the data analysis phases of this research. It outlines the methods used to collate the data and justifies the choice of using narrative inquiry as a means of doing so. Information is provided regarding additional research tools applied including the interviews, the pilot study and the usage of a reflective journal throughout the research. This chapter stresses the importance of conducting the interviews in Hebrew – the participants' mother tongue - and much consideration is given to aspects concerning the transcription and translation of the interviews emphasising the means applied to ensure that loyalty and authenticity to the narrative shared were maintained throughout. Further discussions provide details of how the

participating mothers were chosen, highlighting the usage of the direct approach typical to Israeli culture.

Discussions shift to reviewing the data analysis process of the research and the exploratory approaches applied in the search for meaning and themes in the narratives. These share considerations made for choosing Braun and Clarke's six phases of thematic analysis and the desire to be guided by sensitized rather than definitive concepts, which to my understanding provide a more flexible frame of reference (Charmaz, 2014) and the opportunity for unexpected themes and findings to arise. Furthermore, this chapter explains how the identification of themes were guided by frequency and commonality and by views deemed to be of importance regardless of their quantifiable ratings. The nonlinear, multi-layered approach applied throughout resulted in the identification of the seven themes which support the development of the emotional relationship between the mothers and their children. The further analysis of the data which ensued provided the wider and deeper appreciation of Israeli culture, its history and the people - the context within which the identity of the woman in this research and her role as a mother is framed. These are the focus of the chapters which follow.

Chapter 4 provides a perspective of motherhood and considers the broader historical and sociocultural aspects recognised in this research as being influential in shaping both the role of the mother and the identity of the participating Israeli woman. It contextualises motherhood within a society that places a high value on the role of the mother, the family unit and its family members. This chapter presents the conflicts, tensions and pressures that exist for Israeli women and mothers bringing up their children in a society influenced by matters relating to gender in/equality, work-family issues, and aspects relating to national security particularly, with reference to the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and the legacy of the Holocaust. These conflicts and tensions exist alongside the open and honest 'dugri' style of talk typical of Israeli society which means emotions are openly expressed and the conflicts, tensions and pressures are aired and shared.

The practices and behaviours which form part of the seven themes are explored in chapter five. Discussions - intertwined with the mothers' narrative – provide insight into family practices and behaviours which, in the eyes of the mothers, influence the development of the emotional intimacy between them and their children. The open and honest narrative and the sharing of experiences reveal the complexities that exist for these Israeli mothers bringing up their children in today's Israeli society. Discussions will argue how the open and honest dialogue triggers a process which enables reflectiveness and self-awareness to occur, resulting in considered rather than habitual practices and an inner confidence regarding the mothers parental role. The chapter shows how inner confidence

regarding parenting practices enables the participating mothers to develop loving and sensitive relationships and a strong emotional and intimate bond with their children. Finally, this chapter signifies the importance of sociocultural experiences in the development of the emotional bond between mother and child and suggests that to better understand the nature of this bond requires an approach which appreciates its profundity and complexity; one which is not exclusive to, attachment theory.

The final chapter, chapter six, identifies the complexities that exist for the women of this research needing to navigate what is expected of them by Israeli society, both as mothers and as women. Implications of the research stress that for policy makers and parent practitioners working on attachment related issues with parents within schools and other educational settings, there is a need to adopt a multi-layered approach which recognises the sophistication of the human commitment to one another and the importance of understanding the sociocultural and historical context in which the relationship develops. Furthermore, this chapter recommends that future research is carried out, in which mothers representative of the diverseness of Israeli society share their narrative and views regarding the relationships between them and their children. Finally, I reflect on how this research has enabled me to gain a better understanding of my culture, my family and of myself.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this literature review is to contextualise the research identifying influencing theories, theorists, ideas and historical and cultural factors which have provided the rationale, framework and direction of this research. The goal is to provide an account of the difficulties, challenges and criticisms and to highlight 'contrary findings and alternative interpretations' (Randolph, 2009, p.11) surrounding the theories so as to mitigate the potential for subjectivity and a blind allegiance towards one argument over another.

The literature review will focus primarily on two theoretical frameworks within which this research is positioned, both of which emphasise the importance of the 'reciprocal interactions of parent and child' (Shaw and Bell, 1993, p. 516). Although the universal function of attachment is discussed, much emphasis is placed on exploring the Israeli sociocultural context in which this research is placed and the position of the Israeli Jewish woman within it, signifying the importance of the cultural world in shaping and defining expectations, values and traditions and the development of attachment formations (Bornstein et al, 2011).

The first theoretical framework refers to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural approach to child development and learning, which theorises that human behaviour is set within a cultural framework and that understanding and learning are socially constructed, placing the primary caregiver – be it a parent, relation, sibling or other individual in the child's life - as the mediator and mentor of the child's sociocultural world. This section will also refer to Feuerstein's theory of the Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) (Feuerstein and Feuerstein, 1999) as it perceives the process of child development as an interaction between adult and child in which the adult mediates the wide-ranging culturally shaped meaning of the world to the child. This theory is closely linked with Vygotsky's theory that the social environment, which is culturally dictated, plays a central role in child development (Vygotsky, 1978; Feuerstein and Jensen, 1980).

The second theoretical framework refers to Bowlby's (1952; 1960; 1982) attachment theory which stresses the significance of the quality of the emotional relationship between parent and child and on the attachment formations this relationship produces. The review will consider how attachment formations combine both universal needs guided by physiologically driven behaviours and by sociocultural norms which are by nature more localised.

The subsequent sections of the literature review portray aspects of Israeli society, emphasising how the family unit is viewed in Israeli society and what it means to be a secular Israeli Jewish mother in

Israel in the 21st century. As the focus of the research is on culture, discussions provide an initial overview of the broader meaning of culture leading on to an analysis of Israeli culture. The review portrays the complexities of a society which embraces a variety of ethnic backgrounds, cultures, customs and affiliations to the Jewish religion, and explores the values, customs, perceptions and beliefs surrounding the family unit and mothers in modern Israeli society. This portrayal raises questions regarding motherhood and the intricacies of defining sociocultural expectations and views regarding the role of the mother.

In terms of the two main theoretical frameworks in which this research is positioned, the literature review that follows provides information regarding the early days and early influences of the theories so as to contextualise and provide a better appreciation of the manner in which the theories have been constructed. Chu (2003) explains how the essence and meaning of writings and information are subject to the sociocultural environment of both the writer and the reader as those environments provide the framework and benchmark against which interpretation and construction of meaning has been written and against which it will be understood. As such, the act of constructing meaning can be understood to be both dynamic and subjective to the environment and accepted sociocultural norms. In other words, in order for a theory to be better understood and appreciated it needs to be located and seen within the context – the social world - in which it has been structured.

Understanding the 'context' - which here refers not only to the social setting (Cole, 2003) including key historical, religious, political and sociocultural factors but also the intellectual development and rationale of the individuals involved - can provide not only clarity regarding those issues and ideas addressed but also offer insight into those which may have been marginalised due to the prevailing circumstances and environment (Feuerstein et al, 1999). For example, Doherty et al (2008) consider how early Western research in family theory has been dominated by voices of 'male, white and middle class' (p.9) researchers which, according to Osmond and Thorne (2008), has resulted in a 'distorted [portrayal] of women's – and men's experiences' (p.9).

If we accept that theory results from a process of 'systematic ordering or ideas, concept and models with the purpose of constructing meaning' (Garrison, 2000, p.3) striving to achieve a better understanding of reality (Bernath and Vidal, 2007), then having an understanding of the contextual framework and influences which may have shaped theoretical development can offer a better understanding of the theory itself.

On a personal level, the desire and need to acquire a better understanding of the developmental process of the theories chosen stemmed from an attempt to mitigate the potential for bias and

subjectivity. These arise from an awareness of an affinity I may have towards the theories chosen which, according to Toomela (2016), may have led to an element of 'idolisation' towards the key individuals within the theories, namely Lev Vygotsky and John Bowlby, and to the theories themselves. Toomela (2016) relates to an element of division and immaturity which exists amongst followers of standing theories resulting from an almost emotional '"like" or "dislike"' pick rather than an objective correspondence 'to external reality' (Toomela, 2016, p.96). In essence providing a deeper insight is symbolic of my desire as a researcher to strive to provide perspective and a better portrayal of the sociocultural, historical and political worlds which have shaped the theories presented rather than ascribe the theories with blind 'universal validity ' (Schmidt, 2001). The chapter concludes with a brief summary and an introduction to the Methodology and Methods of Research chapter that follows.

2.2 Vygotsky's Social Development Theory – Introduction and Early Influences

Vygotsky's theories were written and developed during the 1920's and early 1930's under Stalin's rule after the Russian revolution (Kozulin, 1995). His work was banned from discussion or publication by Stalin; the exact reasons behind the 'Stalinist suppression' (Fraser and Yasnitsky, 2012) are unclear and opinions vary from political differences shared between the two men and feelings of anger that in the era of the Cold War Vygotsky had contact and supporters in the West, to suggested anti-Semitism and a general disapproval with his psychological ideas (Fraser and Yasnitsky, 2012). This censorship meant that translation, publication and access to Vygotsky's work became available only in the 1950's, after his early death in 1934 from tuberculosis (Kozulin, 1995). As his work became better known in the West, Vygotsky's status and his theories of pedagogy and psychology became an accepted and relevant part of child psychology in the 21st century (Kozulin, 1995; Van der Veer and Valsiner ,1988).

Kozulin (1995) calls for a need to maintain perspective and appreciation regarding the timing and context in which Vygotsky's work became accessible to the West. He explains that the delayed acknowledgement and respect for his work combined with a complexity of translating his material from Russian - the original language of his work - may have resulted in the meaning of the theories being open to interpretation and speculation. Additionally Kozulin (1995) explains how the timing of Vygotsky's work becoming more accessible, which occurred after his death, meant there was an inability to hold discussions with Vygotsky which could help ensure that his theories were portrayed and interpreted in their intended original manner.

Burr (2008) maintains that having a better understanding of the context and background which leads to the development of a theory, adds perspective and increases awareness of the contributing ideas,

events, facts and experiences which have culminated in the development of that theory. As such gaining a better understanding of the historical and social context of Vygotsky's writings and the influencing events and ideas of the time, can provide some clarity regarding the meaning and emphasis behind his theories.

The years in which Vygotsky formulated his thoughts and philosophies – 1928 to 1932 - are described by Fitzpatrick (1974) as the 'cultural revolution' years in which Russia witnessed political and social change. During this era Russia witnessed a shift towards a more socialist society with a 'spontaneous expression' (Fitzpatrick, 1974, p.51), albeit limited, of the type of society which the working-class intellectuals wished to create.

With regards to Vygotsky's theories, in addition to the social influences of the Russian Revolution and the significance it placed on the collective and the role of society in terms of human development (Vygotsky, 1930) it is also believed that Vygotsky was influenced by Carl Marx and the theory of Marxism (Davydov and Radzikhovskii,1985; Veresov, 2005). Marx considered social change as an unavoidable revolution (Allen, 2005) resulting from conflicts arising from opposition within the society to the status quo. This process of change, also known as dialectical materialism (Oizerman, 2017) describes how those being 'oppressed and coerced by others… [are in time able to]… overthrow and change' the status quo (Allen, 2005, p.73). Marx believed that this was a continuous process as in time the progressive state of affairs would develop within it aspects of conflict and resistance which would drive the change required to achieve a new status quo (Marshall, 2012).

Vygotsky applied the rationale behind the concept of dialectical materialism to his research on the development of the mind and the process of human thought (Vygotsky, 1930). Vygotsky saw the relationship between the individual and society as one which relied on the ongoing interaction between them, where emphasis was on the process of change and the relationship between the two (Vygotsky, 1930; John-Steiner and Souberman, 1978).

Vygotsky's theory of learning and mediation was based on the view that to understand the present state, there is a need to appreciate that 'the past and the present are fused and the present is seen in the light of history' (Vygotsky, 1978 p.64). Thus, the study of the present needs to embrace the historical and developmental journey exploring both the individual's past experiences and the route of change which formed part of the 'process of change' (Vygotsky,1978, p.65). Vygotsky's affiliation to the concept of dialectical materialism is demonstrated in his assertion of the need to understand the characteristics and reasons which form part of the process of change and accept the understanding that 'relations are not static as they are not the products of the processes but are the processes themselves' (Fu, 1997, p.11).

Vygotsky's work focused on the dynamic relationship between external historical events, sociocultural input, the messages received from the environment and the impact these had on the development of inner thought - the psychology of the human mind - in particular the 'higher mental functions' (John-Steiner and Souberman, 1978, p.126). This work was based on the understanding that the notion of mental functions referred to culturally shaped internal 'psychological developments' (Minick, 1999, p.36) which result from social mediations in which cultural symbols, signals and gestures are mediated, perceived and internalised becoming part of the child's cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). As such Vygotsky's theory of social development highlights the importance of social interactions and encounters as these play a crucial role in shaping and constructing sociocultural understanding and facilitate the process of absorbing the values and perceptions of the social group.

2.3 Vygotsky's Social Development Theory – Concepts

Vygotsky's theory signifies the 'dynamic interdependence of social and individual processes' (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996, p.192). This approach theorises that child development and learning are interdependent processes which rely on the child's interaction with individuals in their lives (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). This places the interaction the child has with the social environment as highly significant to learning as it provides the feedback, cooperation and collaboration which enables the child to learn the accepted and valued cultural practices, aptitudes and qualities (Vygotsky, 1978).

This process of interpreting experiences and new encounters is both a social and an individual process which involves 'synthesizing new experiences into what we have previously come to understand' (Brooks and Brooks, 1999, p.4). During social interactions the mind is involved in a learning process as the new social experiences provide opportunities in which previous knowledge is reconstructed and co-constructed, adjusting and attuning to the feedback and reaction provided by the social encounter (Hurst et al, 2013). In other words, social encounters embedded within the values, beliefs and shared understandings of the cohort enable 'dialogic interaction' (John-Steiner and Meehan, 2000, p.35) - collaborative communication - to take place, in which knowledge can be restructured both socially and individually (John-Steiner and Meehan, 2000).

Titiev (1949) describes cultural values as influential in moulding the character of the child as it is those values and beliefs which are conveyed to and internalised by the child. Titiev describes this adaptation process which takes place both on a conscious and unconscious level as a process of 'enculturation' resulting in the individual achieving competency, experience and 'know how' of their

cultural norms. This process which enables the child to learn and adapt to the 'pattern of culture' (Titiev, 1949, p.45) can be described as a process in which:

> 'learners are believed to be enculturated into their learning community and appropriate knowledge, based on their existent understanding, through their interaction with the immediate learning environment' (Hua Liu and Matthews, 2005, p. 388).

Vygotsky saw the potential to lean as a collaborative process in which the 'more capable peer' (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86) provides the learner with the necessary support to achieve the actual cognitive development also known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978).

The ongoing interaction between the child and the social environment and the impact this has on child development stresses and highlights the need to appreciate social, cultural and historical contexts in order to fully understand social patterns of behaviour (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1992).

The theory of social development considers the process of development as an interactive and dynamic process which occurs both on a social and an individual level (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1979). The process relies initially on a specific skill being experienced in a social encounter where the interaction between the mediator and the child creates an opportunity in which the learning experience can take place. During this learning experience the child can not only learn the skill in that specific place and time but can also be guided through a transition process which enables the skill or mental function to be understood and adopted internally, developing into a 'higher mental function (such as thinking, voluntary attention, and logical memory)' (Wertch, 1991, p.27). One such mental function which Vygotsky saw as both 'highly personal and at the same time profoundly social' (John-Steiner and Souberman, 1978, p.126) was the development of speech (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky theorised that the social encounters between adult and child provide learning opportunities which enhance the development of mental functions such as memory, observational skills, comparison, classification and categorisation which facilitate the child's ability to process and categorise sounds and nuances, building on existing knowledge of utterances and communication customs, which support communication skills (Vygotsky, 1978; Brooks et al, 1992).

This process, which relies on the social interaction and mediation between the more knowledgeable other and the child (Vygotsky, 1978; Toomela, 2016), witnesses how the developmental process which incorporates practice and manipulation of signs... 'becomes a pervasive and profound part of the higher psychological processes' (John-Steiner and Souberman, 1978, p.126). In other words, successful mediation - according to Vygotsky - results in the cognitive skill taught being internalised and understood on a deeper psychological level enabling the child to transfer and apply it on to future experiences. Vygotsky refers to this as the 'transition from interpsychological to

intrapsychological functioning' (Wertsch, 1979, p.68) where the interpsychological level relates to the initial social interaction between people, and the intrapsychological function relates to the internal process which takes place on an individual basis (Vygotsky, 1978).

Elements of plasticity and malleability of brain functions associated with social child development theory were however challenged by an understanding that the development of brain functions and the ability of the brain to react to external stimuli is limited to critical or sensitive periods of time in early childhood (Sylva, 1997; Tzuriel, 2014). These relate to periods of time during which there is an increased sensitivity and receptiveness to the manner in which the brain responds to internal and external stimuli, which enable the development of patterns of behaviour and the development of brain functions and learning to occur in either a child's or animal's life (Hess, 1959). As such the belief is that development and learning are limited to periods of time and may not necessarily occur if the same inputs are experienced during non-critical or sensitive periods of time.

Part of this belief was based on research which stemmed from the field of ethology such as that of Lorenz's research - more of which is discussed further on - relating to the innate behaviour of young chicks and geese and the notion of 'imprinting' (Kalikow, 1976; Schleidt, 1992). The concept of 'imprinting' refers to the phenomenon in which the young, through social encounters – which are not related to feeding - form a bond with 'the first object to elicit a social response' (Hess, 1999, p.133). The understanding is that this bond occurs during a critical period in the animal's life (Van der Horst et al, 2008; Kalikow, 1976) and is highly instrumental in shaping the nature of the social behaviour that follows (Hess, 1959). Ainsworth, (1991) describes how animal research related to the concept of imprinting suggests that if the bond does not take place within the critical period intended, it may never form.

Additional research supporting the concept that brain functions are bound to critical periods in time stemmed from research carried out by Hubel and Wiesel (1964). In their research they found that when eyelids of kittens were sewn shut when they were born the brain functions responsible for the acquisition of vision did not develop, even after the eyelids were reopened. Critics however maintained that these findings centred on particular areas of brain development and should not be universally assumed onto child developmental functions (Hannon, 2003; Schore, 2014a).

Hannon (2003) reinforces Vygotsky's theory that development is experience related and that 'neural plasticity' (Hannon, 2003, p.60) and development and restructuring of brain functions can occur later on in adulthood. Research involving adult rats also showed how new stimuli experienced later on in the rats' life resulted in the development of new signals in the brain (Greenough et al, 1985; Greenough and Bailey's, 1988).

Malleability of brain development was also found in research mapping brain areas relating to sensory motor skill area in adults, as it showed that brain areas involved with the development of a specific discipline - such as auditory skills amongst musicians (Pantev et al, 1998) and spatial awareness skills amongst taxi drivers (Maguire et al, 2000) – were more enlarged in comparison with adults who did not develop those specific disciplines (Nelson, 2000). This discovery supports claims that brain functions are malleable and neural plasticity can occur beyond the critical period (Hannon, 2003; Schore, 2014a) and later in life (Hübener and Bonhoeffer, 2014) as 'connections continue to be made and remade well into the life span' (Nelson, 2000, p.218).

The belief that brain functions are malleable and not confined to a critical period is shared by Reuven Feuerstein a psychologist working with Jewish immigrants in Israel, in the 1950's (Feuerstein et al, 1999; Kaniel et al, 1999). Feuerstein's work stemmed from a determination and desire to truly understand the complexities and struggles experienced by the new immigrants as they tried to connect with and integrate into their new, Israeli, culture.

Feuerstein aimed to establish culturally-neutral means of assessment which would focus on the true capacity to learn as opposed to an assessment which was more representative of specific knowledge acquired (Feuerstein et al, 1999; Tzuriel and Kaufman,1999). The focus of the culturally-neutral assessment tools was on establishing which mental functions developed as a result of sociocultural interaction and mediation (Lidz and Thomas, 1987) with the intention of providing learning and mediation opportunities intended to strengthen the cognitive weaknesses that had been identified. Referring to the concept of the critical period Feuerstein maintained that the issue of cognitive development was one of timing rather than time, and that development of cognitive functions was subject to the presence of the right conditions, referring predominantly to mediation conditions (Feuerstein et al, 2014).

Feuerstein's theory borrows from Piaget's understanding that a child acquires a repertoire of mental functions in a sequential order (Piaget, 1955) however it more closely echoes Vygotsky's concept that the social setting, which is culturally shaped, plays an essential part in the cognitive development of a child (Vygotsky, 1978). Cultural values and meanings of stimuli and experiences encountered by the child are conveyed by the mediator, the person who 'interprets…and modifies the stimuli' (Feuerstein et al, 2014, p.31) – the experience - to the child, ensuring that cultural meaning is conveyed in an accessible manner. An adequate mediation of experiences incorporates within it the shared desire and motivation by the adult and the child to engage in an exchange of information which denotes an interaction characterised by mutuality and reciprocity (Feuerstein et al, 2014).

Aspects of mutuality and reciprocity are typified by the manner in which the stimuli are structured and delivered, designed with the intention of providing a communication experience which includes the desire to mediate and a willingness to engage. It is those elements of the reciprocal engagement which mediate cultural experiences and provide the learning opportunities which will result in the development of the child's set of cognitive functions (Feuerstein and Jensen, 1980; Feuerstein et al, 1999). As such Feuerstein's work reflects his understanding that the learning experience and manner in which knowledge is transmitted and acquired is cultural and impacts the manner and specificities of the mental functions developed (Feuerstein et al, 1999). The above signify the role of social reciprocity in mediating sociocultural values and norms and the importance of sociocultural context in shaping child development. Furthermore, it highlights a correlation between the development of the individual, the development of social relations and the role of the sociocultural and historical milieu. Gauvain (2005) talks about differences in sociocultural norms and how these shape the group's structure and the social interactions which take place within it. These social interactions and their impact on the child's emotional, social and cognitive development are at the heart of attachment theory, which is discussed in the following section.

2.4 Attachment Theory – Introduction

The second theoretical framework within which this research is positioned, namely Bowlby's attachment theory, also signifies the importance of the interaction between the primary caregiver and child and the importance played by social experiences in terms of child development. Within the boundaries of this literature review the terms 'primary caregiver' and 'mother' will be used unless the nature of the literature dictates otherwise. In the context of this research the term primary caregiver refers to the main person, usually the mother but not necessarily so, who provides the main care, attending to both the physiological and psychological needs of the infant. It is also important to stress that these terms apply to both humans and animals, depending on the context of the literature.

The following section aims to contextualise and position 'the historical development' (Bretherton, 1991, p.9) of attachment theory, so as to gain further understanding and insight and with that an appreciation of the individuals, historical events and various disciplines such as ethology, psychology and biology, which have merged together and have provided some of the key concepts of attachment theory (Brandon et al, 2009).

2.5 Attachment Theory - Early Influences

The periods following both the First and the Second World Wars witnessed increased levels of bereavement resulting in changes to 'mourning customs' (Newcombe and Lerner, 1982, p.2) from

which psychologists and psychotherapists were able to expand and broaden their observations and studies into the concept of loss, early separation and mourning and their association with adult mental health. This period in time provided a new social platform from which to study the causation and influences of mental health and psychotic disorders (Newcombe and Lerner, 1982).

In the years prior to the First World War, accepted perceptions amongst psychiatrists were that 'disease is inconceivable without some underlying physical basis' (Purves-Steward, 1913, p.355). The understanding was that the origin and causes of mental illnesses such as depression, chronic fatigue and lack of appetite were inherently physical therefore the manner in which these illnesses were treated was also often physical in nature. One such treatment was proposed by Weir-Mitchell (1887) who devised a physical 'rest cure' (Stiles, 2012) which involved keeping a person confined to their bed, remote and isolated (Newcombe and Lerner, 1982), as the assumption was that the product of a 'suffering brain' was a result of prolonged periods of pressure being exerted on the brain:

'men may not know they are abusing the organ of thought until it is already suffering deeply' (Weir-Mitchell, 1887, p.14).

Indeed little consideration was paid to the impact that the environment, in particular relationships and interactions between the individual and those around, had on mental wellbeing (Newcombe and Lerner, 1982).

Insight into aspects of interpersonal relationships and the correlation between loss, bereavement and mental health were noted during the First World War when disorders and ailments typically associated with so-called 'shell shock' – symptoms predominantly linked with anxiety and distress – were noted in men who did not participate in combat or experience the dangers and stresses of battle. In 'A contribution to the etiology of shell shock', Wiltshire (1916) identified the need to readdress both the term and the definition of 'shell shock' to one denoting the fact that symptoms typical of neurotic disorders are not exclusive to those who experienced the traumas of battle, but should also refer to symptoms characteristic of those who have experienced the traumas of loss and bereavement.

The increased number of both civilian and military patients suffering from mental illnesses, generated greater insight into the symptoms and causes of mental health issues. This led to an increased understanding of concepts such as 'suppression' and 'repression' and to self-protecting mental processes intended to remove distressing and upsetting experiences from memory (Rivers, 1918). According to Rivers (1918) neurosis was often a result of the forced repression of not only traumatic and painful events but also of the normal grief processes (Newcombe and Lerner, 1982)

which could facilitate the recovery from such traumas. Grief processes would entail the active practice of bringing those memories to the surface, discussing them and grieving for the loss experienced. These observations resulted in an increased sensitivity and appreciation by those involved in psychiatry regarding the impact which environmental influences, family and childhood relations and early experiences - such as separation and loss - had on the 'vulnerability to psychological problems' (Newcombe and Lerner, 1982, p.11).

Bakwin's (1942) work in a children's hospital in New York was an example of one such platform where observations of environmental influences on children took place. The hospital was witnessing a high rate of child mortality and initial attempts to reduce the rates of mortality by providing a sterile environment with little or no contact from medical staff or family members and a nutritious diet made no impact on the number of the children dying or on their body weight (Van der Horst and Van der Veer, 2008). Bakwin (1942) decided to shift the focus of his attentions onto the psychological condition of the children by promoting the social contact the children had with the nurses and by allowing parents to visit the children during their stay in hospital. This change in policy dramatically reduced the rate of child mortality, highlighting the importance which the external environment and social contact had on a child's wellbeing.

Bakwin's observations were amongst several studies which highlighted the impact which 'the deprivation of maternal care' (Bowlby, 1982, p.666) had on the mental wellbeing of children. The findings of those studies often met with criticism and challenges from psychiatrists and clinicians whose work was more focused on the accepted theories, such as that of the functionality of fantasy, rather than reality in terms of child development and child wellbeing (Bowlby, 1982). Furthermore, these findings were not situated within an existing established framework and defied an accepted view that feeding was a major drive in the formation of the mother/child relationship.

The above characterise some of the challenges which drove Bowlby to seek alternative answers from other disciplines such as psychology and sociology, as the explanations provided by traditional theories 'did not seem to me to fit the fact' (Bowlby, 1982, p.667).

Some alternative answers and further understanding of attachment related concepts came from ethologists and studies of animal behaviour which researched attachment formations amongst infant animals (Van der Horst et al, 2008). Some of Bowlby's initial perceptions came from Lorenz's work on ducks and geese and 'on the principle of imprinting as a process underlying the formation of affectional bonds' (Van der Horst et al, 2008, p.45; Bowlby,1980). Lorenz's work demonstrated how attachment between the mother and her chicks was formed and maintained even though the baby chicks were precocial and therefore did not depend on the mother to feed as they could do so

themselves; the tie between the mother and her chicks therefore appeared to be based on a social drive rather than a feeding one (Bretherton, 1991).

Furthermore, Van der Horst et al (2008) consider the contribution Harlow's research which involved the conduct of rhesus monkeys, had in influencing Bowlby's thoughts and understandings regarding affectional bonds. Through his research, which paid particular attention to patterns of emotional behaviour, Harlow demonstrated how baby monkeys appeared to develop a 'deep and abiding bond' (Harlow, 1958, p.684) with their mother regardless if this was their real mother or a surrogate cloth one. Furthermore, Harlow 's research illustrated how baby monkeys retreated to their mothers for safety and protection - viewing her as a 'source of security' (Van der Horst et al, 2008, p.81) - when presented with a strange situation. In his research Harlow demonstrated how the baby rhesus monkeys 'overwhelmingly preferred' (Suomi et al, 2008, p.94) the closeness and contact of a cloth surrogate mother which provided no milk, to a wire replacement mother figure who provided a constant supply of milk. This led to the understanding that attachment behaviour was a result of the comfort derived from contact rather than the feeding process as:

'typical attachment behaviour is directed to the non-feeding cloth model whereas no such behaviour is directed towards the feeding wire one' (Bowlby, 1969, p.182).

The significance of environmental experiences on shaping a child's emotional wellbeing also came from Bowlby's early work in the London Child Guidance Clinic. During his work at the clinic his study of forty-four 'affectionless thieves' (Van der Horst et al, 2008) enabled him to recognise the significance which the environment, in particular the impact experienced by the loss or separation from a parent – referred to by Bowlby (1952) as 'maternal deprivation' - had on the emotional wellbeing of the child (Holmes, 1993; Van der Horst and Van der Veer, 2008). This work highlighted the effect that nurture rather than nature - more specifically disruptiveness of childcare and separation in early years - had on the development of mental wellbeing amongst children (Bowlby, 1952; 1969).

Following his early work on mother and child relationships and separation, Bowlby was asked by Ronald Hargreaves of the World Health Organisation (WHO) to write about the mental wellbeing and fate of children in post-war Europe. In his report Bowlby (1952) signified the importance of the quality of the relationship between mother and child; this referred to a provision of a warm, empathic, sensitive and loving relationship in which 'satisfaction and enjoyment' (Bowlby, 1969, p.20) of time spent together were key factors in building a secure attachment.

Further discussions will address at more length some of the challenges and criticisms of Bowlby's attachment theory, however at this stage I would like to draw attention to critical observations which are more specific to the above.

Rutter (1991) describes how emphasis on 'maternal deprivation' overlooks the possibilities that other influences such as environmental factors – for example social class -, 'marital discord' (p.335) or genetic and biological factors, can play a role in influencing mental health outcomes of children. Newcombe and Lerner (1982) consider if Bowlby's emphasis on issues of loss and separation were in response to the sociocultural surrounding of a society engulfed by bereavement which may have led to an oversensitivity to the issue of early loss and separation. In other words, Newcombe and Lerner (1982) question whether the attributes associated to a place and time in which levels of bereavement were significant due to the First World War, may have resulted in Bowlby 'overemphasising the role of early separation and loss' (Newcombe and Lerner, 1982, p.11). Rutter (1972) explains how the circumstances surrounding certain disruptive events in childhood can play an important role in impacting the level of trauma experienced by the child. For example, a child who has experienced separation but is settled into a 'good family setting' (Rutter, 1972, p. 242) may find the adjustment to the change in circumstances and to separation less traumatic than a child placed in a residential institute. Rutter (1972) also observes that the impact of separation on the child appears to be influenced by the age at which separation occurs, noting that if separation disrupts the process of attachment formation between the child and the parent rather than it taking place prior to that bond being forged, distress levels appear to be much higher and more traumatic to the child.

Furthermore, in his early work Bowlby (1952) failed to signify the role of the father as an important one in terms of the impact this relationship had on the development of the child's attachment formations. This early view placed the father as playing 'second fiddle' (p.13) to the mother whom Bowlby believed was the one with whom in normal contexts the child developed the 'most important relationship during these years' (Bowlby, 1952, p.13). Stroebe (2002) notes that observations within attachment theory which referred to the mother as the person with whom attachment formations occur, became an issue amongst feminist groups as they perceived this observation as one which restricted and confined the role of women to household duties and motherhood responsibilities.

Urwin (1985) refers to a widely-accepted connection between women's social status and motherhood, describing how an increase in duties and responsibilities has shaped, defined and confined the mother's role. This process has been shaped by theories in child development which

have influenced assumptions regarding 'normalised' accepted views impacting not only external and more defined expectations regarding what mothers 'should' do, but also touching a more internal and potentially subconscious expectation of 'women's own aspirations and desires' (Urwin, 1985, p.165).

Burman (2008) too calls for the need to consider the prevailing social conditions in which Bowlby's findings gained popularity and acceptance. Burman describes how findings regarding the impact of maternal separation and deprivation on a child's emotional and social wellbeing promoted 'women's futures [as one which] lay in motherhood' (Burman, 2008, p.130) and provided validation and rationalisation of re-establishing roles and duties carried out by women during the second world war back into the hands of men. Burman (2008) reflects on the connection between 'theory and policy' (p.130) and considers how dynamics between social conditions of the time may have impacted the popularisation and acceptance of a theory – attachment theory - which repositioned mothers as central to their child's physical, social and emotional wellbeing. Burman argues how this in turn may have played a role in shaping and structuring government intervention and policy, concerning (in this case) childcare and the repositioning of mothers back in the home.

Bowlby (1969) later acknowledged that the role and functionality of the main attachment figure did not necessarily have to be assumed by the mother but could be someone who behaved towards the child in a manner more typical of a 'mothering way... engaging in lively social interaction with him [the child], and responding readily to his signals and approaches' (Bowlby, 1969, p.305). The significance of social interactions and the role of the main attachment figure are discussed in more detail in the following section.

I believe that the process of contextualising and positioning attachment theory has provided transparency and clarity to the 'chain of events' and to the setting in which Bowlby started his 'voyage of observation and discovery' (Sable, 2010, p.26) which resulted in the development of a more systematic interpretation and analysis of the process of attachment formation.

2.6 Attachment Theory – Concepts

Attachment theory is the result of the joint work between Bowlby and Ainsworth (Ainsworth and Bowlby, 1991) and it stresses the significance which social interactions and experiences have on child development. Attachment theory signifies the crucial role of social reciprocity, in particular the interactions within the mother and child dyad and the bond they form during the early years. The importance of the social interactions relies on the competency of the mother not only to understand the psychological and biological state of the child but also to respond in a manner which helps the child regulate and synchronise their internal emotional state (Schore, 2012). According to Bowlby

(1982) attachment behaviour is constructed around particular 'attachment figures' (Sperling and Berman, 1994, p.5) that the child has learnt are able to respond to their physiological or psychological needs. In early childhood, patterns of behaviour intended to signal the need for 'proximity seeking' (Bowlby, 1982) with the attachment figure are easier to observe as they are often modes of behaviour displayed externally, such as crying or displaying a desire to be closer to the attachment figure.

The quality of the social reciprocity within the dyad typifies the attachment formations between mother and child. The nature of these experiences will shape the nature of the attachment formation, characterising it as either secure or insecure; those experiences will influence the quality of mental representations – defined by Bowlby (1969) as internal working models - developed by the child, shaping and influencing the child's views and expectations of the world, others and of themselves. Sable (2010) therefore argues that the formation of a secure attachment is dependent on the mother's ability to respond in a sensitive and consistent manner to her child's social, emotional and physiological needs (Sable, 2010). Semrud-Clikeman and Hynd (1990) describe how much of early emotional experiences, which form part of the early formation of internal working models, are 'disproportionately stored or processed in the [brain's] right hemisphere' (p.198). These make up part of the underlying emotional layer linked with personal, 'autobiographical memory' (Fink et al, 1996, p. 4276) and are regarded as closely associated to part of the representation and image of self and that of others. These will influence and shape the constructed overall perception the child has of themselves and their expectations but also their beliefs regarding the world in which they live and the people in it.

Bowlby (1969) describes how internal working models are 'processed and stored in implicit-procedural memory systems' (Bowlby, 1969, p.10) in the right hemisphere of the brain and although these often do not form part of conscious mental states – such as 'sensations, feelings, [and] ideas' (Ebbinghaus, 1885, p.1) they will shape 'the individual's characteristic approach to affect regulation' (Schore, 2003, p.40). In other words, the repetitive recurrence of experiences which form part of the formation of internal working models may often be reflected in behaviours and actions which are more instinctive and partly unconscious (Main, 1991). Malekpour (2007) describes how, by the time the child has reached the age of five, their attachment formations enable them to apply those internal working models (Gerhardt, 2004) as comparative models of expectations. Although formed internally, working models are applied by the child as points of reference from which they then decipher other social experiences and encounters.

Ainsworth signifies the manner in which a mother responds to her child's signs and gestures as indicative of the quality and security of the attachment formations within the dyad (Smith and Pederson, 1988). Ainsworth's concept of a secure base (1969) was based on her interest in and exposure to ideas learnt from Blatz's (1944; 1966) work and views regarding the concept of security in terms of child play and exploration and the role of the parent figure. Blatz refers to the feeling of security as 'the state of consciousness which accompanies a willingness to accept the consequences of one's own decisions and actions' (Blatz, 1944, p.165). He hypothesised that the child's inquisitiveness and desire to learn was reliant on the child's belief and understanding that when they venture away from the parent figure there was a safe base to which they could return for comfort and safety at times of anxiety and uncertainty (Fearon et al, 2016). This belief and understanding was dependent on the nature of the relationship between parent and child which would influence the confidence the child had in the ability of the parent figure to act as a secure base in times of need (Ainsworth, 1969). Blatz also hypothesised that a secure base facilitated the development of an accumulated repertoire of experiences and skills by the child, resulting in the child gaining an 'independent security' as opposed to a state of dependent security in which the parent 'accepts responsibility for the consequences of the individual – [the child]' (Blatz, 1944, p.165).

Initial written reference to the term 'secure base' was however made by Ainsworth who acknowledges that she extended Blatz's theory of a secure base as a centre of exploration into her own work on attachment theory (Berghaus, 2011). Indeed, the idea of the child using the mother as a secure base from which to independently explore his or her environment was the foundation upon which Ainsworth founded the Strange Situation Procedure (SSP), which was used to characterise and classify attachment formations between mother and child and the level of security of that attachment (Van Rosmalen et al (2016). Ainsworth's classification of the various levels of attachment security, her differentiation between maternal warmth (Bowlby, 1952) - a quality attributed to the mother - and maternal sensitivity, which referred to the mother's responsiveness to the child's signals (Ainsworth and Marvin, 1995), highlight the strength of her role in shaping and influencing attachment theory. While this suggests that Ainsworth's contributions have indeed helped us better understand the concept of the secure base and the role of the mother, it must be noted that classifying attachment as 'secure' and 'insecure' feels somewhat simplistic, particularly in light of the diversity and complexity of the many sociocultural factors which influence and shape the attachment formation.

Ainsworth (1969) maintains that one of the characteristics which illustrates the nature of the relationship between the child and their mother is based on dependency and describes the term 'dependency or dependent' as a portrayal of learnt patterns of behaviour developed initially as a

result of the mother's ability to respond to 'help seeking behaviour' (Ainsworth, 1969, p.986); these patterns are later assumed on to relationships with others. Bowlby (1982) describes these patterns of behaviour as ones which are observed in 'virtually all human beings' (p. 669). However, he also states that the manner in which attachment is displayed differs amongst people. The behaviour patterns connected with attachment formations are understood to be influenced by the child's upbringing and surroundings which will drive the manner in which circumstances and experiences are perceived and valued (Sperling and Berman, 1994).

Initially Bowlby's theory of attachment advocated the importance of monotropy which related to the development of an attachment formation between the child and their primary caregiver, usually the mother (Sagi-Schwartz and Aviezer, 2005). However, the concept of monotropy with regards to attachment formations was later questioned as further research found that children can develop and establish multiple attachment formations without experiencing emotional upset (Meins, 1997).

For example, much of the research in Israel around the area of attachment formations and relationships between parents and their children has focused on collective child rearing and on the multiple attachment formations which occurred in the 'human laboratory' (Lieblich, 2010, p.2) of the Israeli kibbutzim[1]. The ethos of the kibbutzim lay in creating a collective society encompassing socialist and collective values, which included bringing children up collectively (Van IJzendoorn, 1994). The communal way of child rearing meant children spent a great part of the day with their peers in the children's home, where care was provided by both the mother and the care-giver - 'metapelet'[2]; at night-time children slept in the children's house rather than in the family home and were looked after in small groups by alternating 'watchwomen' who were regular members of the kibbutz (Sagi et al, 1995).

Van IJzendoorn (1994) observes how the provision of daytime childcare by both the mother and the metapelet enabled children to experience 'two emotional centers…the parental home and the children's house' (Van IJzendoorn, 1994, p.6). Indeed, similar findings were noted by Fox (1977) who found that children in communal sleeping kibbutzim viewed both their mothers and the metapelet as 'interchangeable attachment figures, providing a 'secure base' for the infant' (Fox, 1977, p.1234).

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[1] These primarily agricultural settlements, in which children were brought up with multiple carers, were established by the Jewish pioneers in Israel prior to the declaration of independence in 1948 (Gordon, 2007) in an attempt to create a different life to that lived by the Eastern-European Jews.

[2] The 'metapelet' was a nonfamilial member of the kibbutz viewed as the 'ultimate authority in kibbutz children's care' (Van IJzendoorn, 1994, p.7) who provided child care during the daytime.

However, the irregularity of the women watching over the children during the night time was found to impede the ability of the children to form secure attachments with the watchwomen and resulted in higher distress levels amongst children at night-time (Sagi et al, 1994). Indeed, further research identified the collective sleeping arrangement to have a negative effect on the child's emotional wellbeing and on the attachment formations between children and their mothers[3] (Van IJzendoorn, 1994).

The 1960s and 1970s saw an increase in the importance of the family unit and a decline in the communal sleeping arrangements in favour of children sleeping in the family homes. These changes, supported by Bowlby's theory of 'maternal deprivation' (Bowlby, 1952) – referred to in more detail later in this chapter – saw a greater emphasis on the child's emotional wellbeing and an increase in the time children spent with their parents in the family home. By the 1990s most kibbutzim ended communal sleeping arrangements altogether in favour of children sleeping in the family home (Van IJzendoorn, 1994). These changes also enabled women to resume many of the maternal responsibilities which were previously shared with nonfamilial members of the kibbutz. As such, although findings support challenges made to Bowlby's concept of monotropy, they also highlight the need for other factors to be present such as consistency and quality of care, so as to support the development of the secure attachment occurring.

Rutter (1979) also challenged Bowlby's claims regarding a child's instinctive predisposition to form an attachment primarily to one person. He maintained that a child can form multiple attachments – for example with peers, other family members, school or nursery staff - which may differ in strength and depth but which may still provide the child with 'similar [attachment] functions' (Rutter, 1979, p. 287) such as the provision of sense of safety to explore the environment or the ability to ease anxiety. Indeed, Bowlby later acknowledged that children could develop multiple attachment formations and stay 'psychologically healthy' (Meins, 1997, p.8).

Gauvain (2005) signifies the connection between child development and the sociocultural environment of the child and describes how culturally influenced responses to the child's physiological and emotional needs can influence the experiences encountered by the child, shaping the development of social, emotional and cognitive functions. For example, the manner in which a

[3] Higher levels of insecure attachment formations between children and their mothers were identified in communal sleeping kibbutzim compared to those being brought up in home sleeping kibbutzim (Sagi et al, 1994; Van IJzendoorn, 1994).

child is held and carried may differ culturally resulting in different encounters and experiences, in turn impacting emotional, social and cognitive development of the child.

This places the behaviour and the nature of the interaction of those within the dyad as one which is regulated and structured by sociocultural norms (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). As such the behaviour and nature of the interactions can be said to be embedded within the cultural and social values shared by the orthodoxy of the community members in which the child is brought up (Van IJzendoorn and Kroonenberg,1988).

This indicates that the behaviour of the individual is confined and routed by sociocultural norms (Markus and Kitayama, 1991) highlighting the need for caution when observations and suppositions are made regarding the quantification and qualification of attachment formations. If, as argued above, interactions and patterns of behaviour are culturally dictated, then the manner in which those interactions are assessed needs to mirror the cultural norms and values. In other words, the benchmarks against which the attachment assessment is gauged should truly incorporate and reflect the cultural undertones and mannerisms of the cohort. Rutter (1995) supports this concept claiming that the manner in which Bowlby and Ainsworth categorised and characterised attachment formations was structured around specific – Western - cultural norms rather than universal ones.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) explain how those patterns are shaped by variations in cultural views and highlight differences between the Japanese and American cultures which have differing views and perceptions of the manner in which the self and the group are perceived. Japanese culture views the self as part of the group, stressing the need to think about the requirements of the group before the requirements of the self, and on maintaining a balanced relationship of mutual dependency with its members. American culture, on the other hand, emphasises the importance of the self and on celebrating diversity, focusing on the needs of the individual above those of the group.

It can be argued that within Western cultures, the child is brought up with an 'independent construal of the self' (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p.226) where the intention is to become an individual striving for independence from the group. Modes of behaviour are driven by positioning the needs of the self above the needs of others (Markus and Kitayama, 1991) in order to address and satisfy individual internal drives, needs and beliefs rather than those of the group. Van IJzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988) highlight the importance of recognising that social variations in the development of attachment formations are not only reflected cross culturally but also exist within the same culture. As an example, they found great intracultural variation between samples taken from city and kibbutizim in Israel but cross-cultural similarities with samples from the United Sates.

Gauvain (2005) describes how differences in sociocultural values and traditions influence 'patterns of group composition' (p.16) which relate to the level of interaction the child is exposed to on a regular basis. These 'group compositions' and the manner in which the child is integrated into the social group will play a part in influencing developmental patterns and the manner in which children learn.

These arguments bring to light the role of context when considering attachment formations and the need for caution when approaching aspects such as the quantification and interpretation of the quality of an interaction between mother and child, as it is embedded in and subject to the cultural norms and customs of the environment in which the relationship has developed. Indeed, the role of sociocultural values and traditions in shaping the emotional intimacy between mother and child highlights once again the potential simplicity which exists in utilising classifications such as 'secure' and 'insecure' attachments when assessing the profundity of the human commitment that exists between mother and child.

These discussions signify how cultural attitudes and values regarding the needs and wishes of the individual in comparison to the needs and wishes of the society, differ both on an intracultural and intercultural level. The above accentuates the impact that sociocultural values and norms have on navigating the manner in which attachment formations develop.

The above literature suggests that attachment formation is a process which encompasses neuroscientific and psychologically universal triggers (Norenzayan and Heine, 2005) which serve to elicit subjective and localised dependent responses between the infant and their primary caregiver, representative of the cultural norms of the environment in which the triggers and responses occur. I would therefore like to focus the next sections firstly on the universal aspects of attachment then on aspects relating to culture. The aim is to contextualise culture initially from a broad perspective, then narrowing down to Israeli culture, and finally to the cultural values of secular Israeli Jews, which are represented in this research by the participating mothers.

2.7 Universality of Attachment

As discussed earlier, ethologists have observed how young animals use innate behaviours such as imprinting to communicate and elicit the necessary behaviour needed for their survival. These behaviours enable a bond to be established between the mother and her young, providing the infant with the necessary components of survival such as safety, shelter and food (Kalikow, 1976). Ethologists highlight that although feeding played a role in reinforcing the relationship between mother and infant, the concept of imprinting demonstrated that attachment formation in itself was not a food-dependant process (Harlow and Zimmerman, 1959). The realisation that the formation of

a bond amongst the young in animals was not one which was reliant on feeding was further demonstrated in experiments carried out by Harlow and Zimmerman (1959) who applied the term 'contact comfort' as a 'variable of critical importance in the development of affectional responsiveness' (Harlow and Zimmerman, 1959, p.423). This understanding enabled researchers to theorise that the process of attachment formation between human mothers and their children could be of a similar nature, providing a social and emotional need rather than a purely biological one (Bowlby, 1969). Suomi et al (2008) relate how research carried out by ethologists such as Harlow provided Bowlby with 'compelling empirical support that was biological in nature' (Suomi et al, 2008, p.102) in ascertaining that there was a physiological built-in aspect to attachment formations. Bowlby (1969) refers to Harlow and Zimmerman's (1959) research as indicative that feeding plays a minor role in the process of attachment formation whereas 'contact comfort' plays a significant role in developing an emotional and secure attachment. He goes on to argue that human babies have an innate predisposition to familiarise themselves with certain external drives and inputs which more closely connect them to their primary caregiver.

The innate physiological components of attachment formations feature highly in current research which combines attachment theory and the fields of neuroscience and psychiatry (Schore, 2009). Schore (2014b) and Siegel (2012) both refer to the field of interpersonal neurobiology of human development which explores the manner in which experiences, connections and relationships, in particular emotional connections, impact the manner in which the brain is shaped and how energy and information accumulated is channelled. In other words, it is a field which perceives the shaping of the brain as an ongoing dynamic process defined by the interpersonal connections and relationships people form.

Schore (2014b) describes how the right-hand side of the brain, which develops during the later stages of pregnancy and the initial years of a baby's life, is responsible for managing and understanding social and emotional functions. From infancy the baby communicates their emotional and physiological needs to the primary caregiver as they are not capable of regulating their own emotional state and are dependent on their primary caregiver being psychologically attuned (Shcore, 2014b) to their needs and responding to them in a manner which will restore the emotional and physiological balance. The experiences received from the environment stimulate and strengthen the manner in which neurons in the brain grow and connect with one another, affecting the way in which the brain is structured and moulded (Schore 2009). Schore (2009) describes how much of the behaviour displayed by the young child will stimulate and influence the amount of attention and nurturing they receive from their caregivers. The manner in which their caregiver responds will shape the attachment formations and the expectations and understandings that young

children have about future social and emotional relationships. Therefore, the manner in which social and emotional demands are regulated and attended to will shape the manner in which social and emotional functions develop. This argument strongly connects to Bornstein (2012) who claims that although the formation of attachment between the child and the primary caregiver may appear to be a universal function, the cultural world typifies and shapes the process and manner in which the attachment is formed (Bornstein, 2012).

Much of the literature above emphasises the impact that sociocultural values and norms have on the development of attachment formations, which position those formations as being subject to the culture and 'social settings' (Schaffer and Emerson, 1964, p.59; Gauvain, 2005) in which they occur. These discussions raise questions regarding how attachment formations are perceived in a diverse and complex society such as Israel's which holds values relating to both the needs of the individual and the collective (Adamsky, 2010). This shifts the focus of this literature review onto exploring the meaning of the term culture, both in a broader sense and in the more localised setting of the Israeli context.

The following section will therefore focus on the concept of 'culture', which will address the functionality and definition of culture, followed by a contextualised description of sociocultural values, norms and perceptions of Israeli society, specifically regarding the role of the family and the relationship between mother and child.

2.8 Definition and Functionality of Culture

Pellegrino (2014) describes culture as set structures and modes of behaviour which are familiar and accepted within our social community and which provide a means with which to interpret and construct perceptions and understandings regarding the experiences encountered. This is sympathetic to Bruner's (1990) definition which describes culture as a structure of shared ideals and modes of behaviour conveyed from one generation to the next. Bruner (1990) argues that 'culture and the quest for meaning within culture are the proper causes of human action' (p.20). Triandis' (1990) description regarding the functionality of culture adheres to the above, claiming that the task of a culture is to provide 'a philosophy that helps us evaluate what is going on around us' (Triandis, 1990, p.34). This philosophy provides a framework and guidelines of attitudes, viewpoints and ways of life for the members of that culture.

As such it can be said that culture is socially constructed and reconstructed by its members influencing the mannerisms of the individuals within the sociocultural group as they follow the cultural beliefs accepted as the norm. Cultures which contain beliefs and attitudes of a similar nature to our own are considered as 'good' and are more acceptable than those which display

different social behaviours which are often disapproved of. For the Israeli mother, bringing up her children in a diverse society such as Israel's in which the practicalities of identifying and following distinctive sociocultural benchmarks are not always clear (Roer-Strier and Rosenthal, 2001), how does she navigate her way through the complexities of the Israeli cultural context? How does she decide which sociocultural standards and practices are considered to be 'good' and which ones to adopt for her own children? Indeed Morgan (2011a) talks of a 'fuzziness' which exists in relation to familial structures and practices. He signifies the importance of flexibility and relationality in interpreting practices and 'established procedures' (Morgan, 2011a, p.25) as these are contextualised and positioned in relation to others and to their cultural environment (Morgan, 2011b). As such, in order to better understand the contextual background and the forces which influence the choices and decisions made by the Israeli Jewish woman, the following section will explore the contextual background of Israeli society and culture.

2.9 Contextual Background – Israeli Society and Culture

Since the formation of the state of Israel in 1948, Israeli society has seen a shift in the nature of its population and cultural values due to a large number of immigrants which arrived over the years (Jewish Virtual Library, 2018). The population of Israel has grown from just over 800,000 to approximately 8.4 million people; of which 75% are Jewish, 21% are Muslim, and 4% are Christians and other religions (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Until July 2018 the official languages spoken in Israel were Hebrew and Arabic; however, following the approval of the Nationality Law by Israel's Knesset[4], the Arabic language is no longer considered an official second language rather it has been given 'special status' (The Association for Civil Rights in Israel, 2018).

The years following the Second World War witnessed a diversity of immigration which was met by the present Jewish community whose ancestors arrived primarily from Europe (Friedlander et al, 2002). The wide variety of geographical and cultural backgrounds of the immigrants influenced not only the values held by the existing population, which held strong socialist and collectivist ideologies (Liran-Alper, 2010), but they also widened the religious sections and divisions within the population. The nature of diversity of the immigrants alongside an increased contact with Western cultures has affected sociocultural values of Israeli society. This has resulted in the creation of a society which can

[4] The Knesset is Israel's legislative body which sits in Jerusalem and is determined by the outcome of general elections, which usually take place every four years. The first Knesset sitting was held in February 1949 and Israel's first government was formed by David Ben Gurion in 10.03.1949 (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), 2013a).

be described as heterogeneous (Liran-Alper, 2010) as it incorporates a 'mosaic' of different ethnic backgrounds, cultural dynamics and religious beliefs (Roer-Strier and Rosenthal, 2001).

This 'ethnic mosaic' (Friedlander et al, 2002, p.137) resulted in the formation of a new sociocultural identity which incorporated both individualism and collectivism. According to Florian, Mikulincer and Weller (1993) societies can be characterised by their attitude toward individualism and collectivism which relates to the manner in which the individual and the needs of the individual are prioritised in relation to the requirements and demands of the group. Within a collectivist society the wellbeing and honour of the family and compliance towards the family members, take priority over the objectives of the individual, which is in contrast to an individualistic society which supports and promotes the objectives of the individual above that of the cohort (Florian, Mikulincer and Weller, 1993).

The friendship and solidarity amongst members of Israeli society during the early years of Israel's independence typified values representative of a more collectivist nature (Kerbel, 2003). Adamsky (2010) observes how over the years these cultural values have shifted into what can now be portrayed as 'Israeli individualism' (Adamsky, 2010) characterising Israelis as being independently confident in their capabilities and having a more laidback attitude to authority. However, Adamsky (2010) notes how this individuality embraces within it a sense of loyalty towards the shared objectives of Israeli society and a concern for the security and safety of its members – an issue discussed in more detail further on.

Despite the variety in ethnic backgrounds, Israel is regarded as a 'familistic society' (Goldscheider, 2015, p.213) which places a strong emphasis on the family unit and a loyalty and commitment to the family members and Lavee and Katz (2003) describe the family in Israel as 'stronger and more stable than in other industrialized nations' (p.213). Despite the increase in divorce rates and the decrease in marriage rates and number of children per Israeli household, the establishment of the family remains an important, robust and stable institution within Israeli society (Lavee and Katz, 2010). Torstrick (2004) describes how loyalty to the family and its members is central to Israeli society and for working mothers, the responsibility and the wellbeing of the family and its members remain a major part of the mother's role (Lavee and Katz, 2003).

Israeli society can also be described as a 'child-oriented' society (Katz and Lavee, 2005, p.490) and as such its members treasure its children and perceive their happiness and wellbeing as a shared social responsibility. The commitment to child wellbeing and the support provided for families and children is also translated into aspects of Israeli policy as this demographic group is one of the primary beneficiaries of the Israeli tax system. These include Child Benefit - which is not income dependent -

for families responsible for children under the age of 18 (Gal et al, 2010); Maternity Allowance which compensates working women who have taken maternity leave (National Insurance Institute of Israel, 2015a) and a Birth Grant which is paid to women who have either given birth in hospital or have attended hospital immediately after giving birth, to help with the early costs of childbirth (National Insurance Institute of Israel, 2015b).

The commitment and emphasis of the family unit is set in a country whose declared identity is both as a democracy and as the Jewish State (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013b), which means that being an Israeli Jew is inevitably linked with the Jewish faith and incorporates aspects of the Jewish faith and an adherence to Jewish Laws to different degrees. The term 'Israeli Jewish' signifies different meanings which are linked with the Old Testament - the 'Torah' - and the manner in which the rules of the Halakhah – the Jewish Laws (Rich, 2011a) - are interpreted and adhered to. Elazar (2015) describes four broad classifications:

- orthodox Jews, who represent approximately 8% of the population, adopt the Torah as the word of God (Jewish Virtual Library, 2016) and for whom the religious laws and traditions represent a way of life;
- Zionists Jews, who represent approximately 17% and, although they lead a modern way of life, like the Orthodox Jews, they observe the religious laws, customs and traditions in their daily lives;
- traditional Jews, who represent approximately 55% of all Israeli Jews, observe Jewish laws and traditions however are prepared to revise customs to meet their own personal needs, for example they will not closely observe the laws of the Sabbath;
- secular Jews who represent approximately 20% of the population and are the subject of this research. In a broad sense the term 'secular' is defined as 'irreligious' which implies a person who is 'not connected with religious or spiritual matters' (Oxford English Dictionaries, 2018). However, within Israeli culture the term 'secular Jewish' can often indicate a choice to preserve elements of Jewish traditions and celebrations but 'for family and national reasons rather than accepted religious ones' (Elazar, 2015, p.3). Therefore, the secular Israeli Jew might identify more with Jewish culture than the Jewish religion, and the term 'secular Jewish' will often hold a commitment to Judaism and an identity with Jewish culture.

At this point it is worth noting that despite the affinity a person may have with the Jewish religion, in the population registry at the Ministry of Interior all Israelis are identified as 'Jewish' rather than 'Israeli' under the section marked 'nationality'. This classification was disputed in the courts by those who argue that they had no religious faith and wanted to be identified as Israeli nationals or of

Israeli ethnicity (Kalman, 2013; Zino, 2007) rather than being classified by a religion. However, the request has been denied by the Supreme Courts and continues to be a matter of public debate (Kalman, 2013).

Roer-Strier and Rosenthal (2001) explain how parenting views, attitudes and philosophies vary contextually and culturally and are moulded by a desire of parents to raise their children to be able to follow, respect and promote the ideals and values of the cultural cohort. In a diverse society such as that of Israel, which incorporates a multitude of ethnic and cultural groups, the definition of a culturally representative archetype is less clear cut. This means parents are expected to identify and assume a blend of sociocultural values and practices which are perceived to be essential in directing and supporting them in their parental responsibilities. In addition, these ideals and values are further influenced by the anxieties and pressures of the cohort, often resulting from shared historical and current events as these too influence the nature of the relationship of the people within the sociocultural group including those of the mother-child dyad (Devakumar et al, 2014). Bourdieu (1977) describes how within each of us 'there is part of yesterday's man…who inevitably predominates in us, since the present amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we were formed and from which we result' (Bourdieu, 1977, p.79); thoughts echoed by Morgan (2011a) who signifies the value of the connection between biography and history - between historical origins and the culturally enacted, taken-for-granted practices shared within the sociocultural group. Thomson et al (2011) emphasise the value of an outlook which combines both the subjective, biographical account and a wider shared cultural narrative as they explore experiences of motherhood and family relations both intergenerationally and 'between women who share a historical moment' (Thomson et al, 2011, p.10). The following section will focus on the Holocaust and the Arab-Israeli conflict, recognising the impact of these events on Israeli identity and underlining the importance of an understanding of both historical and prevailing narratives.

2.10 The Legacy of the Holocaust and the Impact of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

The years following the second world war witnessed the United Nations vote in 1947 calling for the partition of Palestine into two separate states, an Arab state and a Jewish state. During those years tensions between the Jewish and Arab communities living in Palestine were mounting whilst details regarding the Holocaust were emerging. In addition to providing a home for the Jewish people, the option of the Jewish state 'opened the way for the problem of the Jewish refugees in Europe' (Friesel, 2008, p.457) following the events of the Holocaust. Elon (2010) refers to the trauma of the Holocaust as one which has left 'an indelible mark on the national psychology, the tenor and content of public life, the conduct of foreign affairs, on politics, education, literature and the arts' (Elon,

2010, p.199) and refers to a strong belief amongst Israelis that the fact that the Jewish people did not have a country of their own enabled the atrocities of the Holocaust take place.

Rosenthal (2010) highlights the complexities of parenting and of family dynamics which exist for second and third generation Holocaust survivors as they negotiate tensions arising when social expectations 'clash' with emotional parental boundaries, which originate from the traumas of the Holocaust. She describes how strong intergenerational family bonds are often located against the need of second and third family generation members to create a 'greater autonomy from their parents and…more distance to the persecution in their grandparents' past' (p.42). In a study regarding the impact of the Holocaust on Israelis and on Israeli society, Lazar et al (2008) considered the intergenerational shared cultural trauma of the Holocaust and found that, irrespective of the family background, for Jewish Israelis the Holocaust is seen as a cultural trauma. This, according to Alexander (2004), lies in the degree to which those in the social group who have not experienced the trauma identify with and share considered 'valued qualities' (Alexander, 2004, p.14) with the victimized group. Indeed, Lazar et al (2008) describe how third generation Jewish Israelis – both the offspring of survivors and those whose ancestors did not personally experience the Holocaust – view it as their mission as individuals and as a society to keep alive the memory of the Holocaust and the people who perished in it. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the ongoing threat to national security posed by Israel's surrounding enemies since the declaration of independence have been viewed as a reawakening of anti-Semitism (Adamsky, 2010). This has meant that even for those generations born long after the second world war 'the ghetto mind-set of total insecurity and distrustful self-reliance was preserved as a fundamental narrative' (Adamsky, 2010, p.115) and has played a central role in shaping the sociocultural values and orientation of the Israeli people. According to Bar-Tal et al (2009) the ''social construction' sense of victimhood' (p.233) which exists within Israeli society supports its members in coping with the stresses and effects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and provides 'moral power' (Bar-Tal, 1989, p.29) in the ongoing quest for justice and fairness, and an overall sense of unity and loyalty to the nation and to maintaining the safety and security of its people. Indeed Horowitz and Kimmerling (1974) describe Israeli society as one 'characterized by an almost all-embracing consensus on a relatively high commitment of resource to the maintenance of national security' (p.263). It is however worth noting how, despite the fact that issues concerning the safety of society and of the individual are of great concern within Israel (Bar-Tal, 1998), there exists a 'shared yet uniquely Israeli maternal voice' (Mann-shalvi, 2016, p.27) that conveys powerful feelings of anxiety about the fact that at the age of 18 children will have to leave home to serve in the army (Mann-Shalvi, 2016). Indeed Rosenthal (2010) refers to tensions that exist for Israelis living between an 'image of the fighting and future oriented Sabra and the shadow of the persecution in

their parent's past' (p.42). The collective memory of the Holocaust and the ongoing tensions and pressures resulting from the Arab-Israeli conflict are located alongside an affiliation, even amongst secular Jewish Israelis, with the 'communal Jewish body' (Birenbaum-Carmeli, 2004, p.901) and with the strong value placed by society on the family unit and on childbirth. These are set within the strong 'desire for continuity and the significance of children' (Rosenthal, 2010, p.89) that exists both on a personal level for Holocaust survivors and in Israeli society, adding to the pressure that exist on women to have children. Shalev and Gooldin (2006) refer to 'Israel's pro-natalist culture with "pro-family" values', referencing one of the biblical commandments to 'be fruitful and multiply' (ויאמר להם אלהים פרו ורבו) (Bible, Genesis, chapter 1:28) as an additional factor considered within these cultural codes and conventions. Although one may argue that this commandment refers to the bible and to Judaism, Israelis 'see little difference between their identities as Jews and as Israelis' (Katz,1973, p.9) and religion plays a dominant role in Israeli politics, with religious parties regularly forming part of coalition governments (Allon, 2013).

Simone de Beauvoir (1997) considers the influential role of culture in determining the transitioning and the existence of the self in different 'situations' - temporal states. She describes 'civilization as a whole [as that which produces] the figure that the human female presents in society' (p.295) thus positioning gender as constructed by the social group. With this in mind and in consideration of the above literature, the identity of the Israeli Jewish woman can be seen as constructed within a society which holds a strong pro-natal ethos driven by sociocultural, historical, religious and political forces (Levush, 2012) and the expectations these generate. The following section explores how the identity of the Israeli Jewish woman is constructed, shaped in the realm of domestic life and the public arena of a militaristic (Ben-Eliezer, 1998) and familistic society.

2.11 The Israeli Jewish Woman

Berkovitch (1997) talks of a 'formal commitment of the State of Israel to the idea of gender equality' (p.608) a commitment considered by academic discourse (Padan-Eisenstrak, 1973; Swirski and Safir, 1991) to be 'mere myth' as in reality women in Israel are constructed as wives and as mothers, and having children is considered to be of outmost importance (Berkovitch, 1997). Indeed, gender inequalities that exist for the Israeli Jewish woman can be noted in the work force where more women than men work in the public sector, more women than men hold part time jobs, less women than men hold senior political and economic positions and women's earnings are still less than that of men (Tzameret-Kertcher et al, 2015). Furthermore, although the number of Israeli women holding a higher education degree is greater than that of men, 'women are not managing to

translate their education into achievements that reduce gaps between women and men in the labor market and the power domain' (Tzameret-Kertcher, 2014, p.25).

Berkovitch (1997) refers to legislation in her attempt to frame the position of the Israeli Jewish woman and considers The Defence Service Law (1949) and the Women's Equal Rights Law (1951) in her attempt. She describes how regardless of changes made in areas such as employment, retirement and domestic violence, issues concerning marital affairs remain subject to religious courts and to Jewish laws in which women do not hold the same rights as men. The Defence Service Law (1949) - considered by Berkovitch due to the high symbolic status held by the military in Israeli society – states that alongside men, at the age of 18 Israeli Jewish women will too serve in the military service unless they are married, are mothers or are pregnant, or consider themselves to be religious. The exemption, which does not apply to married or religious men, was partly due to an agreed consensus by members of the Israeli Knesset that there was a 'linkage between demography and security' (Berkovitch, 1997, p.610) and that the participation in the military service may prevent women and wives 'from fulfilling their most important duty, motherhood' (Berkovitch, 1997, p.609). Rhode (1989) describes the law as a 'social text which illuminates as well as influences the cultural construction of gender' (p.2) symbolising and creating cultural traditions, customs and procedures within social groups. With this in mind Berkovitch's examination of the two differing laws locates Israeli women within a society shaped and influenced by 'two main gendering forces' (Berkovitch, 1997, p.606) namely that of the family and the military system. These play a major role in defining and influencing behavioural patterns and social characteristics which position women in Israeli society primarily both as 'mothers and potential mothers' (Berkovitch, 1997, p.615).

2.12 Summary

In this literature review I have explored the theoretical frameworks within which this research is set, namely Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural approach to child development and learning, including Feuerstein's theory regarding the mediated learning experience, and Bowlby's (1952; 1960; 1982) attachment theory. Discussions emphasised the importance these theories place on the reciprocal interaction between adult and child highlighting the role of social interaction in shaping, constructing and mediating meaning of the sociocultural world of the individual and of the social group (Vygotsky, 1978; Feuerstein and Jensen, 1980). The focus of the review shifts onto Bowlby's attachment theory where yet again emphasis is given to the role of social reciprocity, signifying the interaction between primary caregiver and child, and the importance of the interaction in shaping and influencing the emotional, social and cognitive development of the child and his or her views of themselves, their world and the people within it.

The strong emphasis placed on the correlation between culture and attachment formations notes differences between the universal physiological and neuroscientific aspects associated with attachment formations, and those aspects guided and shaped by the sociocultural milieu of the mother-child dyad.

Discussion of Israeli sociocultural and historical context highlights the strength of the family unit and the role women and mothers play in Israeli society, emphasising expectations placed on Israeli Jewish women to assume their motherly duties and fulfil the traditional and culturally defined family related roles (Tzameret-Kertcher, 2014). These expectations are located alongside claims of gender equality ethos which exists in Israeli society and the high expectation set by Israeli society on women to have both a job, 'pushed by society to be the best' (Shloim et al, 2015), yet also be the one looking after the family and the home.

This review highlights a need to ensure that the values and ideals against which attachment formations are gauged and assessed should truly represent and reflect the cultural undertones and behaviours of its group members. Furthermore, the influencing role of sociocultural values and traditions in shaping the emotional intimacy between mother and child raises questions regarding a misleading simplicity which exists in attempting to classify such complex issues.

As referenced earlier much of the research conducted in Israel on issues relating to attachment formations between parents and children took place in the kibbutzim as this setting attracted much interest amongst researchers, (Sagi et al, 1995; Van IJzendoorn, 1994; Lieblich, 2010); further research into attachment took place within the wider Israeli sociocultural milieu. Goossens and Van IJzendoorn (1990) for example explored the correlation between the quality of attachment formations between children, their parents and their professional caregivers and the sensitivity and regularity in the responses to the child's needs, whilst Zreik et al (2016) looked into maternal sensitivity and attachment formations amongst mothers and infants in the Arab Israeli community. Lavy et al (2012) carried out comparative research exploring the outlook on attachment patterns between Arab and Jewish Israelis which identified similarities in the importance members of both communities place on having strong 'social and familial networks' (Lavy et al, 2012, p.190). Additional research explored mother/child attachment formations and children's social competence (Contreras et al, 2000) and aspects concerning family, parenting and marital practices amongst orthodox Jewish returnees (Kor et al, 2012).

This study places much emphasis on the Israeli cultural and historical context as it explores the undertones and behaviours of this context through the eyes of eight Israeli secular Jewish mothers. Indeed, this study seeks to truly represent and reflect the cultural undertones and behaviours of its

group members and to better understand what aspects of Israeli cultural, values, beliefs and/or traditions contribute to the developmental process and formation of attachment relations between Israeli secular Jewish mothers and their children.

This literature review provides the background which has led to the formation of the research questions and to the setting in which this research takes place. In the 'Methodology, Methods and Data Analysis' chapter that follows I present a thorough account of the methods applied throughout this study and the data analysis processes applied in the search to answer the research questions, through the voice of the women participating in this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology, Methods and Data Analysis

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the methodology, methods and data analysis conducted for research. Initial discussions provide an outline of the theoretical approach – the methodology - which has guided the manner in which data has been gathered and the tools and strategies – the methods - used to do so. It justifies the choice of methods applied throughout the research, and the reasons why these methods have been chosen. Emphasis is placed on choosing narrative as a method of research, addressing issues of power within narrative, the relationship between researcher and participant and ethical issues which may arise due to the nature of the research topic. Much attention is given to the importance of contextualisation of the narrative within the sociocultural and political framework in which it is constructed, highlighting the benefits achieved from understanding not only the norms and traditions of its group members but also of the language used to construct meaning.

An overview of the research tools applied, namely the Interviews, Pilot Study and Reflective Journal is provided which will include a description of the developmental process which led to the final choice of interview questions and the manner in which the interviews would be conducted. Much emphasis is given to the importance of applying mother tongue during the initial stages of the research and attention is given to issues regarding the translation of the interviews and the need to ensure that loyalty and authenticity to the narrative shared are maintained throughout. These are followed by an overview of how the participating mothers were chosen.

The focus of the chapter moves on to the data analysis phase of the research and on the approaches applied in the search for meaning and themes in the personal and individual shared narratives of the participating mothers. It reflects my understanding that the focus of the research questions, which seek to explore aspects of Israeli culture, inclines the data analysis process towards the exploratory nature of a thematic method of analysis which enables themes and patterns to emerge from within.

Discussions shift on to the more practical aspect of the data analysis process and will initially explore how sensitivity to sociocultural context and further influences played a key role in positioning the relationship between the researcher, the participants and the narratives shared as this was instrumental in determining how the data analysis process was carried out. They describe the attributes, outlooks, features and additional factors which were key in establishing thematic analysis as the chosen method of data analysis for this research. These are followed by a review of how issues relating to the researcher's subjectivity and bias were addressed to ensure rigour, validity and authenticity of interpretations and findings presented.

A discussion of the more practical process of data analysis phase will then follow dedicated to the thematic analysis process itself and the various phases adopted. Within this I observe how the quest to gain a better understanding of a narrative that is representative of complex socially constructed views, ideas and perceptions necessitated an appreciation of these complexities and demanded an integrated, nonlinear approach to data analysis. I proceed to acknowledge that the development of the data analysis phase was an ongoing process which would be driven and manipulated by the themes and findings as they developed and emerged.

3.2 Methodology and Methods – an Overview

'Methodology' can be described as the theoretical process involved in establishing, rationalising and validating the choice of the methods used within the research to produce and collate the data and knowledge acquired (Longden, 2005). Clough and Nutbrown (2007) refer to methodology as a 'critical design attitude to be found always at work throughout a study' (p.35) as it connects, clarifies and explains the research and the different components within, justifying their place, their functionality and their presence. Methodology therefore represents the 'theory of acquiring knowledge' and relates to the 'overall approach to the research' (Wellington et al, 2005, p.97) rather than the more technical and pragmatic characteristics of how the research is conducted which falls within the functionality of the research methods.

As such, research methods form part of the detailed and explicit procedures and tools applied to generate the data required in the research (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006). As the ingredients in a recipe influence and alter the nature and flavour of the dish produced (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007), so do the chosen research methods determine the feel, complexity and profoundness of the data which is to be collated and presented. It is important to acknowledge that these ingredients, tools or 'channels of communication' (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007, p.29) may evolve and change throughout the research as realisations and observations regarding the data collection or data analysis emerge, triggering the need for adjustment.

3.3 Methodological Approach

The aim of the research is to explore the perceptions held by a small group of eight Israeli secular Jewish mothers regarding the attachment relationships between them and their children. The research will elicit data from the participating mothers about the emotional connection they have with their children whilst reflecting on the emotional relationships and attachment formations with their mothers or other close members of their family, within a specific sociocultural milieu.

This locates the research within a qualitative framework which will enable the study to investigate data representative of a more complex and personal nature. As 'qualitative data-gathering techniques permit observation of the world from the perspective of the subject not the researcher' (Cowman, 1993, p.789) this approach will provide mothers with a platform from which to explore, voice and evaluate the emotional aspects of their relationships with their children, and provide their own interpretation of how attachment formation occurs. Hughes (2001) describes differences between qualitative and quantitative research by using the analogy of a shining torch balancing proximity of light and detail. The concept of qualitative research is represented by an image of shining the light of the torch with closer proximity onto a smaller area, thus gaining depth but losing breadth, whereas quantitative research is equated to casting the light on a wider area, achieving greater coverage but losing detail.

The choice of applying a qualitative method of research stems from the desire to collect data which is both complex and subjective aiming to identify and appreciate the meaning behind occurrences and encounters shaped within their sociocultural environment. This positions the research as inductive, as it journeys through the phases of gathering and collecting responses, to exploring and questioning the data 'allowing ideas and themes to emerge from the personal accounts rather than imposing a predetermined theory' (Clarke, 2009, p.39).

3.4 Why Narrative?

Choosing which method of research to use was not a straightforward process and it involved consideration of the particulars of the research and the data I intended to gather. The method chosen aligns with the interpretivist paradigm that frames the study in which reality is viewed to exist within the context of the social world in which it is being constructed and seeks to understand meaning as perceived by the individual (Hughes, 2001). This relates to my understanding that reality is not something which can be viewed objectively, as it is socially constructed, and is subjective to the interpretations and views of the individual (Yardley, 2000).

Furthermore, I trust that this method adheres more to the scope of the research where emphasis is on identifying and discovering the 'what' - the perceptions held by the participating mothers regarding the development of emotional attachment - and the 'how' - the manner in which this emotional attachment is achieved. The emphasis of the research is therefore on understanding the participant and their personal perspective within a specific sociocultural framework.

The appeal of narrative research is in its ability to 'open up the possibility of seeing anew, of representing complexity, uncertainty, contradictions and silence' (Chataika, 2005, p.5). Each narrative represents a different outlook, perspective and view which, when pieced together with

other outlooks, perspectives and views, can help to present a wider understanding of the issues explored. Indeed, the task of reconstructing the narrative presents the researcher with the responsibility of safeguarding the final narrative, ensuring that the manner in which it is presented contains the different aspects and characteristics of the original story, to ensure that the character, quality, and meaning of the narrative are conveyed.

Moen (2006) places narrative research within Vygotsky's (1978) perception that processes such as knowledge acquisition, development and change are structured and characterised by the sociocultural environment in which individuals live. This identifies the acquisition of knowledge and processes of development and change as dynamic and ongoing, which steers the choice of method of research to one that illustrates and describes but also clarifies and illuminates, revealing meaning and concepts which are at times presented in a more philosophical and abstract nature.

Bamberg (2012) describes narrative as a reconstructed, retold story which places individuals and events according to the manner in which meaning and interpretation was assumed by the narrator. The strength of narrative interviews rests in the ability of the researcher to personally connect with the participant's intimate account as it is being narrated and shared 'embedded in its context' (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.10). The ability to connect with the participant as they tell their stories, conveys the feeling of a shared moment, thus providing a sense of presence and togetherness between researcher and participant.

Incorporating a sociocultural sensitivity complies with the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms discussed earlier and appeals to my epistemological understanding of how knowledge and meaning are constructed. This understanding views the construction of knowledge as an ongoing, dynamic process which although is based on social exchanges and is mediated through social interactions, is a process which occurs internally, on an individualistic level and is a unique representation, personal to each individual (Crotty, 1998). As such my decision to use narrative inquiry in the research stems from my understanding that this method can offer a powerful means of communicating culturally adopted, traditional and typical opinions, beliefs, concepts and philosophies which are shared and revalued throughout the generations (Garro and Mattingly, 2000; Lee et al, 2003).

3.5 Using Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry as a method of research is located within qualitative research parameters and entails gathering, interpreting and reconstructing shared personal accounts of life events and experiences. This method provides the narrator with an opportunity to be actively involved in providing and communicating meaning to the shared experiences. Narrative inquiry represents one means by which narrative can be shared, and other forms such as written diaries, discussions,

debates and dialogues (Riessman and Quinney, 2005) provide additional means in which the sharing of narrative can be achieved.

The decision to choose narrative inquiry as a method of research is reflective of a view that the process of the research plays a role of identifying and shaping the information and knowledge of what 'is' and what 'exists', as knowledge is formed and emphasised by the experiences, rationale and belief systems relating both to the narrator and the researcher (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007). Indeed Yang (2011) perceives narrative research as a method which reflects knowledge comprising of both episteme - a reality which is certain and constant (Eisner, 2002) - and doxa - a belief or interpretation - as the constructivist quality of this method provides the narrator with an opportunity to share and communicate their own narrative time and time again, constructing 'plural truths and multiple realities' (Yang, 2011, p.208).

While the process of generating and sharing narratives can be considered to be a daily, run-of-the-mill process in which individuals share their stories, using it as a method of research is far from simple and necessitates careful and systematic scrutiny and investigation of the data presented so that the hidden layers of meaning can be revealed (Riessman and Quinney, 2005).

These hidden layers of data can at times extend into areas and functions which are not always easy to detect and view. For example, these can refer to, mental processes in which the internal processing of experiences takes place and meaning provided to events and accounts 'is hidden from awareness' (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.159). Due to the cognitive complexity involved in completing such activities, these processes and procedures cannot be viewed and are hard to examine. These procedures differ to the more evident and visible processes which involve the more visible construction of the narrative being shared (Polkinghorne, 1988).

The narrative interview as a qualitative research method aims to explore ideas, thoughts and experiences vertically, where the term 'vertically' refers to a focus on discovering and investigating as opposed to authenticating or justifying. In other words, the qualitative method of research offers an in-depth means of exploring data as 'it is in the nature of exploratory studies to indicate rather than conclude' (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006, p.492), to convey and propose, recommend and communicate rather than confirm and validate.

This method of research offers an opportunity to tap into representatives of a more specific sociocultural group whose positionality and outlook have been shaped through continuous dialogue and interactions which have taken place within their sociocultural milieu. The emphasis placed is on uniqueness and distinctiveness of the individual narratives shared and on the capacity of the

researcher to mentally hold and maintain detail and information shared by the participants. It signifies the importance placed on individuality and richness of the data rather than on quantity and statistics (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006). Although more is written about the participants later in this chapter, at this point I would like to observe that the in-depth nature of this method played a big part in influencing the decision to use only eight participants in this research (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006).

Hughes (2001) describes how the quest of 'getting to know' the individual, understanding and appreciating their story within the social world in which it has been told, is an essential aspect of 'verstehen' –the manner in which individuals 'make sense of or interpret our everyday world' (Hughes, 2001, p.226). This view, which 'looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life world' (Crotty, 1998, p.67) is representative of the interpretivist approach to what constitutes knowledge. This approach, influenced by Georg Simmel and Max Weber (Weber, 1947; Tucker, 1965; Schutz, 1967), seeks to discover the world 'in us' (Hughes, 2001, p.41) understanding the rationale and motives attributed to behaviours and actions from an individual's perspective thus offering a means of 'accessing the social through the individual' (Thomson, 2009, p.20).

The interpretative approach to knowledge views reality as the subjective manner in which individuals perceive their world and the experiences within and focuses on identifying and appreciating the individual, their story and the 'nature of the situation in which the individual action occurs' (Tucker, 1965, p.159). This approach is closely associated with the constructivist approach and to the understanding that reality, and meaning are constructed by social actors (Schwandt, 1998) locating them as subjective and specific to the context in which they are constructed. Charmaz (2006) places the constructivists approach as one which 'lies squarely in the interpretive tradition' (p.130) as it too is concerned with accentuating and understanding reality through the lives of 'social actors' (Schwandt, 1998, p.19). Schwandt (1998) describes how both approaches 'share the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it' (p.2) and acknowledges how understanding that 'complex world' is achieved by interpreting it.

As a researcher working within an interpretivist / constructivist paradigm, my understanding of social reality is that 'the meaning of human action is inherent in that action' (Schwandt, 2001, p.134) and that the role of the researcher is to 'unearth that meaning' (Schwandt, 2001, p.134). As such reality can be viewed as constructed by individuals as they interact with and relate to life experiences and events, and provide meaning and interpretation (Bracken, 2010) to those events.

This reflects an understanding that reality is created within sociocultural parameters and is to be viewed and explored 'from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated' (Cohen et al, 2011, p.15).

The above highlight the need to identify with the individual, having a better appreciation of not only the narrative shared but also the 'socially constructed, negotiated and shared meaning' (Hughes, 2001, p.41) within which the narrative is positioned. An interpretivist approach provides a nonlinear, more subjective approach to knowledge and meaning and an appreciation that there are 'multiple, coexisting realities rather than a single reality' (Cohen et al, 2011, p.27).

Bakhtin (1981) describes how language and the expression of narrative embrace a compendium of voices – a polyphony - which conveys the accumulated sociocultural philosophies, opinions and theories of the social group, articulated and 'ventriloquated' (Sheers, 2013) by the narrator as they interpret and reconstruct the experiences and encounters shared. Bakhtin's use of the term 'polyphony' relates to the manner in which a melody - which he equates to the story shared - can be 'harmonised vertically', constructed from its horizontal, linear state to a deep and rich musical creation by multiple instruments to provide both an orally and aurally composition (Bakhtin, 1981). Bakhtin equates the musical composition to the strength of the narrative and its ability to provide richness of meaning to the story being told as it embraces within it the collective voices of sociocultural values and traditions present at that moment.

In order to fully appreciate and understand both the narrative shared and the sociocultural, political and historical context in which the narrative is placed, and to which the individual sharing the narrative is connected (Moen, 2006), there is a need to appreciate that the universal and simplistic manner in which narrative is used, masks elements of complexity and difficulty. These elements are to be recognised and appreciated to fully understand the less visible and more buried meaning which lies within.

The strength of narrative as a qualitative research method supports the belief that being able to get involved with and connect both with the environment and the sociocultural group researched, is of benefit as it provides a shared benchmark and framework against which interpretations are made. Anderson (2013) signifies the attachment between the researcher and the sociocultural group researched, describing how the shared subjectivity provides the researcher with empathy and understanding of the positionality – the outlook, perspective and accepted boundaries - of the researched sociocultural group.

Pring (2000) describes how interpretations and meanings which are applied by the cultural group to 'true facts' and 'knowledge' are loaded with, and are subject to, educational, social, cultural and political values which can be perceived as portraits, revealing and signifying the orthodoxy of its group members. The differences in the manner in which experiences and encounters are perceived and understood vary according to the social group in which they occur. Indeed Fischer (1998) describes knowledge and findings resulting from social research to be described as contextualised within the sociocultural boundaries of the research influenced and guided by the underlying and central values shared by the orthodoxy of the social group in which the research takes place (Berg, 2009).

The understanding that the narrative is illustrative of the sociocultural and political world in which it has been constructed highlights the argument that the process of interpreting the narrative would be facilitated if the researcher had an inner understanding of the social context in which the research was set, and was able to identify with the dynamics of the social surroundings under which the narrative evolved and developed. For a person on the outside of the cultural group the patterns of norm and modes of behaviour do not denote the same unquestionable and absolute truth which is the result of a rich, shared 'historical tradition' (Schutz,1944, p.502). This shared historical tradition plays a crucial role in constructing collective knowledge and understanding and plays an influencing role in structuring and shaping the cultural values and traditions of the group. Schutz (1944) stresses the importance of experiencing and sharing historical events as they become 'an integral part of [one's] biography' (p.502) rather than mere historical facts. These historical backgrounds contribute to an overall sense of identity with the group, and not having that shared historical experience may hinder the ability of an outsider to truly understand the impact of those events on the shared philosophies of the group. The sense of unity and solidarity these historical experiences provide to a group of people, also offer common structures of interpretation which serve the cultural group with guidelines and benchmarks in interpreting and understanding experiences and encounters shared.

The narrative which develops is often guided and influenced by the norms and guidelines of the sociocultural group and reflects the individual's desire to remain faithful to, and connected with, the collectively shared cultural and social standards of the group (Berg, 2009). This highlights a cautionary note regarding narrative research, requiring the researcher to consider that narrative shared and articulated may often reflect a more romanticised or iconic representation of events in which the individual assumes different, more idealised images of the self, which may also incorporate knowledge and reflections not necessarily experienced in person by the narrator (McAdams, 2001).

For the researcher this raises a question regarding the credibility and authenticity of the narrative shared, a thought reflected by Ochs and Capps (1997) who describe the process of constructing and shaping oneself as a process which may incorporate uncertainty and confusion. McAdams (1988) describes how 'we understand who we are in the context of what we believe to be real, to be true, and to be good' (p.215) and in a desire to stay faithful to the ideals and principles of the group. This positions the construction of the self as a desire – not necessarily an intentional or conscious one - of the individual to identify and adhere to varied images and symbols within their cultural group.

Atkinson (1990) describes the dual process of collating data and then interpreting and reconstructing the narrative as a process of 'writing down' and 'writing up' the narrative. The 'writing down' process refers to the phase of the research in which data is collated, in which there is less input from the researcher's epistemological positioning which, according to Atkinson (1990), is an aspect found in the 'writing up' phase of narrative. Indeed the process of 'writing up' is one in which the narrative is reconstructed and interpreted, involving the ontological and epistemological positionality of both the narrator and the researcher, thus emphasising the subjective nature of narrative method. This highlights the need to consider issues of power which may exist within narrative inquiry; some of which are discussed in the following section.

3.6 Power Issues and Narrative

Like Vygotsky and Bakhtin before him, Foucault (1980) observed that the construction and presentation of reality portrayed within the narrative was influenced and shaped by cultural dynamics. However Foucault (1980) also highlighted the position of power and responsibility held by the researcher as the person who will ultimately analyse and interpret the narrative presented. This would also incorporate deciding what features and aspects played a role in shaping and impacting the narrative (Berg, 2009), including which beliefs, values and viewpoints would be marginalised and which ones would be honoured and promoted.

The concept of power being placed with the researcher reveals a risk of creating an 'asymmetrical power' (Kvale, 2002, p.9) within the relationship between the researcher and the narrator as the direction, nature and theme of the narrative hinges around what the researcher perceives to be of relevance and of consequence to the purpose of the research. The aspect of power highlights the need for awareness that the manner in which the narrative is interpreted and presented by the researcher may be in conflict with the meaning and message which the narrator is trying to portray. In other words, the power held by the researcher, which may filter through and influence the actual interaction and dialogue with the narrator and the manner in which the narrative is shaped, poses a risk which shifts the nature of the narrative from a neutral and value-free perspective (Kvale, 2002)

to one which is more biased and subjective towards the thoughts and beliefs of the researcher. One manner in which the researcher can mitigate this risk is to openly declare their positionality, including their beliefs, values and relevant experiences, recognising that these may impact the nature and direction of the research.

As such the role of the researcher assumes an initial function of providing the participant with a safe and trusting platform in which experiences and events are shared and in which the participant acquires the feeling of equality which empowers them, enabling them to perceive themselves as the 'experts in their own narratives' (Billington, 2012, p.323). However, it is important to note that this is balanced against an understanding that the narrative is produced within the intended framework and boundaries of the research which specify and provide the context and dynamics of the research (Billington, 2012).

The complexity and difficulty in penetrating and revealing the less visible aspects of the narrative can, according to Moen (2006), be better understood and valued by investing both time and effort in building a trusting relationship between the researcher and the narrator. The power of a more open relationship lies in its ability to provide the narrator with a sense of authority and empowerment which results in a more honest, authentic and real narrative. Achieving a relationship which involves trust and confidence stretches the research to a more personal and private level, which also 'gives voice to people silenced, not heard, or rejected in society' (Creswell, 2012, p.63). As a note of caution, Riessman (1993) describes how although through narrative research voices are indeed heard and recorded, the following processes in which those voices are analysed interpreted and represented, in which the researcher's positionality and voice come into play, reduces the ability of maintaining impartiality and objectivity and as such calls for caution claims made to the actions of 'giving voice'. To further ensure that the voice of the participant remained strong and present in the research and to ensure that the process of reconstructing the narrative was performed 'with' rather than 'to' the participants, I decided to incorporate the process of respondent validation (Torrance, 2012). This would involve providing the participants with a verbatim transcription of the interviews for them to check – including pseudonyms chosen - and on which they could comment on any aspect of the interviews themselves and of the issues discussed.

Furthermore, the authenticity and depth of the shared narrative is dependent on the nature of the relationship between narrator and researcher and the level of trust created. The dependency on the strength of the relationship and its dynamic nature positions narrative research as an interactive rather than a solitary undertaking and assigns great responsibility to the researcher to conserve the privacy, dignity and respect of the participants and those included (directly or indirectly) in the

narrative. As such the responsibility on the researcher incorporates a need to balance on the one hand the ethical commitment to the participant and, on the other, the 'scholarly obligation' (Josselson, 2007, p. 538) of the research.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The nature of the research requires the participants to share information regarding their family relationships, delving into the emotional features of those relationships. This may involve having to reach deeper into the more personal aspects of one's life, voicing reflections, views and opinions which are often left dormant (Josselson, 2006). Lieblich (1996) describes how participants may use the sharing of their narrative as a means of 'venting old grievances against others' (p.182), potentially for the first time which may lead to the exploration of difficult, upsetting and sensitive issues. These, can result in uncomfortable feelings echoing and filtering out of the realm of the research itself and back into reality of daily life (Josselson, 2006; Lieblich, 1996). This impact highlighted for Lieblich (1996) how the shared narrative was not merely an interactive process between the researcher and the participant but also between the participant and members of their own family 'breaking the taboo of secrets and silence…through [the] solicitation of narratives' (p.182). As a researcher it was important for me to ensure that strategies were adopted to mitigate the handling of difficult feelings arising during the research process and the risk of personal or confidential data being disclosed.

Following the granting of the application for ethical approval (see appendices 1 and 2 for both application and approval documents), a phone conversation with each of the participants was conducted explaining in brief what the research was about and what would be expected of them if they chose to take part. In adherence with my ethical application, following this conversation each participant was sent a more detailed document describing the focus of the study, the ethical issues and the expectations of their involvement in the research (see appendices 3a and 3b for the English and the Hebrew versions). At each stage it was reiterated that participants could withdraw from the research at any time without needing to provide a reason for doing so.

Prior to the interviews themselves each participant was sent a brief regarding the topics which would be covered in the interview advising them that they did not need to prepare anything or talk about any topics they did not wish to discuss (see appendices 4a and 4b for the English and the Hebrew versions); additionally each participant was asked to sign a consent form before the interview commenced (see appendices 5a and 5b for the English and Hebrew versions). I also advised the mothers that if they required further support regarding any of the issues discussed a list of local counsellors would be available for them to contact (Corbin and Morse, 2003). Corbin and

Morse (2003) also recommend that if a participant becomes 'too overwhelmed to go on' (p.343) it is advisable to have a break in the interview to allow them time to calm down and to collect their thoughts. I therefore allowed for a second round of interviews for contingency.

On a more personal level I was keen to ensure that whilst my responses as a researcher would combine support and understanding, I would be less focussed on problem resolution than I would otherwise be in my usual role of parent practitioner. I therefore decided to adopt an empathic manner during the interview process and throughout the research as a whole where the focus lies on calming emotions down by identifying, acknowledging and respecting their presence rather than on finding solutions and resolving issues (Siegel, 2012). Furthermore, I ensured that at the end of the interview there was time for more general and personal conversation to take place which helped bring the interview session to a close in a relaxed manner. Josselson (2007) describes how this also instils a feeling of value and importance in the participants, signifying their participation in the research.

As highlighted, the essence of the data shared by the participants within the narrative interviews is likely to be of a more personal nature (Kaiser, 2009) in which the experiences, occurrences and reflections disclosed and shared are of a more individual and specific nature. The uniqueness and individuality which helps to contextualise and position the narrative runs the risk of exposing the identity of the participant. As such, in order to protect the identity and privacy of the participating mothers and of their family members it was crucial to ensure that confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research and present data 'in such a way that respondents should be able to recognise themselves, while the reader should not be able to identify them' (Grinyer, 2002, p.1). One way of achieving this was by ensuring that information which may risk the disclosure of the participants' identity or other personal data referred to in the narrative was not divulged in publications of the research.

Wiles et al (2008) reflect on the close link between confidentiality and anonymity and describe the anonymization of data as a means by which 'confidentiality is operationalised' (p.4). However, it is important to acknowledge that anonymity does not encompass all aspects of confidentiality or protect from the risk of data being disclosed unintentionally or purposefully outside the parameters of the research. As an example, Crow and Wiles (2008) refer to the risks of including visual materials of places or people which may unintentionally reveal the identity of an area and with that risk the disclosure of the identity of the participants.

The function of anonymising and changing personal data can help provide participants with an amount of external confidentiality (Tolich, 2004). This relates to attempts to conceal the identity and

further personal information such as names of people, places of work, 'structural positions' (Crow and Wiles, 2008, p.5) – which refer to job roles, title and positions within places of work - and other aspects, which could make the participant identifiable and recognisable by those outside of the research. However, Kaiser (2009) reflects how the process of changing identifiable characteristics risks altering the meaning, value and authenticity of the data (Wiles et al, 2008). This highlights an additional risk that maintaining anonymity by disguising or altering details may result in a 'distortion of the data' (Heaton, 2004, p.29) and a difficulty of providing an accurate presentation and analysis of the narrative. As such a fine balance had to be struck between authenticity and anonymity.

3.8 Research Tools

3.8.1 The Interviews

The interactive and collaborative nature of the narrative method is the style I wanted to adopt during the interview phase of the research as it appeals to my own nature and incorporates similarities to the manner in which I work with parents and children in my professional capacity as parent practitioner. The process of openly sharing personal experiences and events provides insight into the deeper and emotional meaning and value of specific events and how these have impacted and shaped the individual, influencing who they are today (Lilgendahl, and McAdams, 2011).

I have found that using an interview-style approach which incorporates open-ended questions like those used in safeguarding situations (HM Government, 2018) provides parents with an opportunity to take ownership of the narrative. I decided to use semi-structured, in-depth interviews as this structure provides a relaxed and casual setting in which the participating mothers can explore issues and topics related to the area of the research in more depth (Mathers et al, 1998). This method provides a 'personal and intimate encounter' (DiCicco, Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p.317) and an opportunity of presenting the participating mothers with contextualised, direct, open-ended questions aimed at gathering data which is relevant and meaningful to the research (Mason, 2002). However I was determined to ensure that the structure of the interviews was also 'fluid and flexible' (Mason, 2002, p.24) as, although there were broad topics I may have wished to discuss, the aim was to allow the conversation to develop and progress naturally, reaching the unplanned and unpredictable issues as well as the more expected ones. This would also adhere to previous intensions made of ensuring that the research remained highly exploratory and that the participating mothers felt able and free to talk about any aspects of their lives.

Designing the interview questions themselves was an ongoing process which involved self-reflection and conversations with close friends and family, guided closely by the research questions and the

data I was seeking to collect. This process led to more focused areas of discussion which resulted in developing the interview questions themselves (See Appendix 6: The process of designing the interview questions).

I trusted that the interview questions chosen enabled me to gain insight and increase my awareness of the views, understandings and modes of behaviour shared by the participating mothers. I also trusted that this method could provide a means of identifying, discovering and viewing things within the sociocultural context of the participants enabling me to 'look beyond and transform' (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007, p.24) my understanding of the concept of attachment and its formation (see appendices 7a and 7b for the English and Hebrew versions of the list of Interview Questions).

I was aware that the combination of the cultural and human elements of my research necessitated careful planning and consideration so as to ensure that the participants had a good understanding of the focus of the research and of the questions asked thus reducing any elements of confusion which may have arisen. To help reduce those elements of confusion and to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness and clarity of not only the information sent to the participating mothers but also of the effectiveness of the processes involved in carrying out the interviews themselves, I decided to carry out a pilot study.

3.8.2 The Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study was to improve the manner in which the narrative would be assembled, in particular the type of questions used during the interview process (Robson, 1993). Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) describe the pilot study as the trial run carried out before the research which serves to assess and analyse the effectiveness and value of the various procedures to be utilised in the actual research. Yin (1994) describes the pilot study as 'formative' (p.79) and influential as it can be utilised to develop, construct and improve both the practical and more theoretical aspects of the research. These can include the questions and information shared with the participants, as well as the more technical aspects of the methods used such as functionality of the recording equipment and suitability of an ambiance. Furthermore, a pilot study provides an opportunity to assess the efficiency and smoothness of the participant recruitment process, including the clarity and ease with which the material provided is understood and perceived. Furthermore, even though I recognised that the more flexible nature of qualitative research presents the researcher with opportunities to 'learn on the job' (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p.156), I felt that a pilot study would provide a new and less confident researcher such as myself the opportunity to trial aspects of the research in which more practice might be needed. I was particularly keen to use the pilot study to evaluate the effectiveness of the questions I intended to use to elicit both

conversation from the participants and data relevant to the nature of the research (see Appendix 8 for information regarding the Pilot Study).

In addition to being a 'testing tool' the pilot study provided opportunities to reflect on the process from a personal perspective encompassing personal actions, conduct, understandings, assumptions and beliefs which have emerged as a result of the study. Indeed the aspect of reflection appealed to me as I believed it would enable me to gain an awareness and insight regarding the research, highlighting what might hinder or prevent the ability to perceive and understand that which might remain unseen and unobserved. I therefore decided to keep a reflective journal throughout the course of the research which would provide a 'stimulus to reflect back…to deepen my understanding of the research process' (Watt, 2007, p.83); these are explored in more detail in the following section.

3.8.3 The Reflective Journal

The aim of the reflective journal is to enable the researcher to make 'experiences, opinions, thoughts, and feelings visible' (Ortlipp, 2008 p.704) and to provide opportunity for reflection and self-criticism. From a personal perspective, the use of a reflective journal provided a space in which I could maintain an ongoing open and honest account with myself and the opportunity to self-reflect, self-analyse and question procedures, choices and thoughts as they developed (see Appendix 9 for Extracts from Reflective Journal).

The process of reflecting on events and processes enabled me to gain insight into personal views and understandings which provided a sense of progress and self-development. It provided a space in which personal thoughts and reflections of first impressions and observations of the interviews could be aired and shared. Indeed, Halcomb and Davidson (2006) attribute the functionality of a reflective journal as a means of providing further information regarding thoughts, concerns and ideas which develop during the process of the research. It endeavours to promote a focus on 'self-revelation' as opposed to creating an image of 'looking good' (Furman, 2004), respecting the concept that 'research is about truth, not impression management' (Furman, 2004, p.164).

The ability to reflect throughout the research process enabled me to better understand my own views and the emotional connection I had to the research. This highlighted the need for awareness regarding how having an emotional connection with the research, or wanting to prove a specific view or a theory, could jeopardise the manner in which data is interpreted and presented, a risk reiterated by Mackay (1841) who describes how the desire to validate or construct a theory can result in the researcher 'torturing facts' (p.552) to do so. This strengthens the argument made earlier

of implementing strategies which would reduce the risk of bias, thus reinforcing claims of legitimacy and authenticity regarding the research findings.

3.9 Language

Narrative inquiry as a method of research delves into 'natural linguistic expressions' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.6) where emphasis is on regular and natural 'talk' and on data which is transactional by nature - 'fluid, shifting, and changing' (Clandinin and Murphy, 2009, p.601) – rather than static. Thomas (1905) signifies the importance of language, describing it as a means through which perceptions, awareness, thoughts and understandings of the cultural group are established and reproduced, but also as a means in which heritage and culture are echoed and reaffirmed as they are mediated from one generation to the next. This point is reiterated by Cardwell (2002) as he describes how the process of sharing narratives through the generations restores and reinforces sociocultural traditions and customs, helping the next generation to identify and connect with members of the same cultural and family groups and with the traditions, customs and belief system they share.

In terms of the language spoken, for a researcher trying to gain an understanding and meaning of narrative shared by members of a cultural group, having a knowledge of that language but also of the 'fringes' (James, 2003, p.33) which surround it provides an added depth and level of understanding to the 'linguistic symbols catalogued' (Schutz, 1944, p.504). By 'fringes' James (2003) relates to sensations, associations, memories and moments in time remembered like a 'dying echo of whence it [the association] came to us' (p.32) and which are linked in our consciousness to images and objects. He describes these associations as ''halo' and 'penumbra'' (James, 2003, p.33) as they not only surround but also merge and amalgamate to form part of a more holistic yet personal image. These reinforce the benefit of placing narratives within a social, historical or cultural context as these add 'a special tinge' (Schutz, 1944, p.505) to definitive moments in time and often represent additional symbolic meaning which are exclusive to a group of people.

Duranti (1997) refers to language acquisition as an interactive process between the individual and their environment, between nature and nurture. He positions language as a combined product of both sociocultural and natural influences where the ability of humans to acquire language – be it verbal or non-verbal - as a means of communication, is inherently shared as a universal trait which goes beyond geographical and cultural barriers. However, he proceeds to explain how language acquisition as a process is also a result of the more localised cultural environment in which it is developed, and that access to language enables individuals to enter and be part of the social group and the traditions, customs, ideas and norms of behaviour that it shares (Duranti, 1997).

I intended to carry out the interviews myself, a decision supported by Hopf (2004) who stresses the importance of ensuring that the interviews are conducted by a person who has authority over the research and a good understanding of the theoretical framework in which the research is set. This helps to ensure that the questions and the direction of the interviews remain within the focus of the study and that the narrative shared is of relevance and of value to the interests of the research question. The decision to carry out the interviews in Hebrew – the dominant language spoken in Israel and my mother tongue - goes back to the research questions which specify that the focus of the research is on exploring aspects of Israeli culture, and to the understanding that culture and language are perceived to be interconnected:

> 'Language does not exist apart from culture, that is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives' (Sapir, 1921, p.221)

It also reflects the understanding that in order to truly know the person and their culture and to gain a better understanding of their views and feelings there is a need to connect with them in their mother tongue, as the process of producing narrative which is linked with the remembering of experiences relies on language and shared cultural frameworks during the process of expressing and communicating the narrative itself (Browning, 2015). The sense of connection and attachment which are enabled by the acquisition of mother tongue is reiterated by Yildiz (2012) as she describes mother tongue as the 'language that signifies belonging and reaffirms it' (p.203).

Al-Yousef (2005) describes how the ability to express oneself in one's mother tongue provides the speaker with a feeling of empowerment and ownership of the spoken words and of the meaning of the delivery, as it provides an emotional component and a sense of authority to the words and the message conveyed. As such, opting to utilise the narrator's mother tongue in narrative research can be said to reflect a desire to empower the participants by enabling them to express their narrative in their native language, as this strengthens the sense of identity which instils validity and authenticity to the narrative expressed. Conducting interviews in a language which is not the mother tongue of the narrator may also impact on the dynamics between researcher and narrator during the interview process itself as voicing narrative in a second language may at times require support and encouragement, particularly if the narrator is 'struggling to express him or herself and is searching for words to convey his or her thinking' (MacLean et al, 2004, p.116).

Li (2011) explains how providing participants with the opportunity to share their narratives in their mother tongue is a means of creating a more relaxed and less intimidating setting in which participants can 'express their innermost feelings and thoughts freely and without effort' (Li, 2011, p.23). Reflecting on her work, Li (2011) describes how enabling participants to read the transcribed

narratives in their mother tongue, allowed the participants to identify with the narrative, and see themselves in it, in contrast with the English transcriptions which appeared more rigid, less emotional and resulted in a weaker sense of connection with the narrative.

In terms of this research, which explores cultural characteristics of attachment formations through narratives shared by members of the cultural group, enabling participants to share the narrative in Hebrew - their mother tongue – provides a way of connecting with and accessing views, traditions and perceptions held by the sociocultural group to which they belong (Duranti, 1997). Yildiz (2012) considers mother tongue as the language through which social and emotional connections are made and 'the language in which one first says and becomes "I"' (p.203). I therefore decided to select participants for whom Hebrew was their mother tongue and the language they spoke to their children, so as to achieve a uniform expression of their narrative and a unity in the culture reflected in the language.

3.10 Transcribing the Interviews

By its nature this research explores the more sensitive and delicate issue of relationships within the family. In practice, narrative interviews represent an interactive and interpersonal mode of research in which the researcher, in a quest to gain knowledge and understanding, enters and potentially invades the daily life of the participant (Josselson, 2006). This position requires the balancing of sensitivity, duty of care and discretion - thus guarding the safety of the participants and the information shared - with the desire to achieve a commitment to truth, authenticity and understanding.

The more subjective nature of the data collated and the desire to ensure authenticity in the representation of that data can be facilitated by creating a deeper and more intimate 'closeness' (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006) between the narrative collated and the researcher, which is enabled by transcribing the interviews verbatim. Providing a verbatim 'word-for-word' (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006, p.38) account of the vocalised narrative shared 'captures the richness of the participant's narrations as he or she gives them' (Lopez et al, 2008, p.1736) and simplifies and eases the process of data analysis as it offers the researcher a more intimate and first-hand connection with the original narrative produced.

I was aware that having the narratives transcribed by a third party risked exposing data and therefore compromising the privacy and confidentiality of the participant and the information shared (Oliver et al, 2005). Furthermore, Poland (1995) describes how interviews transcribed verbatim by a third party risk being either 'tidied up' (p.296) or altered to ensure that the final document is grammatically accurate. MacLean et al (2004) suggest that although getting a third

party to transcribe the narratives may be less time consuming for the researcher, the researcher will still need to check the transcripts to ensure that there has been no 'distortion of interview content' (MacLean et al, 2004, p.115) and that authenticity of the narrative has been accurately reflected in the transcripts – activities which require time.

The danger of inaccuracies in the transcriptions of the narrative have been highlighted by Lopez et al (2008) who describe how they may often result in a more interpretative transcription rather than one which offers a more accurate account of the narrative interview, particularly in cross cultural research involving translation of the original narrative. They warn that an interpreted transcript may also result in loss of detail which may lead to an 'overall loss of insight into the experiences' of the participants (Lopez et al, 2008, p.1731); this reinforces the argument for verbatim transcription in the language in which the interviews were conducted.

Oliver et al (2005) describe how having knowledge of the colloquial use of language and the sociocultural peculiarities of the context in which the narrative is produced provides a better understanding of the additional expressions which provide the 'peppered…signals that can change the tenor of conversations and meaning' (Oliver et al, 2005).

Due to the discussions presented above, I recognised that as an Israeli and a native Hebrew speaker who is cognisant of local culture and is fluent in English it would be advantageous to transcribe the interviews myself. However, this meant I was faced with a practical problem as, although Hebrew is my mother tongue, I could not touch-type in Hebrew and I was aware that learning to do so would be a very time consuming process. However regardless of this and in recognition of the benefits in doing so I embarked on an on-line touch-type tutorial in Hebrew which offered step-by-step lessons that I could access at any point. The process did prove to be lengthy taking approximately seven months to complete, however - as will be highlighted in the data analysis section - it did prove to be extremely valuable, satisfying and fulfilling and facilitated all my subsequent correspondences with the participants throughout the research.

These discussions reinforce the argument that elements of risk regarding confusion and misinterpretation can be reduced if the transcription is carried out by the researcher as he or she can provide additional meaning regarding the circumstances around the interview, which may add clarity and lessen obscurity of the data presented (Oliver et al, 2005). These arguments can be similarly applied to the process of translating the narrative, which is discussed in the following section.

3.11 Translating the Narrative

Research which uses narrative interviews as a means of collecting data relies on verbal communication and as such is heavily dependent on the meaning of the spoken word and utterances made which positions language as the 'lifeblood of the project' (Phillips, 1959, p.184). As such, in order to provide authenticity to the narrative and the data shared it is crucial that the translation process is carried out by someone who has an added knowledge of the 'supplementary values - the connotations' (Bloomfield, 1933, p.151) or secondary meanings (Nöth, 1985) which exist within the language. These refer to added meanings and values, locally ascribed to symbols, speech forms and signs, which provide further value and sense to the spoken word. Often these are not directly linked to the actual meaning of the words and gestures and are implied by sociocultural context, necessitating a deeper knowledge of the culture so as to fully understand what these represent (Phillips, 1959). Without this knowledge and understanding there is a risk that during the translation process the true meaning of the message could get misconstrued, misjudged, misinterpreted or, simply put, lost in translation. Leavitt (2014) describes how a translation approach which stipulates that the text to be translated is contextualised and located within the sociocultural environment in which it has been produced provides 'anchoring points in the movement of life we label society and culture' (Leavitt, 2014, p.215), which offers the reader not only a glimpse of the content but also insight into a different way of life and a different way of viewing the world. Eco (2004) believes that the relationship between the written word and the manner in which it creates meaning is enhanced by visual and physiological images and the sensations evoked by the association and connection between the written word and the personal experiences held by the reader. Eco goes on to explain how these sensations and images are not universal, rather they are more subjective and personal to cultural and historical context; 'this word does not have the same evocative impact every time, in every culture or country' (Eco, 2004, p.107). This concept is shared by Bruner (1990) who also describes the extraction and achievement of meaning as a 'public and shared' (Bruner, 1990, p.12) culturally related process.

As such the translation process encompasses not only translation of the language but also translation of the culture (Phillips, 1959), which often involves knowledge of the 'abstract' (Nöth, 1985) and 'implied' (Phillips, 1959) meanings contextualised and embedded within sociocultural values and traditions. One example of such an implied term is the word 'פולניה Polania' in Hebrew, which literally translates as 'Polish woman' but can be applied to a woman of any ethnicity and nationality as the term relates to the cultural characteristics associated with the Jewish Polish woman, rather than the country of origin (Klein, 2007). This term is often used in relation to mothers

as the abstract and cultural meaning of that word immediately conjures an image of the mother who overprotects her children:

> '…smothering her children with guilt-wrapped love as she forces them to eat more of her chicken soup with kneidlach, because she slaved over a hot stove, not that she's complaining, and you know, it wouldn't kill you to come visit more often. And what's vegetarian-schmegetarian got to do with chicken soup, anyway?' (Kordova, 2014)

As highlighted earlier, the role of the researcher seeking to understand the meaning behind narrative is a crucial function within qualitative research. Van Nes et al (2010) refer to the written text as 'the 'vehicle' with which meaning is ultimately transferred' (p.3). This highlights the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the analysis and interpretation of the narrative strives to understand and communicate the intended meaning of the narrative. Shope (2006) describes how her role as a researcher conducting narrative research in the participant's mother tongue but then expressing them in English held with it the responsibility of the role of a friend - 'a comrade of sorts, in their quest for equality' (Shope, 2006, p.167).

For the researcher faced with the task of translating the text this stresses the complexity involved in the translation process and the obligation on the researcher as interpreter to safeguard and preserve the view and sentiment of the narrative, ensuring it is shared and conveyed to the reader. Consideration and awareness need to form an integral part of the translation process ensuring that meaning and emotion are conveyed and preserved at every phase of the process.

Birbili (2000) highlights 'conceptual equivalence' or 'comparability of meaning' as a potential problem which exist in the translation process. These terms relate to times when there is a difficulty in finding vocabulary which offers a similarity or equality in the meaning conveyed in the original language, and there is therefore a need to recognise that there are times in which finding a like-for-like match in the other language may not be possible. As an example the words in Hebrew חבל על הזמן- which literally translate as 'shame on the time' (Yanay, 2016) - refer to something amazing and wonderful like an experience or a place and doesn't have a direct translation in English. This highlights difficulties in finding absolute matches in the translation process stemming from cultural differences which exist between words, symbols, utterances, gestures, silences and other signals, and the culturally specific meanings they convey.

This further emphasises the complexity of the translation process, seeking to maintain accuracy and authenticity expressed in the original language. To mitigate this, Van Nes et al (2010) propose staying with the original language during the initial stages of data analysis. This point is reiterated by Al-Yousef (2005) who suggests that analysing data in the original language of the interview also

ensures 'continuity in meaning' (p.131) and reinforces authenticity and legitimacy of meaning, as the process of translating the data and 'jumping from one language to another' (p.131) risks transforming the data. Carla (2012) describes how the act of analysing data in original language shifts the focus from trying to find 'close equivalents' in the second language - which risk transforming and or obscuring meaning - on to enabling the researcher to 'capture…understanding gained in the original language' (p.75). Van Nes et al (2010) further suggest that translation into the second language should initially include an assorted description of meaning rather than explicit and definitive words whilst reference to the original notes is regularly made.

Lopez et al (2008) highlight the importance of having the data translated by someone who is not only bilingual but also bicultural and is therefore familiar with and has an understanding of both the culture and language in which the research is conducted and the culture and language into which the research is being translated. As an Israeli and a native Hebrew speaker who is fluent in English and is cognisant of English culture, I am proposing to carry out the translation myself. However, in order to ensure that the quality and authenticity of the translations truly reflects the original narrative and does justice to the participants' voices, I am proposing to have random paragraphs of the original interviews and their translations checked by another bilingual and bicultural person (Lopez et al, 2008).

The above arguments, which highlight the significance and criticality of applying mother tongue in qualitative research and the risks associated with losing authenticity and meaning in translation processes, have strengthened my decision to carry out the initial phases of the data analysis in Hebrew and to translate the findings at a later stage; these are discussed in more detail in the following section.

3.12 Selecting the Participating Mothers

As the aim of the research is about 'maximising understanding of the one in all its diversity' (Sandelowski, 1995, p.180), to ensure that the group of the participating mothers is 'informationally representative' I decided to have a small group of eight in order to provide a profound and insightful narrative immersed in their lives, which will achieve 'a new and richly textured understanding of experience' (Sandelowski, 1995, p.183).

Choosing the participants was a process which involved the assistance of friends and relatives in Israel who were able to identify and contact parents with children of both nursery and primary school age (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013c), regardless of their socioeconomic background, and ask them directly if they would be interested in taking part in the research. Katriel (2004) describes how this direct approach, referred to as 'dugri', or 'straight talk', is typical of the Israeli

sociocultural norm and is a 'symbolic affirmation of an assertive, fearless and confident speaking style' (Katriel, 2004, p.156). The acceptance of straight talk within Israeli culture meant that approaching mothers directly would be viewed as an acceptable way in which to contact and recruit participants for the research.

I have chosen to research mothers with children in their early childhood, more specifically between the ages of 4-8 years old. The lower age range of 4 has been chosen due to the fact that it is around that age that children become more independent, inquisitive, able and empathic, extending their interactions with others, forming friendships with peers and relationships with other adults (Malekpour, 2007). Malekpour (2007) describes how, by the time children have reached the age of five their attachment formations enable them to develop and construct internal working models based on their relationships with their main carers, which are then used as benchmarks in other social experiences and social relationships.

The upper age range of 8 years has been chosen as this is the generally accepted definition of 'early years' (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2001; World Health Organisation, 2007). It is during those early years that attachment formations between mothers and their children impact and influence the way in which children develop socially and emotionally, shaping the manner in which children interact and engage in future social relationships (Siegel, 2012; Gerhardt, 2004). During those years the interactions and shared emotional connections experienced by the child, play a crucial role in shaping the brain (Siegel, 2012) influencing the social, emotional, linguistic and cognitive development of the child.

Additionally, this age range is representative of the age group of the mother-child dyad with whom I work at a local primary school and of whom I feel I have a better understanding. Anderson (2013) describes how this familiarity and understanding provides awareness and appreciation of the sociocultural environment in which the narrative is constructed. This belief is shared by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who signify the importance of understanding the sociocultural world in which the individual's daily life experiences are 'rooted' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.77) in order to truly understand the manner in which individuals construct their reality.

The above literature and the process of revisiting the research questions have helped to clarify what traits and common characteristics the participating mothers would share. I started the process of recruiting participants by sending an email to friends and family who offered to help, giving the general criteria of the mothers I was looking for. This covered the following:

- mothers who were born in Israel - ideally second generation Israeli,

- mothers for whom Hebrew was their mother tongue and the language spoken with their children,
- mothers who considered themselves to be secular Jewish,
- mothers who had one or more children between the ages of 4 and 8

At a fairly early stage of the selection process I was faced with a dilemma when a friend sent me the names of three willing mothers who were all members of the same family, either through marriage or due to them being siblings. Initially I failed to reflect properly on the ethical implications of this and of the suitability of recruiting participants who - in one shape or form - knew each other or were related to one another. It wasn't until a few days later, after I had already sent an initial message to all three mothers, that I reflected properly on the suitability of recruiting members of the same family and reached the conclusion that for the purpose of my research this would not be appropriate. Tolich (2004) highlights the need to acknowledge the difficulty and danger of identity disclosures which could arise in research where the participants are linked or associated to one another. Tolich (2004) refers to these as 'internal confidentiality' issues which relate to the ability of participants within the same research to recognise one another by subtle but distinctive 'nuances of meaning shared only by insiders' (Tolich, 2004, p.103). The element of risk arises from the fact that often these subtleties may go unnoticed by the researcher, who may therefore incorporate details which may unintentionally expose the identity of the participant.

Of the three family members, one of the mothers responded promptly and ended up meeting the criteria of the research. As the other two mothers took longer to respond I advised them that I had managed to recruit a sufficient number of participants and that, regrettably, I would not be looking to recruit any more mothers. It highlighted to me that I needed to be more cautious regarding the recruitment process and I subsequently specified to friends and family that I could not have members of the same family or people that knew each other participating in the research. Over the months I received further details of mothers who expressed an interest in participating until I ended up with eight mothers who shared the above criteria, were interested and were willing to take part (see Appendix 10 for more information about the participating mothers). As highlighted earlier, each mother received further information about the focus and aims of the research, what her involvement in the research would entail, including her right to withdraw from the research at any time without having to provide any reason for doing so.

3.13 Analysing the Data

3.13.1 Theoretical Considerations

Yardley (2000) emphasises the importance of having an awareness and sensitivity to the sociocultural context in which the research takes place and refers to influencing features of a more abstract and philosophical nature such as 'historical, linguistic and socioeconomic influences' (Yardley, 2000, p.220). These influences shape and impact the general ethos and character of the group members and the attitudes, beliefs, traditions, practices and values to which the group adheres. Achieving a better understanding of the more abstract concepts of social groupings such as the development of thoughts and ideas, emotions, attitudes, beliefs held and shared and other conceptual aspects, requires an understanding that the development of such concepts is a complex and strongly nonlinear processes (Brătianu and Vasilache, 2009). This complexity and nonlinearity adds to the justification of approaching data analysis in a manner which is reliant on the ability of the researcher to delve deep into the data, using empathy and understanding to absorb and connect with the data in a deeper and more sensitive manner rather than a more structured and controlled one (Yardley, 2000).

I spent a long time undecided as to how to proceed, wavering between an unstructured method of data analysis that risked ending chaotically, and a more structured method that might be too limiting, risking losing meaning derived from an added sensitivity to the personal and sociocultural value of the narrative shared. Ongoing reflection on the research questions enabled me to realise that my aim was to explore the personal, private and (hopefully) intimate reflections and understandings of the mothers participating in the research. I also recognised my excitement about the element of the unknown - what might emerge during the data analysis process – not wanting to feel restricted or confined to a specific framework or structure. I therefore realised that the data analysis process would be one which, on the one hand might follow a general direction guided by the research questions, but on the other would not have a destination in mind. With this realisation I recognised that sensitivity – albeit combined with flexibility and an element of uncertainty – prevailed over a clear-cut, more orderly procedure.

3.13.2 Thematic Analysis

Analysing the data in a manner which empathically and sensitively provides a 'voice to individuals who may not be heard otherwise' (Swell, 2012, p.63) requires a recognition that the potency and value of narrative interviews is to be considered against the malleability of the data shared. This highlights the need to achieve a balance which, on one hand enables the participants to 'be experts in their own narrative' (Billington, 2012, p.323), providing an opportunity in which the participants

can process and make sense of events and experiences shared, whilst on the other hand acknowledges the fact that the researcher plays a role and is 'part of the process and influential in its outcomes' (Billington, 2012, p.323).

This made me appreciate that the data analysis process was an evolving one and I needed to trust the unknown and be guided by the data, rather than try and direct the data to reach a pre-determined destination. I reflected on key issues which I felt had to be present in the data analysis process and they are summarised as follows:

- I wanted to ensure that my data analysis process was one which incorporated sensitivity and awareness to the sociocultural, historical and linguistic context of the participants and their respective narratives, as these provided a framework for the manner in which interpretations of experiences and events occurred;
- I wanted to ensure I would be able to detect the abstract and more obscure nuances and meanings present within the narratives;
- I wanted to 'do right' by the participants and their narrative shared whilst remaining faithful to the ethical framework of the research;
- Finally, I wanted to ensure that the data analysis process provided a platform on which both the participants' knowledge and my own interpretations and understandings could come together to identify themes which would be of relevance and importance to the research topic and the research questions.

Returning time again to the research questions enabled me to establish that the aim was to analyse the narrative in a thorough and systematic manner (Boyatzis, 1998) with the aspiration of increasing the likelihood that the concepts, ideas, and themes shared within the narratives are accurately and sensitively represented in the analysis process. Due to the exploratory nature of this research I decided to apply a thematic method of analysis as this would allow for ideas and themes to be identified from within.

I was drawn to the more flexible nature of a thematic approach in which analysis of data is led by the interest of the research rather than being 'wedded to any pre-existing theoretical framework' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.81). Furthermore the 'straightforwardness' (Riessman,2008, p.53) of the thematic approach and its suitability to a wider choice of narrative formats depicted it as a more manageable approach, an appealing concept to someone in my position who is new to the data analysis process (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis as a means of analysing the data is an approach described by Braun and Clarke (2006) as 'a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (p.79). It involves the identification of themes by connecting and associating data which may represent similar trends, which are of relevance and of significance to the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2016). This entails identifying and connecting not only text which is visibly the same, but also looking beyond the text to try to uncover the hidden and less obvious themes present. The above adheres to an understating that themes are often more abstract by nature and as such can be implied or indicated (Morse and Field, 1996, p.115) rather than being definite and distinct, making them less apparent and potentially harder to identify. A thematic analysis process can therefore also be described as an investigative process, an exploration seeking to identify 'common threads' (Morse and Field, 1996, p.114) within the narrative. As such the aim is to navigate and sift through the rich and 'thick descriptions' (Denscombe, 2010, p.304) within the narrative unveiling data of a more intangible, less concrete nature and discovering the 'tacit knowledge' (Moriarty, 2011, p.4) within.

It can be described as a member of the narrative analysis 'family of methods' (Riessman, 2008, p.11) which explores the content of the narrative and 'what' is being said, focusing on interpreting and understanding the message within the data (Bryman, 2012). This may differ from other methods of analysis where attention may be on 'why' or 'to whom' things are being said, observing for example aspects such as the motivation behind what was being shared with the narrator (Riessman, 2008).

The above adheres to the suggestion that benchmarks used to construct and interpret themes and ideas within the narrative would benefit from being guided by what Blumer (1954) terms as 'sensitized' rather than 'definitive concepts'. The differentiation between the concepts is determined by the level of precision and detail provided in the description of thoughts, ideas and beliefs used as guidelines during the process of analysing and interpreting data. Definitive concepts provide well-defined classifications and descriptive benchmarks regarding shared attributes and features within the sociocultural group which can be used for analysis and meaning, whereas sensitized concepts offer a more general, less structured and less descriptive set of guidelines for the researcher to follow – a 'loose frame' (Charmaz, 2014, p.31) - when embarking on the data analysis process positioning them as 'a place to start inquiry, not to end it' (Charmaz, 2014, p.31). I believe that having a less structured, 'looser frame' framework allowed for the unanticipated, natural themes to rise to the surface.

3.13.3 Themes… What Are They Made Of?

With the above in mind I returned to the research questions for inspiration which made me recognise that, whether I liked it or not, the nature of the research, the questions and the interviews

themselves meant that high-level themes were undeniably linked to the overall subject of the research topic. I therefore acknowledged that it would be impossible not to have some - all be it broader - themes in mind: 'impulses behind all research' (Stenhouse, 1981, p.109) which could potentially influence the way in which the data would be analysed. With this in mind, I had to ensure that in my search to unearth themes I would not be influenced by my positionality and views on attachment formations and be guided by the quest to identify themes which would allow me to answer the research questions rather than search for themes that were indicative of how attachment formations occur. In a search to mitigate this issue I was determined to maintain clarity and transparency regarding the steps taken and choices made in the search for themes. Indeed Sandelowski and Barroso (2002) refer to a lack of consistency and transparency within qualitative research regarding the manner in which themes and patterns are identified and established, leaving an uncertainty regarding generalisability and universality of findings within research. This uncertainty relates to a failing amongst researchers to openly convey the decisions made regarding how themes and patterns are chosen and identified.

As such I would like to establish that in terms of this research, initial 'items of interest' and 'initial themes' which later led to the establishment of the final themes, were identified with the following in mind. Initially, consideration was given to the frequency and commonality of items of interest and patterns, across the interviews. Boyatzis (1998) defines this initial stage of inquiry as one which involves early recognition of something of significance such as a pattern within the text, which is then followed by 'seeing it as something' (Boyatzis, 1998, p.1) which involves the categorisation and definition of the pattern; and finally reaching the stage of interpreting the pattern.

Braun and Clarke (2006) stress that although the frequency of a theme may be indicative of its relevance, it is important to understand that this is not necessarily always the case and a high recurrence of a theme is not necessarily a direct indication that it is of relevance or importance to the participant. As such additional consideration to the identification and establishment of themes within this research involved the recognition that something worthy was occurring, something which may not be obvious to others, something which was of significance and value to individual mothers even if from a quantifiable perspective the rating of 'this something' across the interviews was low (Sandelowski and Barroso, 2002).

Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that the quality of the data analysis process is key to determining the validity and power of the findings of the research. Ensuring rigour is maintained throughout the data analysis process could alleviate claims that subjectivity has prevailed over integrity, and that views and beliefs held by the researcher have manipulated findings and interpretations of the

phenomenon researched (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). As such, the data analysis process needed to be clear and well-defined so as to strengthen the validity and reliability of themes identified and the research findings (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.13.4 Practical Steps

For a while I hesitated about starting the data analysis process as I felt nervous about the responsibility I had in choosing a method which would do justice to both the narratives and to the meanings they conveyed. I recognised that the unstructured aspect of the data gathered in the narrative interviews (Bauer, 1996) appealed to my way of thinking and to the way I work; this manner is more divergent and less systematic by nature. I was also aware that tackling the data analysis process in what may outwardly appear as an unstructured and potentially vague approach may result in a lack of credibility and validity regarding the research findings.

I embraced Riessman's (1993) suggestion that 'there is no single method' (p.25) for analysing the data but I knew that I wanted to find the 'right' way of doing so, ensuring I would not focus on 'simply the content to which language refers' (Riessman, 1993, p.2) but on what the narratives represented and the meanings they conveyed. Yardley (2000) warns how the temptation to observe 'gratefully to any set of clear-cut procedures… which appears to offer a methodological precedent which may guarantee academic acceptability' (p.218) risks losing the original and personal tone which exists within the narrative. I recognised that perhaps I was trying too hard to find a specific structure and method to guide me through the data analysis process and I needed to appreciate that I was embarking on a journey, a nonlinear process, which would be guided and defined by the data and the findings as they emerged.

Braun and Clarke outline six phases which they define as 'qualitative analysis guidelines' (p.86) to be viewed as flexible phases to follow, rather than structured and rigid steps of data analysis. The flexible nature of their method permits a cyclical, ongoing re-visiting of the interviews and the data, which supports the development of a firm and thorough familiarisation of the data. This in turn strengthens the opportunity to generate themes and findings which are led by the data and are sensitive and embedded in the content and context of the original narratives. I decided to adopt elements of Braun and Clarke's suggested method of a thematic analysis as this appealed to me and to the nature of this research as the independent, nonlinear application of their approach presented a less rigid manner of analysis. Additionally, I had to consider and incorporate steps which would support the challenges likely to be present in a research conducted in Israel and in Hebrew but presented in English. For this I implemented considerations and recommendations by Van Nes et al

(2010) which I believed would alleviate some of the likely challenges; these are discussed within the following sections of this chapter.

Returning to the research questions and to the nature of qualitative research allowed me to reaffirm that the aim of the research was to elicit from the participating mothers their personal perceptions and views regarding features and attributes which, according to them, were key in developing a secure attachment between them and their children. Furthermore, the emphasis of this research was on the intimate, personal and individual, made possible by the small-scale nature of the study.

Crouch and McKenzie (2006) describe how, the ability to concentrate on a small sample of participants enables the researcher to explore individual and subjective narratives, focusing on personal stories, emphasising uniqueness and subjectivity over quantity and statistics. Riessman (1993) suggests that the small-scale study offers the ability to examine the personal and the individual which, although may struggle to offer large-scale comparison evidence, can provide knowledge which is powerful, persuasive and lasting, providing opportunities in which to 'learn about the general from the particular' (Riessman, 1993, p.70). Choosing a small sample of participants also enables the researcher to mentally hold and preserve detail and information of both the experience of the actual interviews and of the content of the narratives shared. The opportunity to achieve the intimacy and familiarity offered by a small-scale research reinforced my decision to carry out the transcription myself, as I believed that having an in-depth and 'first-hand knowledge' (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006, p.40) of the narrative interviews, combined with the personal experience of conducting the interviews and of the research topic, would help to reduce risks of misinterpreting or misconstruing the data within the narrative.

3.13.5 Transcription and First Reading

I also decided to transcribe the interviews verbatim as I believed that including the non-verbal features such as pauses and other 'conversation fillers' (MacLean et al, 2004, p.116) enhance the validity of the meaning behind the spoken word, which provides a better understanding of the data produced (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006). Furthermore Fasick (1977) describes how having the ability to refer to the original transcripts and recordings of the interviews enables researchers to provide 'illustrative material' (p.552) which could explain, clarify, and substantiate the findings presented.

Halcomb and Davidson (2006) explain how transcribing the interviews is a process which needs to be viewed as integral to the data analysis as it converts verbal data into a written format, a thought echoed by Bird (2005) who reflects how, for her, the transcription was 'a key phase of data analysis…and an integral part of my data interpretation' (Bird, 2005, p.247). Holloway and Jefferson

(2000) describe how absorption and thorough engagement with the transcripts results in a feeling of being 'inhabited by that person in the sense that our imagination was full of him or her' (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000, p.16). This is a feeling I can thoroughly identify with, as throughout the process of transcribing the interviews I often experienced the sensation of 'hearing the participants' voices in my head' (Reflective Journal, 04.01.2017). This was accompanied by a strong feeling of intimacy and closeness to the participants and to the time we shared. I must confess at times I felt almost guilty and 'wrong' for having these feelings as I was aware that they were one-sided, and that the participants were not aware of my emotions and of the fact that for a period of time they occupied a central place in my thoughts.

The strength and validity of the transcription process is referenced in Braun and Clarke's (2006) description of a thematic data analysis as they describe how transcribing the narratives offers a familiarisation with the data, creating an opportunity in which 'meanings are created' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.88). This led to the realisation that I had already unknowingly started the data analysis phase of the research; as Braun and Clark (2006) describe: 'the process starts when the analyst begins to notice, and look for, patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data' (p.15). As such I referred to this stage as the first step in my data analysis process and entitled it: Transcription and First Reading.

The ability to mentally hold and consider the information shared by the mothers was a process which started during the interviews and was augmented during the process of transcribing them. That process enabled me to start reflecting on some recurring ideas, common themes and shared behaviours amongst the narratives and I started to note on Post-it text which had the potential of being a theme or, as Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest 'marking ideas for coding' (p.18). I decided to call these notes of text 'items of interest' as these represented items of data which stood out rather than searching for definitive themes.

Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) stress that meaning and findings need to be contextualised within the subjective world of the participants, and suggest the inclusion of direct citation and quotation from the original 'raw data' to support claims of findings, ensuring that analysis of the data 'remains directly linked to the words of the participants' (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p.3). As such the direct Hebrew text was used to note the 'items of interest' identified, as 'plucking chunks of text out of the context within which they appeared' (Bryman, 2012, p.578) risks losing the social setting and context in which data is shared (see Appendix 11 for list of 'Items of Interest' from transcription process). I found myself reflecting on the items of interest, shifting between Hebrew and English observing similarities and differences amongst them and the possibility of emerging

themes. These thoughts and reflections would later be combined with the additional data that emerged from the proceeding coding processes. Once this process was complete each participant was sent a copy of the transcribed interview and was asked to make comments on any aspect of the interviews themselves and of the issues discussed. The only comment back was from Michal requesting that the pseudonyms chosen for her and her family were changed as she felt that the names chosen was too similar to their real names.

3.13.6 Second Reading

I printed the interviews and read through them, underlining text which came across as important, meaningful or appeared to either reflect an existing item of interest which emerged from the transcription process, or which might suggest a new one. I was keen to follow Braun and Clark's (2006) advice and select as many items of interest as possible so as not to leave any potential themes out. This process was still conducted in Hebrew. As before, I found myself reflecting on those items of interest, noting similarities and differences in the interviews and the narrative, reflecting on sentences and words which stood out and which came across as meaningful, important or more personal to the participant than others.

Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) support the idea of maintaining an open and honest account of the manner in which data is analysed and meaning is given and indeed I was keen to record the step-by-step analysis process of how themes were reached. As such I ensured I made a copy of every transcription of the original interviews so as to provide a trail, tracking and showing the steps involved in the analysis process.

3.13.7 Translating Items of Interest into English

Given that this thesis would ultimately be presented in English there clearly had to be a point at which the data was translated. Observing that I had already started to translate words and sentences into English, subconsciously, I realised that this was the appropriate point, prior to any coding taking place. I colour coded the interviews and went through them again and, using the 'comment' function in the word processing software, I translated the underlined items of interest from Hebrew into English; at this stage I also translated the 'items of interest' which emerged from the transcription process. I observed how certain items of interest repeated themselves in more than one interview e.g. the importance of having regular 'time out' from the busy week and a strong belief in expressing all emotions, so I noted these as potential initial themes.

It is important to note that initial translation into English included a variety of words and descriptions of meaning rather than direct translations or definitive words, with the aim of

conveying meaning from original data rather than direct translations which risked distorting the true meaning within the text (Van Nes et al, 2010).

Murray (1997) describes how 'changes in word meaning take place continually in all languages' (p.280) and I did observe how at times the participants used words I knew but in a different context and with a different implied meaning to the one I was familiar. One such example was when one participant used the word עוצמתי - 'otzmati' - which to my understanding is used to describe something or someone as powerful or strong in a physical sense, however the way in which the participants used this word was one I haven't come across before. The ability to use interviews as a 'conversation in which both participants – teller and listener / questioner – develop meaning together' (Riessman, 1993, p.55) meant I could use the time and space during the interviews to seek clarification and make sense of what was being said (see Appendix 12 - Extract from interview with Lihi). This enabled me to understand that in this context the mother's use of that word referred more to a characteristic of her child which related to the manner in which her child expresses emotions – all emotions. Her use of that word was intended to convey a sense of extremes and power but more specifically regarding her child's portrayal of emotions, being 'full on', hard to handle, leaving her at times unsure what to do.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, I went through sections of the translated items of interest from the original interviews with two bilingual and bicultural people – one of them was my mother who has lived both in Israel and abroad and the other was an Israeli friend who by profession is a translator – to ensure that the translations were true and faithful representations of the original narrative (Lopez et al, 2008). Each translated item of interest was coded into an initial theme where the theme can be defined as the 'names or symbols used to stand for a group of similar items, ideas, or phenomena' (LeCompte and Schensul, 2013, p.121). This process entailed reading and analysing the items of interest and the associated original data from the narratives, grouping items of interest together to form initial themes.

3.13.8 Review Initial Themes

I compared the lists of both the 'items of interest' and initial themes which emerged from the coding processes of the interviews and from the transcription process. I combined and tabulated the data which resulted in showing how initial themes were developed from items of interest (see Appendix 13 for examples of data from interviews and the identification of initial themes including original text in Hebrew). At the end of this process I had 56 initial themes (see Appendix 14).

I then embarked on the task of refining the 56 initial themes into higher-level themes. I felt that this task would benefit from having some structure as I was concerned that otherwise I risked losing the

connection between the meaning conveyed in the original data, and the high-level theme presented. I decided to consult my husband who, as a project manager, is very good at organising complex data into an orderly and structured form. He suggested using a spreadsheet to create a document in which I could review the 56 initial themes and refine them into fewer and broader themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006) which is what I did. I listed the initial themes in a column on the spreadsheet and sifted through them, searching to see if I could identify any patterns or strong themes amongst them; using another column I wrote down any possible higher-level themes which emerged. This initial review confirmed Braun and Clark's (2006), description that during this process some themes did 'collapse into each other' (p.20) while others were no longer considered as themes (see Appendix 15 for an example of how a final theme was developed from initial items of interest).

By the end of this process I was left with seven themes which I believed were my final themes (see Appendix 16 for a list of the final themes).

3.13.9 Review of Final Themes

Although the process of using spreadsheets enabled me to refine the initial themes in a more structured manner, I realised that I was struggling to connect with the data in the spreadsheets and questioned if this could be due to the fact that I normally opt for less linear and less structured methods of handling data. I recognised that I needed to find a process which would enable me to feel more connected with the data and ensure that the final seven themes which emerged were indeed representative of the original data. I wanted to find a process which allowed me to see the initial themes and the original text to which the themes were linked – including the items of interest highlighted - as I believed this not only provided clarity regarding the process and establishment of final themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006) but it also enabled viewing both context and content of text which provided perspective and insight, leading to a better understanding of both the practical steps of the process and the more cerebral, meaningful aspect of the analysis (Atkinson, 1998).

I returned to the tabulated data which included the 56 initial themes and the original items of interest to which these were linked (see Appendix 13) and decided to use mind maps as a means of exploring the relationship between original data and the final themes identified (Wheeldon and Faubert, 2009). I wanted to make sure that the final themes identified truly reflected and represented the data and meaning in the initial items of interest (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I felt that the nonlinear, flexible process of building a mind map in which data and concepts involved could be linked to key points, provided a visual, user friendly and manageable format (Meier, 2007) which provided a means of 'cycling between the "holistic" view and an in-depth look at each part' (Meier, 2007, p.3). In other words, I felt that the process of creating the mind maps and the ability to

visually present the data provided an approachable process of viewing the broader, abstract final themes and the more specific, distinct and personal items to which these were connected, navigating and shifting between 'abstract to the concrete' (Meier, 2007, p.2) (See Appendix 17 for an example of a mind map).

The hands-on process of physically drawing mind maps, scrolling through the data and selecting what information would go where enabled me to connect with and engage confidently with the data, feeling in control of the process and the findings achieved (Boyatzis, 1998). Braun and Clarke (2006) talk about developing a closeness and intimacy with the data, describing this level of engagement as one which provides a further opportunity in which themes and ideas can be developed and identified; I believe that this process allowed me to achieve this intimacy and closeness with the data which led to the validation in the identification of the seven final themes:

Final themes
1. Availability – being there for the child unconditionally
2. Foundations from which to grow
3. Meaningful time
4. Parenting - a journey of self-discovery and self-development
5. A safe and supporting place where emotions can 'just be'
6. Open and honest dialogue
7. Sensitivity to individual needs

The aim of the data analysis was to identify the concepts, modes of behaviour and practices perceived by the mothers participating in this research to support the development of a close emotional intimate bond between them and their children. The themes identified provided answers to the 'how' and 'what' questions regarding the thoughts, opinions and perceptions of the development of emotional attachment between the Israeli secular Jewish mothers of this research and their children. Indeed, when I identified the seven themes which, according to the research, were key factors in the developmental process of this emotional intimate bond, I believed I had achieved my goal.

However, this was not the case. By embarking on an analysis with an outcome in mind I failed to look beyond my 'field of vision' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.14) and see what was lying beyond the themes. Furthermore, in my search to identify a list of modes of behaviours and practices which could be decontextualized from Israeli culture and applied within other settings I failed to see the bigger and deeper picture, the sociocultural and historical context in which the themes were set, the

background which provided the depth and the theory behind my list of themes. Throughout this study I have written extensively on the importance of contextualising research and about the need to appreciate and explore sociocultural and historical influences, as contextualisation provides a better appreciation of the manner in which theory is constructed (Doherty et al, 2008). However my aim to understand if there were any practices or behaviours which could be shorn of their Israeli cultural context and applied in a different context, meant that I steered away from exploring and identifying aspects which were specific to Israeli society and culture.

I acknowledged that I needed to revisit the data and explore it anew, focusing on the sociocultural and historical context in which the study was located and in which the participants were raising their children, and this further analysis of the data enabled me to identify an additional, wider and deeper context to the themes. This context comprised shared cultural and social factors, both historical and contemporary, within which the identity of the Israeli mothers was being constructed and which provided a better understanding of the complexity of the emotional bond between mother and child.

3.14 Summary

In this chapter I provide a detailed analysis of the methodology and the methods applied in this research. I justify the decision to carry out the interviews and the initial phase of the data analysis in Hebrew - the participant's mother tongue. I defend the decision to transcribe and translate the information myself, legitimising my position as being both bilingual in Hebrew and in English and cognisant of both the Israeli and the British cultures. Following a brief summary regarding the choice of utilising a thematic approach to analysing the data the chapter describes how the 'dugri' style of talk, popular within Israeli culture has been applied in the search for the participating mothers.

The discussions which then proceeded, provide a detailed overview of the manner in which the data analysis process of the research was carried out including details for choosing a thematic method of analysis and the matters involved in the identification of the themes presented. I discuss the theoretical considerations which emphasised the role of the sociocultural context and the relationship between the researcher and the participants and the practical considerations in which much attention was given to the manner in which the thematic analysis process was carried out. This highlighted the appreciation of the complexity and richness of the narratives which supported the reason for applying a nonlinear approach to data analysis.

Following the identification of the modes of behaviours and practices which constituted the seven themes identified I reflected on my failings to consider the sociocultural and historical context - the

backdrop – within which the themes were positioned and which provided an understanding of the profundity and complexity of that which lay beyond the themes.

Thomson et al (2011) consider the richness of a narrative which combines an in-depth exploration of intergenerational relations and a cross-cultural perspective of women's biographies within a shared historical time. Indeed, returning to the narrative and exploring the richness within enabled me to focus and discover the wider and deeper perspective which lay beyond the themes. It enabled me to identify shared cultural, historical and environmental factors that impact the mothers' identity and their relationships with their children (these are the focus of the discussions in chapter 4), and the more specific themes which allow a glimpse of the more pragmatic family practices and behaviours which, according to the participating mothers, impact the development of the emotional intimacy between them and their children, highlighting aspects which facilitate and challenge, catalyse and hinder the implementation and realisation of practices relating to the themes; these are discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Motherhood: a Sociocultural Perspective

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the wider historical and sociocultural context which has been identified as influential in shaping the maternal identity of the Israeli women participating in this research. It will provide an understanding of the pressures, conflicts and complex choices faced by the mothers having to decipher what is expected of them as women and as mothers in a society in which gender equality and work/family issues are shifting and sociocultural expectations are changing. Discussions - interwoven with raw data from the interviews – will suggest how the aspect of survival, both in terms of a collective sense of victimhood relating to the Holocaust and present-day issues of survival relating to national security and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, plays a key part in shaping Israeli society and raises further conflicts and questions relating to issues such as identity and motherhood for the participating mothers in this research.

Burman (2008) reflects how consideration of the sociocultural, historical and political context offers perspective and understanding of the narrative often embedded within the values and traditions of the social group in which it has been constructed (Phillips, 1959). As such it is important to consider that this research is set within the context of a society which places high value on the family and a strong commitment to its family members. Data and discussions show how this is a society with a strong pro-natal, child-oriented culture which puts high expectation on couples to have children and start a family (Katz and Lavee, 2005). These factors are set alongside the added expectation on women and mothers to assume duties as a mother and a housewife, committed to the family and to fulfilling the traditional family related roles (Tzameret-Kertcher, 2014). These expectations are positioned within the gender equality ethos which exists in Israeli society and the reality of the strong commitment to the security of the state and of its people (Berkovitch, 1997).

The following sections unearth conflicts, struggles and pressures entwined within the personal and intimate accounts shared by the participating mothers, set within the backdrop of modern Israeli society. These provide insight of the complexities of mothering in Israeli society and the environmental, sociocultural and historical factors which are shaping and impacting the mother's role. Although existing research acknowledges the question of gender equality and sociocultural expectations on Israeli women (Lahav, 1974; Cohen and Liani, 2009; Tzameret-Kertcher, 2014), discussions which follow will include expectations concerning career and family life, issues regarding the Friday night and family obligations – these exists alongside conflicts and tensions concerning issues of survival and identity in relation to the legacy of the Holocaust and the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

4.2 Conflicts, Tensions and Pressures

Although under no circumstances do I wish to embark on a discussion about the politics and history of the Middle East, the narrative revealed issues concerning safety and survival in relation to both the Holocaust and to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The discussion that now follow reveal conflicts and pressures which exist for the participating mothers and for parents in Israel around matters of survival and unity, both historical in relation to a collective sense of victimhood and a sense of unity arising from the Holocaust, and contemporary in relation to national security and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict. Findings will reveal further tensions for women and for mothers regarding the importance of the family unit and the expectations placed on Jewish women and mothers living in Israel today (Davidson 1992; Bar-Tal, 1998; Torstrick, 2004).

4.3 Historical Survival – the Legacy of the Holocaust

Discussions unearth how the legacy of the Holocaust and issues arising from national security concerns, impact the manner in which the role of the mother is perceived and the manner in which the individual views his or her position in terms of their identification with the collective and with the overall sense of survival and victimhood which exists within Israeli society and culture.

Issues concerning intragroup solidarity and unity and the identification with the group's sense of survival and victimhood are observed in Lola's narrative when she talks about Jewish holidays, which are celebrated by all, even secular Jewish Israelis, and the feeling of family unity they bring. However she moves on to talk about a common theme connected to Jewish holidays and 'this Jewish perception adopted by Israelis – which personally I really struggle with – that we were victims and we therefore we need to survive through this and we must be together so we are together as a family, together as a society, and together, together, together and each individual is very separate but in theory we are all together'. Her narrative in which she positions herself as someone struggling with the collective sense of victimhood, and her repetition of the word 'together' in a manner which conveyed weariness and disassociation rather than excitement and pride, suggests an internal conflict between her identity as an Israeli who enjoys the cultural aspects of her Jewish identity, such as the holidays and the time spent together as a family, but is at odds with the shared sense of victimhood and the ongoing collective feeling of a need to survive. Lola's reference to a collective sense of victimization has been documented in literature regarding the Holocaust and the Arab-Israeli conflict (Bar-Tal, 1998; Bar-Tal et al, 2009) which considers 'victimization' as resulting from the continuing focus of the group on the shared traumatic experiences, and the ongoing intergenerational transmission of a shared sense of victimhood impacting the group's identity and actions to new situations (Bar-Tal et al, 2009). This often results in a strong sense of injustice felt

towards the opponents' violent behaviour, viewed against social beliefs of righteousness and justness.

Michal on the other hand describes how, although her family did not directly experience the traumas of the Holocaust, she feels 'very strongly' about 'this notion that we need to survive' and talks with great conviction about how 'as mums we need to provide our children with tools and strategies on how to survive, be it in the playground with the child that snatches something or situations which seem unreal – so as a mum you need to be down to earth, realistic'. Michal's usage of words such as 'we' and 'as mums we need to provide our children' in her narrative suggests a strong sense of identity with a common goal and a positive feeling of being part of wider sociocultural context. Furthermore this identification provides guidance regarding some of the 'tools and strategies' she and other mothers need to incorporate into their parenting process with their children.

The legacy of the Holocaust and its impact on the sense of unity in Israeli society is noted by Laufer and Solomon (2010) who describe how the shared experiences of the Holocaust which 'preoccupies a majority of the population' (Katz, 1973, p.8) have contributed and strengthened the overall sense of unity and survival shared within Israeli society (Laufer and Solomon, 2010). Elon (2010) talks about an unequivocal belief amongst Israelis that the fact that the Jews did not have a country of their own facilitated their extermination in the Holocaust. This, according to Jaspal and Yampolsky (2011) has led to a strong 'sense of ingroup security' (p.203) in Israeli society and a security and comfort in the knowledge amongst Jewish Israelis that Israel is the recognised independent home for the Jewish people (Lazar et al, 2008). Jaspal and Yampolsky (2011) further consider the strong connection between the Holocaust and the need to guard against threats to the existence of the Jewish people in Israel, which results not only in an aspiration to have 'greater intragroup solidarity' (Jaspal and Yampolsky 2011, p.204) but also results in a desire to construct and maintain a strong and distinctive group identity.

The impact on parenting resulting from concerns around issues of survival is further noted by Daphna as she describes how her mother 'grew up in a very difficult environment, you know a typical child of the war, where all the family apart from the immediate family perished in the war' and one in which her parents never had time for her as they were 'busy focusing on other things - on survival'. Daphna talks about the personal impact this drive for survival had as she describes how her mother grew up having a very distant relationship with her own parents and without the love, closeness and unconditional availability of a mother. Daphna shares her amazement that despite this, her mother was able to provide both Daphna and her sister with all those things and give them

the reassurance that she was always there for them. Daphna does however share that this unconditional emotional availability and support have not been easy for her mother, who has been seeing a psychologist to help her cope with what she refers to as the emotional overload her daughters are putting on to her. Indeed, the expectation on the mother being the one who supports her children's emotional needs has been recognised as an additional pressure which is discussed later on.

Literature regarding the degree of 'inter-generational transmission of traumatic experiences' (Van IJzendoorn et al, 2003) from the holocaust and its impact on familial relationships is still conflicting (Bar-on et al, 1998). Research carried out by Sagi et al (2003) concerning the impact of the Holocaust on anxiety levels and attachment formations amongst first and second generation Holocaust survivors, found that although survivors of the Holocaust displayed higher anxiety levels and higher traumatic stress levels in comparison with the participants who did not experience the Holocaust, these differences were not identified amongst the second generation comparative groups (Van IJzendoorn et al, 2003). Furthermore, additional research carried out by Sagi et al (2003; 2008) regarding the transmission of holocaust trauma, found there was no difference in the manner in which mothers of second and third generation Holocaust survivors perceived and developed attachment formations with their children, then their comparative subjects - daughters and granddaughters of those who did not experience the holocaust. Sagi et al (2003; 2008) explain that this could be due to the fact that the trauma experienced from the Holocaust was not a trauma resulting from the abuse of maltreatment from the parent, rather it came from 'an almost anonymous destructive force (the Nazis)' (Sagi et al, 2003, p.1090) which meant there was no sense of betrayal or 'the breaking of trust in the attachment figures' (Van IJendoorn et al, 2003, p.466) as is the case from trauma resulting from abuse and or maltreatment from a parent or primary caregiver.

I would at this point like to share a personal experience concerning a recent conversation I had with my mother. My father's family came from Poland and although my father, his sister and my grandfather survived the war, his mother died in Treblinka extermination camp. My mother on the other hand is 7th generation Israeli and her family did not personally experience the traumas of the Holocaust. As a result of my research I have had many conversations with my mother about Israeli history including the Holocaust and the impact it has had on Israeli society. My mother shared how, although she has never met my father's mother, she would often think about her being on the train to Treblinka and wonder about the thoughts and feelings she might have experienced at that time. She said she felt that as an Israeli, even though her family did not experience the Holocaust, there was a strong emotional identity with those who did. Her comments and the data above highlight the sophistication of emotional connections - including those that are not based on personal

relationships - and the depth and strength of the sociocultural and historical experiences which form part of our relationship with others.

Sperling (2010) talks about the memory of the Holocaust, the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and the 'Jewish quest for survival' (p.364) as factors influencing the pro-natalist and familial values in Israeli society today; these are discussed in the next section.

4.4 Present-day Survival – the Impact of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Issues concerning present day survival and the impact on the individual are noted in Tal's narrative as she talks about an ongoing need as a mother to find a balance of introducing her children 'to difficulties, but difficulties that match their level of understanding,' and the desire to 'shelter them from the horrors of the world' as she describes the world that they live in as 'a very tough world'.

Michal too talks about bringing up children in what she describes as 'not a peaceful reality'. She shares difficulties of wanting to pitch things at a child's level against a consideration of what her children hear when they are outside of the home environment, sharing how her daughter recently explained to her that 'even if you don't tell me what goes on in the world, I still know… I know there are attacks and stabbings, we talk about it at school'. Michal relates how the security situation in Israel is something very 'real and present' and is accompanied by the knowledge that when her children are 18 they will serve in the military service - 'a realisation that is always inside me'. Her narrative exposes the complexity and the ongoing conflict which exists in bringing up children to be both tough and strong yet sensitive and kind, as she shares how as a mother she wants to give her children:

> 'resilience because I know that they will need to face in life and in the army, difficult situations which will require courage and will require them to be soldiers, and I will encourage them as I know what will be expected of them…and if they will be in fighter units they will face very difficult and complex situations and I want them to have that strength, but on the other hand I don't want them to lose on the way the compassion and kindness so there is something in the upbringing here that combines both'.

Lola's account also highlights the pressures and worries of living in a reality in which survival plays a dominant part in daily life as she shares an Israeli saying 'that you need to have three children because there is a risk that one of them might die during their military service, which in my eyes is a horrific saying but a very real one'. In contrast to her previous account regarding the sense of victimhood amongst Israelis, specifying it was something she struggled with, this account portrays an acceptance and an affiliation to the group as she describes that 'these are all things which are very uniting – this is not a religious saying, it is a saying which is totally about survival and is completely a secular saying'. Her need to emphasise that the saying is specifically about 'survival' and that it 'is

completely secular' underlines her identity as a secular Jewish Israeli and indicates acceptance about the reality she lives in.

The dominant role played by survival and security in Israel today is noted in Mann-Shalvi's (2016) book as she shares how an Israeli father with five sons, whom she interviewed, said that "Every time they say, 'you have a baby boy,' I hear three knocks on the door…" (p.15) and proceeds to explain that the three knocks on the door represent the knocks on the door coming to inform a family about their son's death. At a later point Mann-Shalvi (2016) describes how a mother shared her feelings of furiousness and anger at her midwife who said 'mazal-tov! A new soldier is born' (p.22) when her son was born and explained how she felt the midwife was trying to communicate to the mother the difficulties that awaited her as a mother in bringing up a soldier.

Mann-Shalvi (2016) talks about the powerful presence of the Holocaust which exists at the heart of Israeli society 'nurtured by [a] collective memory' and describes the strong link 'at the personal and familial levels, between the Holocaust and IDF (Israeli Defence Forces)' (p.133). Mann-Shalvi (2016) acknowledges that the Holocaust forms part of the emotional constitution for Israeli parents as she discusses the dilemma for Israeli mothers of raising sons 'confidently towards healthy lives' with the knowledge that a mentally and physically healthy male could be enlisted onto a combat unit when drafted. She describes both an unconscious and conscious decision amongst mothers to inhibit the development of the more masculine traits in sons so as to minimise the probability of them being drafted into a combat unit; this may impact the natural developmental tendencies of their children.

Although this by no means negates Mann-Shalvi's accounts of how some mothers talked about nurturing certain characteristics in favour of others so as to influence the military service experience of their sons, the themes and findings identified in this research provide a message which highlights a desire amongst the mothers in the research to create an environment in which children are able to recognise their strengths, identify skills, and feel safe and confident to explore and fulfil their potential. Furthermore the above findings highlight the complexities which exist for the mothers bringing up children in a reality contextualised by the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and the impact of the legacy of the Holocaust, and the conflicts which exists for mothers - both on an interpersonal and intrapersonal level - surrounding issues of identity with the collective's sense of victimhood and survival and issues relating to motherhood. The complexities of motherhood remain the focus of the following section which explores additional conflicts and pressures which exist for the mothers as they negotiate sociocultural expectations relating to motherhood and career aspirations.

4.5 Career and Family Expectations

Throughout the interviews the participating mothers shared accounts of pressures which they believe stemmed from expectations placed on women and mothers in Israeli society. They exposed a powerful hierarchy of expectations placed on the Israeli Jewish secular mother in a society where the expectation on women is to have children and be the 'perfect' mum who looks after the family home and spends time interacting with her children, balanced against the expectation that women will develop their academic and professional careers. These expectations create what Lola describes as a dichotomy between the pressures of having a career and 'not being tied to the kitchen sink' and the pressures of getting married and having children, as she explains how a woman who does not have children is regarded by Israeli society as 'being unfulfilled'.

Lola provides an example of this perception of unfulfillment as she proceeds to talk with great admiration about a family member who, as an Iraqi Jewish woman 'who honestly looks like a woman from the market with the flipflops, and all the other stereotypes' broke out of the norms and constraints of her sociocultural orthodoxy in which professional jobs are viewed as a right reserved for men (Gale, 2009) and has succeeded in developing a high-powered career. Although Lola herself has 'worshiped the ground she walks on 'since the moment she joined that family she explains how, despite these incredible achievements, in the eyes of the relative herself 'and in the eyes of her family she is considered to be the failure of the family as she never married or had children.'

Chen too provides further examples of the sociocultural expectations on women to have a family as she shares that 'people feel really sorry for you if you are over a certain age and not married…they can't believe that you might have chosen not to get married' and refers to unmarried women as being 'forgotten' and 'left behind', which adds sadness and a sense of failure to the feelings of pressure. She describes how questions such as 'so, when will you start having children' or 'ok you have a daughter now you need to have a son' are typical questions often asked of married women.

The pressure on women in Israel to become mothers and the negative imagery assumed onto women without children is the subject of the book 'Regretting Motherhood' in which 23 Israeli Jewish women discuss feelings of regret regarding the transition into motherhood. In this book Donath (2017) shares some of the labels and images assumed by society onto women in pro-natal countries such as Israel who do not wish to have children, at times described as 'selfish, hedonistic, childish…dangerous and of questionable sanity' (Donath, 2017, p. 6). Donath talks about an unimaginable concept that a woman who is supposedly healthy and normal, free to choose her life path, would choose not to be a mother, whilst Shloim et al (2015) describe how Israeli women who

do not have children are viewed 'at best, "not yet pregnant" (adain lo beherayon), and at worst deviant' (p.59).

The narratives further expose the dilemma faced by women between pursuing personal dreams which may either defy or delay sociocultural expectations to become mothers or compromising those dreams to fulfil sociocultural expectations. Tal's account is illustrative of this as she talks about needing to weigh her own dreams of studying medicine against the social message she felt she would receive from people around her, questioning her decision and asking ''What? Now? By the time you get accepted, by the time you finish your studying, by the time… it's 8 years''. She proceeds to explain 'and I think I decided to give it a miss … I mean I'm not sure it was the wrong choice, but it was something that was influenced by the society and its values' emphasising the internal conflict faced by women and the pressures from the sociocultural environment in which they live.

Chen too describes conflict and pressure as she talks about her own profession, describing how most of her friends 'by now have private clinics' whereas she has chosen to put her career on hold as she wanted to spend more time with her daughters. She talks about the 'issues' these choices bring, 'issues with my husband, issues with other people' and proceeds to explain how 'all my friends have progressed and furthered their careers and I am still in the same job since when I finished my studies' suggesting that, although some issues may be driven by financial and kudos pressures, others may relate to personal issues. Although she describes how some people are supportive and say to her 'you are making a good choice, just wait' she proceeds to talk about pressure from her mother, describing how 'she believes I should be Minister for Education by now – she doesn't understand why I am still doing the same job and tells me "you can do so much more"'. Chen explains how, for her, it is about wanting to be able to pick up her daughters earlier from nursery so that she can spend time with them as she thoroughly believes in the value of that quality time together, whilst her mother keeps sending her cut-outs of high-powered jobs for her to apply for.

The intensity of the conflicts which exist for the mothers trying to negotiate between the maternal expectations placed on them and the expectation and aspiration to have a career, is further evident as Chen openly shares the ongoing battles and discussions she has – both with herself and with those around her – justifying the choices she makes with reference to her career and the wellbeing of her daughters. Chen proceeds to describe an 'inner voice inside me that says, "you must progress, you must progress"' however she explains that it is a very faint voice in comparison to her belief regarding the great benefit her daughters receive from her picking them up from nursery every day; although this reveals a conviction that what she is doing is right for her daughters and the

confidence she has in herself as a mother able to meet the needs of her children, it still exposes the pressures she feels and the conflict within her.

Michal refers to her previous high-powered job and to the decision to give it up, as both she and her husband felt that the responsibilities and expectations that came with the job were having a negative impact both on the family and on their life as a couple. She talks about the long hours and the pressures of the job and of her decision to give this all up and be a stay-at-home mother. Although she describes her husband as 'being very connected to the children and involved in their lives' she shares her belief that there is something about 'the mother's care and mother's intuition that just feels different to me… I didn't want to give up that sense of fulfilment, my place, I wanted to be there'. Her narrative, which shifts from discussions in which she admits to not feeling totally at peace with the decision to give up her career and to a sense of unfulfillment and uncertainty regarding what will happen when the children grow up, to talking about feeling very happy in her role as a housewife, describing herself as 'a devoted mother', highlight an ongoing internal conflict within her. She further shares how she's going through 'what I call a kind of a midlife crisis of being 40 as it is not a proper crisis but more a time for inner reflection and contemplation', reinforcing the feelings of unrest and uncertainty she is currently experiencing. However despite these feelings both her account and that of Chen's also highlight self-awareness and their ability to reflect and openly discuss their thoughts and feelings.

Chen refers to Israel as 'a country going through a transition period where on the one hand there is an expectation on women that you will have a career but equally when you do, people are critical and will judge you that you put your career before your children.' She talks about pressures to earn a decent salary, pressures to develop and expand one's horizons but also pressures to be a stay-at-home mother who prepares homemade food and brings up children.

Chen proceeds to describe the conflict she believes exists within a society which, in her eyes, is a 'progressive society' but one where the expectations are still placed on the mother to be the one looking after the children. She gives examples of daily expectations put on mothers and specifies that these are not expectations placed on fathers, describing how her mother-in-law – not her mother - will not talk to her if 'the girls are not dressed appropriately', or the constant nagging and criticism towards her sister-in-law that she does not properly feed her children, ignoring the fact that they are naturally of a slim build and still very young. Tal too talks about the pressure on women to embrace motherhood as she describes a lack of acceptance of those who have chosen not to be mothers. She too recognises a transition in society as she explains that the fact that feelings of frustration and difficulties regarding the role of motherhood are openly discussed is indicative of

'the development of new habits' and something which was not voiced so openly when her mother was bringing her up.

In addition to the above the research has identified further tensions amongst women regarding their perception of what is expected of them within their role as mothers and the meaning attributed to this role. Narratives provided different perceptions and different views in the manner in which the role of the mother was considered by the participants, exposing feelings of criticality and disapproval amongst women as they judge and evaluate competency of motherhood, amongst other things. Tal talks about a mother whose child attends the nursery where she works, describing her as being 'career minded and ambitious, who works very hard'. She confesses to feeling irritated towards her work colleagues as she explains that 'I feel that they look at her and judge her, automatically rating her motherhood by if she buys her child frozen schnitzels or if she prepares them fresh at home.'

Shiri's account highlights the intensity of the differences in meanings and values attributed to the role of the mother as she reflects on her friend's perceptions of motherhood compared to her own. Shiri positions her own desire of being a full-time mother, bringing up her children without having to go out to work, against her friend's interpretation of motherhood, questioning what her mother is doing with her life 'now that we have grown up and left home? What does she do? Sits around and reads magazines?… What is she going to talk about? What has she done?' The implied sense of emptiness and lack of fulfilment her friend assumes on to her mother's life may be representative of her own feelings as she shifts the focus of the narrative away from her mother and onto herself, and proceeds to explain how 'ok the kids will grow up and I want to feel that I have done something with my life', indicating the internal struggles she is experiencing relating to motherhood and the feeling of fulfilment.

These discussions reveal the level of scrutiny and pressure on mothers needing to balance realities of daily life and expectations against personal drives and ambitions to ensure they will be considered 'good women' and 'good mothers' (Donath, 2017, p.32). Tzameret-Kertcher (2014) refers to a 'one-sided revolution' which has, on the one hand, enabled women to enter the workforce but was unsuccessful in shifting the responsibilities of home and family life, and the inequality which exists regarding the manner in which traditional roles and responsibilities regarding the home and the family are shared. She describes how regardless of the professional seniority a woman holds within the work place, she is primarily seen as a mother 'or future mother' (p.10). Indeed Lahav (1974) argues that gender equality in Israeli society is a myth as in reality there is a sociocultural expectation that women will be the ones to assume the traditional family related roles, whilst Etzion

and Bailyn (1992) identify that for 'Israeli women, raising a family is a given ("the default") and they accommodate their investment in their careers according to family condition and life stage' (p.32).

The above tie in with prior discussions which signify both the role of the mother and the centrality of the family unit within Israeli society. Discussions relating to the family feature throughout the interviews, where much emphasis is given to the value and quality of time spent together as a family unit and with individual family members. These accounts form an integral part of the themes and are explored in more detail in the next chapter. However, I would at this point like to consider Chen's description of what this shared family time meant for her as it encompasses a perspective of both the wider, sociocultural value often attributed by Israelis to the family (Katz, 1973; Goldscheider, 2015) and Chen's personal perspective, which includes a yearning to experience what she believed was meant to be part of a close family unit.

4.6 The family – Chen's perspective

Chen refers to a family closeness as something which she felt was often absent as she was growing up, but something she was aware her friends had, highlighting conflicts between the reality of family life and the perceived sociocultural expectations of what a family unit in Israel could provide. Chen describes her family which, although loving, was lacking that feeling of משפחתיות – mishpachtiut – a word used to describe familiarity, intimacy, a close family atmosphere (Sivan and Levenston, 1975)[5]. Chen is able to describe what she felt was missing from her childhood and of what she wished existed: 'I wish there was more calmness, happiness, but a genuine one, yes there was happiness but not a real one...I wish we spent more times together'. She follows these words with a direct reference to the Friday night meals emphasising how 'I used to beg my parents for them to do a Friday night meal, I begged them, begged them but they never agreed to have them' symbolising her wish as a child to experience what her friends did when they talked about the family spending time together during the Friday night meal. She explains how as an adult she understands why her parents never celebrated Friday night meals as 'there was no one really to do them with'. She recalls how as a child 'from the time when I could say "dad can you take me" I would drag him to come with me to my aunt and uncle's house for the Friday night meal and for the holidays' as it was a place where she felt this sense of mishpachtiut existed. Her descriptions emphasise the strong sense of family which exists in Israeli society, an aspect which can be felt right from childhood, highlighting

[5] It is interesting to observe that the word 'mishpachtiut' shares its root with the word 'mishpacha – family' but can be applied within other contexts when one wishes to describe something or someone which radiates and symbolises that sense of familiarity, intimacy and closeness associated in Israeli society with the family.

pressures that exist to establish a strong and supporting close family unit and the strong sense of absence felt when this family unit is not always established.

Earlier discussions describe the 'familistic' characteristic of Israeli society (Goldscheider, 2015) and the loyalty and commitment Israelis make to the family unit and its members. In a paper introducing a study in which 4,000 Israelis shared their thoughts regarding leisure, culture and communication, Katz (1973) describes how regardless of the socioeconomic or educational background, both the immediate family unit and the extended family are regarded as 'the centre of the society's conception of itself' (Katz, 1973, p.12). Furthermore, the study also found how the need to 'spend time with my family' (p.11) was ranked second in terms of its importance on the list of 'social and psychological 'needs'' (Katz, 1973, p.5) – 'the pride in having a state' (p.11) came first on the list.

Crockenberg (1981) signifies the importance of the support received from both the family and the social environment on the mother's wellbeing and levels of maternal responsiveness, while Cochran and Brassard (1979) refer to an emotional and material support received from the social network and the impact this has on alleviating parental worries and frustrations. They do however warn that, at times, the constant and intense social and emotional support may lead to 'confusion and conflict' amongst parents, resulting in uncertainty and a reduction in confidence amongst parents of their parental capabilities.

Belsky and Isabella (1988) consider the link between the support received from the mother's social context and the formation of a secure attachment between mother and child. These considerations are echoed by Crittenden (1985) who highlights a correlation between levels of social support received by parents and their ability to display aspects such as 'warmth and responsiveness' (Crittenden, 1985, p.1299), towards their children. Indeed, warmth, responsiveness, and a sensitivity to the child's emotional wellbeing were qualities which featured highly amongst the participating mothers as they displayed not only an acceptance and understanding regarding their children's emotional needs but also in their ability to provide their children with the space and support in which the voicing and enablement of emotions could take place.

4.7 Dugri Speech and Emotional Openness

The importance of having an open and honest dialogue was shared by all the participating mothers, both with reference to their relationship with their children and also as an Israeli characteristic – often referred to as the 'dugri' speech discussed in previous chapters - which forms part of society and the personal relationships within it (Katriel, 2014). This manner of behaviour - associated with the image of the Sabra – the native Israeli – is a style of behaviour which incorporates honesty, sincerity and simplicity. It embodies the characteristics and values attributed to the early pioneers,

who adopted this manner of communication in an effort to create a 'different Jew' to the one living in the diaspora. The aim was to develop a confident and courageous Jew who believed in honesty and sincerity in both speech and behaviour; these characteristics and values, tinted by 'localized coloring' (Katriel, 2004, p.164), are contextualised within Israeli society and the values and traditions of its people. It represents a willingness to disregard and challenge another's point of view, overriding appreciation and approval achieved by politeness, which also symbolises a unanimous sense of loyalty to a 'shared cultural commitment to the meanings and values of the Sabra – [the native Israeli] - ethos' (Katriel, 2004, p.167). Iwamoto (2007) describes how the 'dugri' approach involves the open and honest exchange of ideas and the collision of opposing concepts which exist within the social group, resulting in a 'legitimate diversity of voices [to be] established in the community' (Iwamoto, 2007, p.12). This diversity leads to an acceptance and sharing of different views which, in the case of Israeli society, has been found to result in stronger relationships amongst its members (Iwamoto, 2007). In Israeli society, the dugri style of talk is not perceived as hostile or aggressive, rather it represents part of the 'in-group language that signals solidarity' (Katriel, 2004, p.167). As such the term 'dugri' embodies those who have the courage to speak their mind and do so in a confident and assertive manner.

Chen's account of her time in hospital after her daughter was born, in which she describes the ease and informality in which Israelis meet, the strong bond and camaraderie and the feeling of unity which develops, captures the essence of the dugri style of talk. Her account highlights the value of being able to openly discuss and air a whole range of topics and issues, including those which touch the very personal and intimate aspects of life. It is for this reason that I have chosen to present her account with minimum analysis and interpretation:

> 'So, I don't know what it's like in other countries but here, the minute you meet other mothers, let's say when you are on maternity leave or in hospital, you automatically strike a conversation, and it automatically turns to be a very deep conversation – what do I mean by that? So I was sitting in the premature babies unit, and I was very confused with everything that was happening – we all sat together in the feeding room and a group was formed – now one woman was an orthodox Jew, one was Arab, one was completely secular, another one a bit of a 'chav' you know, each one and her own set of issues, sitting together and having a really deep and honest conversation about how we are feeling, like "I could really do with having a break from my baby now", or "I really don't fancy breastfeeding now"…another might share how angry she is with her mother-in-law and a different kind of conversation develops, one which I don't think happens in other places, I think here it's automatic – you become friends and kisses and hugs and "yeah let's talk" and "we must meet up" and you don't but that doesn't matter'.

Chen believes that having this space and the strong sense of legitimacy and normality this process provides, which she sees as an aspect of Israeli society, supports the development of the emotional wellbeing and the bond between people, 'because it allows me and enables me to feel and share a whole range of feelings and hear how others feel and it normalises things, you know that its normal to feel depressed, irritated it's normal to argue with your husband and scream and shout at him because you are just after the birth…it's as if something uniting happens in this place'. Her description of the processes that takes place, referring to the ability to look back at events and consider the emotional and cognitive states that were going on both for her and for those around her, in essence is descriptive of reflective processing; indeed reflectiveness, self-awareness and change and their connection with the more specific themes are discussed in chapter 5.

4.8 Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the shared cultural and social factors, both historical and contemporary, within which the identity of the Israeli mothers of this research is constructed. It outlines pressures and difficult choices faced by the mothers relating to gender equality and work / family issues and reveals tensions around matters of security and identity arising from the legacy of the Holocaust and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict. It provides a personal perspective of family life followed by discussions relating to the open and honest dugri style of talk. The themes identified within the wider sociocultural and historical context, which offer a glimpse of aspects of family life and parental practices, are the focus of the chapter that now follows.

Chapter 5: The themes and beyond

5.1 Introduction

The analysis of the data identified seven themes which, according to the participating mothers, are key contributing factors – building blocks – in the development of a secure attachment between them and their children; they are:

- Importance of an open and honest dialogue
- Having a sensitivity to individual needs
- Availability - being there for the child unconditionally
- Creating a safe and supporting place for the expression of emotions
- Ensuring regular meaningful time together
- Providing foundations from which to grow
- Parenting: a journey of self-discovery and self-development

The themes are representative of the values, beliefs and/or traditions which in the eyes of the eight Israeli mothers participating in this research, are contributing factors in influencing the formation of the emotional connection between mother and child. Throughout the chapter discussions will highlight aspects which facilitate and challenge the implementation of the themes providing insight to the family practices and behaviours which, according to the participating mothers, impact the development of the emotional intimacy between them and their children.

Discussions that follow the detailed exploration of the themes will consider how the 'retrospective analysis of action' (Darling, 1998) alongside the open and honest nature of the dugri style of talk and the emotional openness that exists in Israeli society, provides a platform in which personal views and beliefs can be explored and better understood (Fook, 2015).

5.2 Importance of an open and honest dialogue

The importance of having an open and honest dialogue with both children and with others, was of importance to all the mothers, sharing an overall message of acceptance that the benefits of having a transparent and honest relationship helps to develop and strengthen connections.

Tal describes Israeli society as one which 'okays' the expression of feelings, as it enables people to voice their emotions and inner thoughts knowing that this is both an accepted and expected aspect of Israeli society. She describes how having the opportunity and ability to be able to openly express difficult emotions is an extremely valuable and beneficial practice. She reflects back to a time when her son was still a baby and a friend asked her 'so have you got to the point where you want to

throw him out of the window yet?' which not only showed Tal that her friend understood how much she was struggling but 'the fact that it was legitimate to openly say that there were times when 'I just wanted someone to take him [her baby] away so I could have a break, the fact that a friend connected with me and talked to me at that completely open and honest level, was so, so helpful'. Lihi shares an acceptance of the expression of all emotions and explains that 'of course, there are arguments and disputes, it's not that ideal – but actually I think it's also ideal when there are arguments' thus legitimising and validating the existence of conflict and oppositional thought amongst individuals.

In research exploring closeness between parents and children, Golish (2000) notes how the ongoing ability to talk openly to parents and the feeling of a 'strong degree of emotional bonding and an overt expression of closeness' (Golish, 2000, p.90), were contributing characteristics to the closeness in the relationship. These findings are echoed in a study regarding the emotional self-disclosure of adolescents, where the term 'emotional self-disclosure' is defined as 'any intentional or voluntary verbal utterance which conveys information about the emotional state of the individual' (Papini et al, 1990, p.960). The study observed how having the ability to openly share and discuss one's emotions with family members or with friends, supports and augments the overall wellbeing of the individual.

However, despite the cultural and personal acceptance of the dugri style of talk, narrative also revealed that being exposed to a dialogue which has no filters or boundaries can at times feel 'too much' or can result in others feeling uncomfortable or hurt. Michal explains that her mother's open and direct style of communication was often a result of a need to offload emotionally to others, rather than an openness derived from a sensitivity and a desire to connect with her daughter. She shares how the household in which she grew up was one in which everything was openly discussed and refers to her mother's need to openly talk about the ongoing marital issues between her and Michal's father as an example of this. Michal explains how this often meant that her mother would come to Michal and just 'dump all their rubbish onto me'. She refers to 'an extremely complicated home life' and explains that 'my brother and I lived in a real… feeling of an absolute sense of instability and uncertainty with two parents who don't get on, although they really love one another they don't get on with each other, and you just don't know where the next 'explosion' would come from'. For Michal the open and unpredictable display of the acrimonious relationship between her parents resulted in the 'lack of a sense of peace and tranquillity' as she was growing up:

> ‘I felt as a child, as I was growing up, and throughout my life, ‘let me live my life! Give me the space to live my life – I don’t want to look after you and be constantly busy with your problems – I want to be busy with my own problems – not only you are not there for me, at least release me from this burdensome and oppressive role you are trying to draw me into’.

She proceeds to describe how she would often say to her parents ‘I am not your counsellor – not your marital therapist or your psychologist’ and today ‘I can tell you I give my mother boundaries’. When her parents argue, for her mother ‘it means verbally throwing everything on to me and I say to her “this is your choice, do me a favour after all this time, it is time for you to make your own choice…I don’t want to hear about it anymore”. However Michal recognises the importance of being able to have an open honest dialogue in building relationships and believes that having a relationship with reciprocal ‘honesty and transparency and telling the truth even when it might hurt or be uncomfortable as, it helps, it is important, you know where you stand and what people think about you, it is those things that create that family unity’.

Tal too, highlights a need for consideration and sensitivity towards others when applying open and honest dialogue and refers to her mother’s needs to have ‘a place to offload and vent’ about difficulties in her place of work, often using family meal times to do so. Although Tal recognises her mother’s need to openly talk about things and share those difficulties she explains that ‘there is a limit to how much you can listen to and take all those difficulties onboard’. She believes in the need to choose a time and place in which certain information is discussed and a need to consider others when talking openly and honestly. She reflects how this has increased her self-awareness regarding her own work and her choice to use professional supervision rather than family time to discuss her own work-related experiences.

Daphna too ponders both the benefits and drawbacks of the dugri style of talk. She considers the aggressive language she observes from her environment and describes a sense of being ‘attacked, being pounced on…and reactions and ‘talk backs’ on social media’ which she finds are becoming more extreme in Israeli society. However, she weighs the bluntness which can comes across when just saying ‘no’ with the ease and simplicity this open style of talk provides. She explains how, when her partner returned to Israel after many years of living abroad, he initially struggled with the open and direct style, referring to it as ‘not nice, and abrupt’. However, she proceeds to explain how after a while of living in Israel he observed ‘that actually there was something very easy about the Israeli dugri style of talk and that somehow this ‘dugriut’ offers ease and comfort’.

The importance of incorporating sensitivity and understanding towards others is shared by Stern et al (2015) who argue that an open expression of emotion, which results in a sensitive response from

those around, is an essential aspect of the development of an empathic relationship between parent and child. The concept of sensitivity is explored in more detail in the following theme.

5.2 Having a sensitivity to individual needs

Data relating to this theme was representative of a desire and/or an ability on the part of the mothers to tune in and connect with the personal and emotional needs of each child. For Michal this meant appreciating and 'recognising their individuality', whilst Lihi talks about understanding her children and being able 'to connect and communicate with them according to their individual needs'. Chen believes that 'in essence every child needs something different' and explains that her daughter Ella doesn't need to be held and rocked, while her sisters do. For a long time Chen used to feel guilty about the fact that she did not hold Ella as much as she did her other daughters until 'I realised that I was actually stressing about the wrong thing.' She appreciates that the needs of her daughters are all different and that Ella 'doesn't need me to hold her and rock her, she needs to run around and be wild…whereas Anat and Daniella are on me – they need something completely different'. Chen's sensitivity is further illustrated as she explains that when she talks to her daughter Ella 'I talk to her at her level, I explain things like when we need to go and why, I give details about what will happen and why we need to do things – I don't just give orders – I feel it helps with the connection between us as it builds trust and feeling safe and secure'.

Often the narrative shared related to childhood events, communicating a range of feelings which reflected whether parents were either able or unable to respond sensitively and meet the emotional needs of their children. Tal talks about her mother's ability to provide sensitivity and much needed comfort and support at a difficult period in her life. It was when Tal was in primary school and had very few friends and 'I suffered a lot from bullying and things were a real nightmare'. She describes how her mother 'played a dominant part in my life' as 'she was my friend, she was the one who understood me, the one who talked to me…she was attentive, and she tried to really see me'. Although her mother 'might not have always succeeded but she tried – yes, she was there, important…she was able to attend to my emotional needs as I was growing up…I hope I'm like my mum, at least in some of the things'.

Shiri's account on the other hand seems representative of a lack of sensitivity on the part of her parents to her emotional needs at a specific period of time in her life, as she recalls the punitive and harsh discipline they used at a time when she needed comfort and empathy. She casts her mind back to her adolescent years and tells of the 'really, really, really unbelievable punishments they used, which when I say them out loud, even today, I still can't believe that that's what they did…you see how this period of time impacted me?' It was a time when her family moved to a new house and

she ended up at the age of 13 going to a new school and 'I didn't know a soul, not a soul – do you understand?' She explains that a common form of punishment used by her parents was to forbid her to go out for long periods of time: 'I mean as a teenager at a time when your friends are going out and you are forming new friendships…not to be allowed to leave home for two months – does that seem reasonable to you?' She proceeds to recall the incident that 'outdid them all', the one which involved the school trip to Poland and, despite the fact that Chen had already been to the meetings about it, as a punishment – 'for something which I can't even remember what it was about' - her parents stopped her from going; the strong impact of this is still felt today as she says 'and…with all the love and closeness I have towards my parents I will never forgive them that they didn't send me to Poland'. Shiri's account will be revisited later, highlighting her ability to reflect on the past and utilise these experiences to implement changes in her relationship with her own children, however for now it is important to recognise the long-term effect a lack of sensitivity and understanding of emotional needs can have and the strength of the feelings which can arise as a result.

Siegel (1999) explains how parental sensitivity and the ability to respond to the child's gestures and signals enhances the relationship between mother and child. This often entails the presence of a deeper connection between mother and child and involves the ability of the mother to sense what is going on for the child at an emotional level and respond in a manner that meets those needs. Indeed, the importance of having an emotional connection between mothers and their children, of having someone who is always available, and providing a safe place in which emotions can be explored and aired are aspects which have featured highly throughout the interviews; they are further explored in the discussions of the following theme.

5.3 Availability - being there for the child unconditionally

This theme is representative of the mothers' shared desire to provide their children with the confidence and knowledge that they are always there for them, willing to listen and to support them through anything, regardless of what it might be. Although accounts incorporated descriptions relating to physical proximity, these appeared to be more descriptive of a space or a time in which the mothers could focus on their children and provide them with both the opportunities to share and the understanding that things could be discussed. As such, within the context of this research it is suggested that the concept of availability related more to an emotional and mental availability and of communicating an understanding: that regardless of the nature of the issue the mothers were always there – available.

For Yaara the importance of providing the sense of unconditional availability was about instilling in her children the understanding 'that they can come and talk to me about everything and tell me

anything and that it will be ok'. Michal too talks about a desire to have a relationship with her children in which they feel 'able to talk about everything, I always want them to feel completely free to come and talk'. She stresses the importance of this as she explains:

> 'I mean when you know you have someone you can talk to and someone you can share and do your thinking with and we always say to the kids that no matter what you do even if it's the most awful thing in the world – you are first of all our children and we will always love you and will always try and help even if we are cross, and we may be very cross but we will always, always love you'.

She proceeds to explain that 'I think I am sowing the seeds of this now' introducing a sense of growth which is suggestive of the need for time and patience in order for this aspect of the relationship to flourish.

Shiri reflects on her own childhood as she remembers 'being terrified when I had to go and talk to my dad about something that did not quite fit in with his way of thinking' and shares that 'what I always wanted to have was a relationship with my children where they know that they can always come and talk to me even when it is something bad, or something that I might not like'. Lihi shares Shiri's wish of providing her children with the knowledge 'that they can come and talk to me about anything, anytime, even if God forbid something bad has happened, yes…that's what I really want to achieve, that openness'.

For Chen the aspect of availability invovled being totally dedicated to her daughter during the first year of her daughter's life. Chen confesses that although 'I don't know if it was the right thing to do or not, what I do know is that it helped me, being in that place, there is something a bit selfish about it, that place where I managed to neutralise myself from the outside world and be there completely for my daughter'. She explains how despite the pressure from those around her who would say "she [her daughter] will never be able to leave you"' Chen would say to her husband "I know it will be ok – I know that this is what will give her the ability to leave me"'. With an air of pride, she recounts how 'when I saw my daughter go to nursery for the first time, I realised what I succeeded in giving her, she has that inner confidence, she has that understanding - knowledge - that there is always someone there for her' – which is also indicative of Chen's distinguishing between 'availability' and 'dependency'.

Daphna also believes in the need 'to give your children that feeling that you are loved, that someone's always got your back and that you are accepted unconditionally', however she explains that the ability to be emotionally unconditionally available is not something that can be taken for granted. She proceeds to recount how her own mother, a 'typical child of the war' (second world war) who lost close family in the Holocaust, grew up without it as her own mum was focused on

other matters such as survival – a matter discussed in detail in the previous chapter. Daphna shares that although her mum was able to provide this strong sense of unconditionality for her daughters, it was not something she found easy and she still relies on the support of a psychologist so that she can off-load her daughters' problems on to them.

The experience of growing up without having that sense of unconditional availability was something Michal talked about as well. Michal distinguishes between the concept of being loved and the knowledge of having someone who is always available for you as she shares that 'I knew our parents really loved us but on the other hand we did not get what we really needed, I mean our basic needs were being met but our emotional needs, totally not'. She proceeds to describe how she and her brother 'we raised ourselves I mean yes, they [her parents] looked after our basic needs you know but emotionally absolutely not…my mother was not there for us she was very absorbed in herself'. Michal's narrative appears to emphasise the importance of knowing that there is someone to talk to and someone with whom to share – someone available, and someone who's got your back; her account is further explored in discussions relating to the next theme – 'Creating a safe and supporting place for the expression of emotions'.

5.4 Creating a safe and supporting place for the expression of emotions

The participating mothers talked openly and at length about providing a safe and supporting place in which emotions can be expressed, creating opportunities for their children in which feelings can be shared and communicated. Narrative was illustrative of the mothers' ability to enable their children to express their emotions, and provide them with the physical and emotional, safe space in which feelings can 'just be'. Yaara talks about creating 'intimate spaces' as she describes her special times with her daughter:

> 'I sit next to her on the bean bag, she's in bed and we just chat about lots of different things, the conversation just develops and spills into many different directions, I don't always have the energy, sometimes I'm really very tired in the evenings and I will say 'I have no energy to talk tonight' but generally I try because I know she really likes it, it is our intimate time together'.

Shiri talks about times when she reads to her son, 'I read to him, since he was a baby I would read stories to him and I would know them off by heart, and I discovered then that this would calm him'. She describes a specific incident 'when he was 5 years old we went on holiday and at one point in the car he started to cry and would not stop and I started to tell him one of his stories and he stopped crying and calmed down straight away' recognising how the creation of that intimate shared time between them at a time when he was upset succeeded in soothing and calming him.

Accounts relating to this theme revealed that the ability to safely express emotions was not only something the mothers felt was important for their children but was also something the mothers valued as important to have in their own adult life. The mothers talked about the importance of having a space where they could 'offload' with the knowledge that someone 'had my back', a feeling that they had the space and opportunity in which they could share everything.

Daphna talks of the strong emotional support she receives from her own mother which, throughout her life, has provided her with the feeling

> 'that I was 100% accepted, that I was very loved – that someone had my back. Even today I have a very strong feeling that someone's got my back, a feeling of real closeness, a feeling that I can really share everything'.

Her reference to the strong feelings of support she has today reinforces the point that having emotional support is as important for the mothers as it is for their children. Furthermore, it is illustrative of the close bond which still exists between her and her mother. However, the weight and stress of being the one providing this support is noted when Daphna shares how:

> 'sometimes my mum might say that I involve her and share too much with her, she sometimes says "enough stop, don't tell me"…she's been going to see a psychologist for many years now as she says that my sister and I keep on loading our problems on to her and then she's stuck with them so she needs to go to a psychologist so that she can off-load the problems on to them (she laughs)'.

Having that safe place in which emotions can be aired is recognised by Rosenblum et al (2008) who discuss how the ability of the mother to understand, accept and openly share her own emotional experiences and that of her children supports the development of the emotional bond between mother and child.

Chen offers a more detailed account as she reflects on when her daughter was two and a half years old, 'I would sometimes look at her and ask "do you need to let it out now? Do you need to cry?"' and explains that this was especially in the evenings when her daughter was very tired:

> 'now she couldn't explain to me that she was feeling tired and wanted to quickly finish her shower so that she could go to bed; now that she is older she can tell me those things, she can express herself and say 'mum, I woke up on the wrong side of bed' but when she was younger she didn't know, all she knew what that she needed to cry and I would completely support her and give her that space and time, where she felt it was absolutely ok cry'.

Chen's approach is suggestive of her ability to empathise with her daughter and be sensitive to her daughter's needs as it involves talking to her about the feelings she is experiencing and suggesting means through which those feelings can be expressed, highlighting the importance of creating an

emotionally enabling space where feelings can be communicated; a space in which feelings can 'just be'. Furthermore, her narrative also illustrates how the act of vocalizing and communicating what was happening on an emotional level helped her daughter gain a better understanding of how she was feeling and, as she grew older, how to communicate her emotional state to her mother. This account accords with Siegel (2011) who explains how the ability of the child to connect and better understand their emotional state helps calm the emotions down, and in turn supports the child to feel more in control of their emotions and their behaviour. Schore (2011) describes this as a right-brain to right-brain connection in which the nonverbal and often unconscious and implicit communication between mother and child occur. This communication provides the child with the ability to understand both their own internal mental state and that of others.

For Michal the ability to openly talk particularly about her emotions and share what was going on in her life was not something that was available to her as a child as she describes how her mother was 'totally unable to provide for me and my brother emotionally…and was too busy with her own issues'. She talks about times when she had no one to talk to and explains how from a very early age 'I wrote, I kept diaries and wrote stories and poems' describing how these acted as a 'form of catharsis and therapy which at the time I wasn't even aware of'. However, she proceeds to explain that 'even though I developed some kind of survival mechanism, the feeling of being alone was incredibly strong'.

Indeed, it appears that for Michal, ensuring the emotional wellbeing of her children is something she considers to be part of her role as a mother and she strives to provide her child with a safe space in which to express their emotions; she explains:

> 'in my eyes parenting is full of responsibility, I mean on the one hand you have the amazing reward of the love and satisfaction but there is an enormous responsibility here that you are bringing up a person that from an emotional and spiritual way is healthy and ready for life, knowing that he is important and worthy of a place in this world'.

Although data shows that the mothers were not only able to be emotionally attuned to the needs of their children but were also able to respond to those needs, it also positions the mother as the one responsible for ensuring that support is provided and that the emotional needs of her children are met. This suggests pressures and an added weight placed on mothers as the ones needing to adapt and provide children with emotional support and balance this with her own needs. Yaara's earlier account, in which she talks about her shared time with her daughter, illustrates this as she confesses that there are evenings when she feels too tired to talk but explains that even then she still makes an effort to provide her daughter with that intimate space and quality time as she recognises the importance it has for her daughter's emotional wellbeing. Shiri openly describes how she firmly sees

the mother as the one who provides the child with comfort and emotional wellbeing, and specifies that she thoroughly believes it is a 'mother's thing':

> 'when I think about the difficult times in my life, the best thing in the whole world was the gentleness, warmth and hug from mum - it is not something you get from dad, I don't quite know how to explain it, maybe it's in my head, it's not a Dad thing, rather a mother's thing, you go to your mum to cry, to get the hug and the warmth and the encouragement, do you see what I mean?' and I absolutely do.

Interestingly the accounts also highlight how although at times the mothers feel pressure on being the ones supporting the emotional needs of their children, and although these pressures can be perceived to be due to external gender related expectations, they can also be seen to result from internal pressures due to internal expectations resulting from the personal belief that, as Shiri says, sometimes only a 'mother's thing' will do.

The accounts presented throughout this research, highlight the vastness of the sociocultural experiences that contribute to the development of that special intimate bond between mother and child, and a recognition that to better understand the nature of this bond requires an approach which acknowledges its profundity and complexity; one which incorporates, but is not exclusive to, attachment theory.

5.5 Ensuring regular meaningful time together

The participating mothers frequently spoke about the importance of spending time together with their family; both with individual members and as a family unit. Their accounts highlighted a need and an aspiration to spend time together and share experiences which were meaningful and of importance to the mothers, their children and to the family unit; in other words, creating a space which provides opportunities to connect.

Lola talks about having valued time as a family and shares how she loves going away together because 'there is something about being in a bubble, together, away from it all, which provides that time and opportunity to connect as a family which is something that happens less in day-to-day life'. She talks about Friday evenings, describing how they get together as a family and how the children still want to spend this time at home, but she is very aware that the time will come when they might choose to go out with their friends 'and when it comes to the kids – even though I don't always succeed in achieving this – I don't want things to be a must, if you want to be here, great but if not that's absolutely fine too'. Lihi too refers to a special feeling of being together as she talks about how 'It's wonderful when we go away just us as a family… Once we went away only the 5 of us (before the younger son was born) it was amazing – it was amazing, real joy and fun, that sense of

unity and togetherness we managed to create was amazing…if I have to choose and say what I really love? It's that togetherness of the 6 of us, of our family'. Lihi believes that when children are younger, the special time together happens more naturally due to the physical closeness that exists with babies and young children. She recognises though that as the children get older this shared time does not always occur naturally, yet she acknowledges the importance of this time as she describes a recent event in which she spent 'time out' with her son when they went for a walk together. She describes how 'going for a walk allows you to create that closeness' and provides an opportunity to connect, as she explains how 'I felt that he [her son] understood me and I understood him'. She recounts how it was 'a wonderful opportunity to talk to him and spend some one-to-one time with him' sharing that she felt that 'it was the start of something' and her wish was 'to have many more moments like that one'.

Shiri's account casts back to special times with her mum as she describes how 'Since I can remember myself, my mum used to sing to me and I think I know all the good old Israeli songs thanks to her'. She connects these childhood experiences to her present-day relationship with her son describing how since he 'was a little baby he would lie in his bed and I would sit next to him and sing to him'. Her reflective account provides insight to the special and valuable times she shares with her son and to the emotional bond created during those shared meaningful times. Chen too talks about the quality of the time she shares with her daughter when 'I pick her up from nursery on my way back from work and we have lunch together, she might watch a bit of telly, we play together and spend the afternoon together having fun, sometimes we might have lunch out, depends on the mood…that's our quality time together'. Chen explains how 'I feel at peace with the fact that I pick her up from nursery every day, I know what it gives her'.

The importance and value of this shared time together is considered by Shaw and Bell (1993) who refer to the importance of social reciprocity, specifically the interactions between mother and child, and by Bowlby (1969) who highlights the significance of having a relationship in which time spent together is – amongst other things – enjoyable, fulfilling, pleasurable and happy (Bowlby, 1969, p.11).

Although associated narrative throughout the interviews was indicative of a desire to create a space – both physical and mental – in which to connect and to create, develop and strengthen relationships, to relate to others and deepen bonds the data is also suggestive that for these mothers, this 'time' does not occur as a matter of course within everyday life, rather is something that needs to be actively sought and protected. This time was not always easy to create, and the mothers felt it was important of protecting that difficult-to-create time from other daily pressures.

Lihi's narrative in which she reflects on the special shared experience and connection with her son on their walk is proceeded by her confessing that this special time together 'doesn't happen that often but it's magical when it does, but we don't make it happen often enough'. She proceeds to explain that due to the reality of daily life she struggles to achieve this one-to-one time with her children, even though she recognises how important this time really is. Her struggles to create that special time set against the daily reality are echoed by Yaara as she too shares her desire of being able to spend more one-to-one time with her daughters, to go and sit in a café and have a chat: 'I need to do this more often but sadly the day-to-day life beats me, I give in to it and to the daily activities and duties'. Lola talks about valued times together for herself and her husband as a couple and describes how Friday mornings were always a time for her and her husband as they didn't work but the children still went to school. Now that her older daughter is in secondary school she too is at home on a Friday which has impacted the time she and her husband have together. Lola confesses that 'if I'm being honest it is a crisis for me as until now it was our dedicated time as a couple and we go out for breakfast…if we go out and she's at home we invite her to come with us…leaving her at home and not inviting her doesn't sit right with me'.

In addition to the pressures of ensuring that meaningful time together does take place, further discussions regarding special times together, particularly in relation to Friday night and Shabbat, have highlighted further pressures and conflicts for the mothers. These pressures and the conflicts involved in ensuring that the valued 'time-out' together as a family was achieved and enjoyed, weighed against other pressures primarily regarding the need to comply with expectations from both the family and the sociocultural milieu.

For the mothers the Friday night meal represented much more than simply 'a meal on Friday night', it represented 'time out': time dedicated to the family, time out from the pressures of the week and time which was valued and loved by the mothers. Daphna refers to the Friday night meal as being 'different' a more 'festive meal'. She describes how they sometimes sing songs for Shabbat and may light candles, adding how the lighting of the candles is 'often done at the wrong time' which, for her, signifies the cultural, traditional nature of the Shabbat meal rather than the religious one.

Yaara depicts a special feeling of calmness, peace and of tranquillity, a physical awareness which exists in Israel on a Friday afternoon as the Shabbat enters, describing how special this time is for her. For her this time represents an 'escape from the busy week' and she is quick to stress that they are 'a completely, completely, completely secular house but I really love those hours on Friday afternoon just before the Shabbat enters' which both reaffirms her positionality as secular Jewish yet emphasises the importance of the much needed 'time out' the Shabbat provides. Her feelings

regarding how much 'I love the family meals' explaining that 'it is very important for me, that time when all the family gets together for Shabbat and we are all together' were feelings echoed throughout the interviews, highlighting the value of this time together.

Lola too talks about the importance of the shared family time on a Friday as she describes how 'we might pop to the Arab village nearby and have some hummus and just wander around…we generally spend time together'. Shiri talks about the importance of both the family and the shared time together reflecting that 'we always go either to his parents or my parents, it's ingrained in us, not sure if it's a characteristic but we are very family oriented, it's part of who we are'. For Lihi the shared time during the Friday night meal when the family gets together, including aunts, uncles and all the cousins, is a time which provides 'a real family feel'. She paints a vivid picture of what this 'real family feel' looks like as she talks about the 'noise, balagan (chaos) – and it's always a late night, sleep-overs with the cousins, it's very uniting', portraying a strong image of what she perceives as being special about this shared family time together.

However, in addition to the value and positive image associated with the family and this shared time, the mothers' narrative revealed some of the pressures and tensions resulting from a sense of duty and obligation which often derived from the immediate and extended family. For Chen, the need to comply with the expectations of being part of a close family creates a pressure which was noted as she talks about the expectations from her in-laws to go to their house for the Friday night meal, something she describes as 'an issue which I find irritating…we normally go there fortnightly and God help us, if not!'. She describes her mother-in-law as someone whom 'I love dearly, she is warm and amazing but Polish and if we don't come then it's a battle, she pulls faces'; it is important to explain that in this instance the term 'Polish' does not refer to a nationality but rather is used to portray an image of the stereotypical Jewish mother who can be overprotective, controlling and at times irritating. Chen explains how although she enjoys going over to her in-laws for dinner, it is not something she always wants to do. Before the girls were born she describes times when she wanted to be left alone, meet up with friends and do what she wanted rather than feel compelled to go there for the Friday night meal; now that her daughters are here she explains that it is not always the best thing for them as they go to bed early and 'dragging them over there to stay awake until 9 or 10 o'clock feels unfair'.

Shiri's discloses feelings of guilt towards her grandmother to whom she is very close, and who is feeling upset and hurt by Shiri not visiting her more often. Shiri shares her emotional difficulty in knowing that her grandmother is hurt and upset with her, yet she explains that due to overall

demands of daily life she is finding it hard to visit her more often, illustrating the nature of her struggles.

For Lola, pressures to guard her quality time with her husband and children relate to familial obligations towards her dad. She talks about the time following the death of her mother and how 'my father spent a great deal of time here with us, which did mean that the nature of our Saturdays was now very different to how it used to be; now although the kids really love him and all of that, he can't do long walks etc which meant having to spend many Saturdays just staying at home'. She proceeds to share that 'to my delight he now has a girlfriend, so he spends less of his time here with us' which means once again they have their Saturdays and that time together.

Lihi shares a family related conflict she has with her husband regarding a close family member of his and about visits on Friday night and Shabbat. She shares how, although she is very close to that person and describes how 'amazing, honestly amazing…so welcoming to everyone, no matter who you are', the overall state of their house has led both to internal conflicts and to conflicts between her and her husband as she is reluctant to take the children there for a visit. Her husband's belief that Lihi should turn a blind eye and ignore the state of the house because the relationship with the family is more important is an argument Lihi says she understands whole-heartedly, yet on the other hand she struggles with the thought of taking her children to the house knowing the state it is in.

In addition to the importance of spending meaningful time together and the tensions that exist for the mothers in guarding this quality time, accounts highlight a dichotomy for the mothers caught between feelings of enjoyment and unity derived from time spent together with members of the immediate and wider family, against feelings of pressure and guilt from expectations on them to do so. The mothers' ability to openly reflect on the feelings that arise from these expectations and pressures are once again followed by changes and solutions implemented so as to ensure that the quality of family/life balance is maintained.

5.6 Providing foundations from which to grow

This theme portrays a strong aspiration the mothers have to provide a supportive and encouraging 'platform' for their children from which they can blossom and develop, exploring their individual strengths and fulfilling their potential. The platform for growth represented in this theme was often accompanied by a conscious decision to steer away from childhood experiences which communicated disappointment and instil children with the feeling that someone – in this case their parents - believed in them and were behind them, rooting for them and for their success.

This was set against what was perceived to be a conscious effort on behalf of the mothers to move away from childhood experiences and an upbringing which could at times be discouraging, stifling or - as expressed by Lihi - an upbringing which 'inspired us to achieve averageness and mediocracy'. The mothers expressed a genuine and selfless conviction to empower and support their children to develop, to flourish and blossom and to feel fulfilled, or to put it in Lihi's words, 'it's about finding that something special in you and give this a bit of a nudge… if I can support this and encourage this rather than try and bring him down - 'normalise' it - that would be amazing – why not?'

Michal emphasises the importance of 'highlighting individual traits' whilst Lihi describes how it's about 'seeing them as individuals and to see and understand every child and their needs and to have the sensitivity to act on it and give them each what they need'. Lola explains how for her it's about the need 'to learn to see them as individuals not an extension of me – really see them, really listen to them' allowing them to explore and progress according to their individual abilities. Shiri too stresses the need to understand 'the needs of your child – give them what their character and personality need, it's about individuality, recognising that children need you in different ways to their siblings and to what you might need - they need you differently'.

Indeed Shechory-Bitton et al (2015) talk about Israeli Jewish parents as ones who adopt a democratic parenting style, wishing to 'encourage their children's 'individuality and independence' (Shechory-Bitton et al, 2015, p.510) allowing them the freedom to decide what 'interests and wishes' to follow (Remennick, 2009, p.279). Furthermore, recent years have seen greater emphasis placed on individuality, autonomy and freedom of choice for children and an increased protection towards children's' rights including 'prohibiting the use of any form of violence perpetrated against' children (Shechory-Bitton et al, 2015, p.521).

As the mothers talked of their desire to empower their children and instil in them a sense of inner belief, a drive to succeed and the freedom to make their own choices, they shared stories about the power of messages communicated - either directly or indirectly - and of the impact these messages have had on them and on their children. Shiri's story centres around her dad's attempts to try and push her to do well at school. She describes how:

> 'my dad tried using tactics of saying to me "forget it, don't bother studying, what do you need it for anyway? You probably won't manage to do well so it will be a waste of time no? just go to the army and be any clerk"'.

She understands his motives in adopting this approach as 'he hoped that I would say to myself 'I'll show you what I can do' and that this might give me a push to prove him wrong and take my studying seriously'. However, in Shiri's case this 'tactic' backfired as Shiri explains how 'instead I

ended up believing him and feeling 'wow, that's what my dad really thinks of me?' Shiri was unaware of the impact her dad's words, communicating a lack of belief in her ability to succeed, had on her confidence:

> 'until I remember how one day, well it was more a point in my life when I decided to take myself and my studying more seriously, but I was so scared that I would try but fail, that I would crush and burn, do you see what I'm saying?'

Reflecting on her childhood she states that 'in essence, what I remember from my childhood is that my parents forgot to allow the time and place to recognise the good things children do, that's really what I remember'. Now that she has her own children she wants to provide them with a different experience to her own, and as a parent she tries to 'praise when praise is warranted, to say what was good and to focus on what it was that they did, not just on the outcome'.

Whilst Shiri talks about the more direct approach adopted by her father, Lola's narrative cautions about the danger of communicating conflicting messages as she warns of the power of the unspoken, hidden messages. Lola illustrates her point as she explains how, despite the efforts she and her husband have made not to be 'pushy' parents, their daughter will push herself to excel academically. Sometimes she will come to her mum and say:

> 'mum I got 84% or 85% in my test, but I can re-sit the test tomorrow and try and get a higher grade, what do you think? and I will say to her, "just leave it, why don't you go to the beach instead?" I mean she is so determined to prove that she can do it'.

Despite their intention not to put pressure on their daughter, Lola and her husband were unaware that they were unintentionally communicating an additional, conflicting message by bringing her up in 'a household full of books, where both parents have studied and achieved'. Lola explains 'so yes, even without having to say a word, the pressure is there…it's a bit nasty'. It was not until Lola had a conversation with her supervisor in which Lola questioned 'how can it be that someone like me who spent so many senior school days on the beach, ends up with a daughter who keeps on going to all these top classes of children who do exceptionally well?' that her supervisor explained how, although Lola sees herself as a parent who does not apply pressure, an additional message 'hidden in the walls' unintentionally emphasised the importance of learning and on academic achievements.

It is difficult to ascertain if the causes behind Lola's daughters' drive to do well academically stems from unintentional hidden messages or from the more relaxed parental attitude adopted by Lola and her husband, or indeed from a different reason all together. Furthermore, without speaking directly to Lola's daughter it is difficult to establish if she felt there was a pressure on her to do well and if indeed this pressure provided a 'foundation from which to grow', which is the essence of this

theme. However, Lola's narrative is illustrative of a need for an awareness that best intentions can get highjacked by subliminal and potentially conflicting messages. Furthermore, it demonstrates Lola's courage and ability to openly question and share her concerns, reflecting and evaluating aspects of her relationship with her daughter and of her own parenting style; these are aspects which are discussed in more detail in the following theme.

5.7 Parenting: a journey of self-discovery and self-development

This theme related to an appreciation on the part of the mothers that parenting is a journey of self-discovery as it provides a platform and much opportunity for reflection, self-awareness and change. The message emerging from this theme stemmed from a desire on the part of the mothers to offer their children either a different or similar parenting experience to their own, depending on the impact those parenting experiences had on their own upbringing. The narrative shared highlighted how reflectiveness and self-awareness provided the mothers with a better understanding of themselves, of others, and of relationships, both past and present, using the in-depth perspective this provided as an opportunity to implement and embrace change.

For Michal the importance of self-development and change form part of a life philosophy, a strong belief which she has had from a young age, a belief she shares with her children:

> 'that in its essence life is about change, and we are constantly changing and evolving and the beauty is that you know that tomorrow is a different, a new day, and you can decide that this day will be different and even if what happened today was the hardest and most awful thing and you were awful as well you can decide for yourself that from tomorrow things will be different and even if you see only small improvements you have already succeeded in achieving change.'

Michal proceeds to talk about a more specific desire for change which relates both to her childhood and to her current relationship with her son but confesses that implementing this change is not easy. She shares how, as a child, when she would do something her mum did not like the most common form of discipline her mum would use 'was to send me out from the house and I would wander around different places, woods, etc from a very young age - it sounds awful - and that feeling that your home is not really yours was an awful feeling'. Although she recognises the 'awfulness' she experienced as a child she confesses that 'sometimes I have to remove my son out into the garden; I need that space, the distance to gather my thoughts and decide how to respond'. She explains how she tries not to do this 'but this reaction comes from way back - and I don't particularly like that I do this, and I am trying to change' highlighting the difficulties involved in altering existing behaviour and doing things differently. Additionally, her account, which also combines elements of guilt and a humbling realisation that mistakes are made, portrays honesty and an ability to reflect on her

actions, trying as a mother to provide her son with a different experience to that of her own childhood.

Lola too recognises that parenting is an ongoing journey of self-development as she recalls a recent incident in which her son fell over. She describes how the reactions which followed led to her realising that as a parent she does not always succeed in providing her children with an opportunity to openly share and display their emotions. She explains how when her son fell, her initial reaction, which came from an instinctive desire to calm him down, was to pick him up, dust away the earth and say, 'nothing happened, right?'. However, when her son turned and looked at her with a deeply hurt expression and said 'mum, nothing did happen – it hurts' Lola was left feeling 'speechless, choked, and I have never used that expression again, it was an invaluable life lesson for me, 'nothing' did happen – don't try and erase my feelings'. Lola's account and her ability to identify the emotional hurt behind her son's words demonstrates her ability to understand his mental state, and her understanding regarding the importance of the ability to reflect on experiences, recognising when mistakes have been made and changes are needed. Her ability to openly share how she does not always get things right demonstrates not only her strong sense of self-awareness, but it also highlights her confidence to use experiences as reflective opportunities and embrace the notion that, as a mother, she is still learning and developing.

Daphna too shares her recognition that as a parent, she is learning and developing describing how for her, 'the experience of being a mum which came to me at a relatively later stage in my life' has provided opportunities of self-development which 'has enabled me to get to know myself and connect with myself better'. For Tal the journey of self-development self-discovery is a continuous one as she explains how 'I have ongoing discussions with myself in which I look at situations and I ask myself if I have done the right thing' accepting the fact that as a mother 'I'm constantly learning'. Lihi too talks about an ongoing process of change sharing that 'I try and mend the small things I'm not happy about' and explains that 'I accept that I make mistakes – but who doesn't?'_Lihi's account in which she observes that 'I think I am more protective than my parents were but not in a better or worse way, I don't feel that the fact that I am more protective is better or worse, it's just how I am' is also indicative of the fact that relationships are dynamic and evolving and that change can often occur naturally.

The honest dialogue in which the mothers openly reflect on personal and intimate experiences highlights a strong sense of self-awareness, often resulting in the consideration of positionality and of practices adopted. Accounts further highlight an acceptance of the need to incorporate change where change is needed so as to ensure that the needs of the child are being met and to have the

confidence to do so; aspects of 'reflectiveness, self-awareness and change' are explored in more detail in the sections that now follow.

5.8 Reflectiveness, Self-awareness, and Change

For the purpose of this research the term 'reflective' is understood to encompass the ability to look back at experiences and events and to explore mental states (Bruno et al, 2011) including views, wants, opinions, feelings and motives of one's own actions and those of others (Rosenblum et al, 2008), an ability to recognise and accept complex feelings associated with the role of the parent (Rosenblum et al, p.368) and an ability to accept and support change when change is needed. Cunliffe (2004) considers reflectivity to be 'both retrospective – making sense of something that happened in the past and examining reasons why we made a decision or acted in a particular way – and anticipatory – planning our future actions' (p.413) whilst Siegel (2007) talks about the opportunity for change brought on by the awareness that results from reflectiveness.

Bruno et al (2011) suggest that the ability of 'attributing mental states to oneself and to others' (p.529) is a feature also found in reflexive processing and suggest the use of qualitative methods, such as reflective journals, in which the focus lies on the utilisation of mental language – language referring to cognitive, emotive and volitive mental states[6] - to evaluate the level and the nature of the reflexive process. This forced me to consider whether in addition to reflectivity, the narrative was also indicative of reflexivity.

I returned to the literature to ponder this point. Darling (1998) considers reflexivity as a 'pro-active' practice which involves the consideration of the self in relation to others and to the context of the situation as interactions take place. Cunliffe (2004) describes reflexive interaction as the 'reacting in-the-moment dialogue and action' (p.412) which occurs in comparison to the retrospective and anticipatory aspects of reflectivity described above.

The narrative research method utilised in this research lends itself towards a retrospective analysis of events, which limits the possibility of exploring the more 'in the moment' dialogue with both self and with others which is more representative of reflexive processing. Although there were occasions in which accounts shared by the mothers described a more 'reacting in-the-moment' dialogue, due to the retrospective nature of this research ascertaining if these were indeed indicative of reflexive practice which occurred at the time or were retrospective is hard to establish.

[6] Bruno et al (2011) refer to mental states as: 'cognitive (thoughts, beliefs, reasoning); emotive (fear, sadness, happiness); and volitive (wishes) (p.530).

As such throughout this chapter the term 'reflectivity' will be applied, however this does not deny the supposition that reflexivity was an additional process utilised and adopted by the participants.

Throughout the research, the data highlighted the mothers' ability to openly share feelings, thoughts and opinions relating to childhood messages and experiences, demonstrating their ability to engage in reflectiveness which in turn supported the development of self-awareness and provided a platform for change.

Lola's account in which she shares her thoughts on the expression of emotions is illustrative of this. Lola recalls how, as a child growing up - in contrast to the general cultural openness enabled by the dugri style of talk that exists in Israeli society - emotions were not openly discussed or displayed with members of her family but is something that as a mother she values and wants to have with her own children. She shares how it has taken her many years to learn how to cry, how to openly talk about things, to argue and to feel, and that now as a parent 'the belief and philosophy in our house is that you can always say things, you are allowed to feel, and talking about your feelings is encouraged if you can do so'. Her account echoes Michal's narrative in which she too talks about her mother's inability to offer emotional support and about the strong belief she has as a parent in wanting to provide her own children with a relationship which provides emotional support.

Tal talks about recent changes she and her husband implemented following their reflections after a difficult period involving times when Tal would go out and her husband would take over. Those times would always end up in a massive argument between Tal, her husband and their eldest son, resulting with their son crying and Tal leaving the house upset. She describes how the ability to reflect on those events from a cognitive, emotive and volitive perspective enabled Tal and her husband to understand that part of the issues related to the strict manner in which her husband handled transition times - such as coming out of the bath or getting ready for bed - which triggered a strong reaction from their son and upset Tal. The process of reflectivity which involved trying to understand their son's cognitive, emotive and volitive perspective, enabled Tal and her husband to agree that in addition to altering the times in which Tal's husband took over he would also make a point of being 'softer' and more sensitive in his approach, 'a bit smoother, more like me, rather than just coming at him and saying, "right, now you have to do this"' which has led to things becoming calmer.

Chen too demonstrates an ability to reflect on past experiences and consider the impact these had on her mental state, displaying self-awareness and a determination to change as she reveals how she experienced violence as a child from both her brother and her dad. She shares her belief that 'any person that has experienced violence has that violence in them' admitting that 'I recognised it

in me and that it could burst out with one of the kids'. However she proceeds to explain how, as a mother with her own children, when she feels she might be getting angry 'I walk out of the room as there is no way on earth that this would happen in my house…I have learnt to stop and I walk away' demonstrating an ability to embrace change and provide different experiences for her children.

Shiri talks about her childhood and her parents' inability to look beyond her behaviour and of an inability on their part to understand her emotional needs. She reflected particularly on one incident in her adolescent years in which she felt her parents' actions towards her were out of all proportion, communicating a complete inability to respond sensitively to her emotional and social needs at that time. Her words as she explains how 'I can never forgive them for some of the punishments they gave me – punishments that were completely out of all proportion and so unfair, which left me feeling very left out of my social group' expose deep feelings of hurt tinted with a sense of betrayal and disappointment at the inability of her parents to acknowledge her needs and what was going on for her emotionally at that time. Her words are particularly poignant as they follow Shiri's earlier narrative in which she describes how 'when I think about the difficult times in my life, the best thing in the whole world was the gentleness, warmth and hug from mum'; this is expressed in the section regarding 'emotional openness' alongside the significance she attributes to the mother being the one who provides her children with emotional support. Her explanation of how 'with all the love and closeness I have towards my parents I will never forgive them' is not only incredibly moving and powerful but also portrays feelings of loneliness and of being 'let down' - particularly by her mother on whom she relied for the emotional comfort she refers to earlier. Furthermore her experiences contradict the open and honest dialogue and emotional openness discussed earlier which although was an aspect of the society in which she lived, was not something she felt she was able to share with her parents. Shiri maintains how 'I don't want to be like that with my children' and proceeds to explain that she is determined to provide her children with the knowledge that they can come and share anything with her, feeling they are safe, supported, protected and not judged. She shares how between her and her husband she is the one that provides the stronger discipline and the boundaries for her children but proceeds to describe the closeness she has with her son. She talks about the knowledge she has that her son loves her very much and feels close to and safe with her, as she describes how it is she that he comes to when he needs comfort, it is she who reads him his bedtime stories and sings the songs he likes, and it is she that can sooth him and calm him when he is feeling upset, tired or is in need of a hug. She does however voice insecurities that she might not be able to provide her children with the feeling that they can come and talk to her about everything and that perhaps sometimes she can be too judgmental. Her accounts however reveal the empathy and sensitivity she has as a parent towards her children, able to sense and to respond to their wants

and to their emotional needs, and of her realisation that parenting is a journey of self-discovery and self-development.

Accounts shared throughout the research revealed what came across as a genuine acceptance that parenting was a journey which offered opportunities for reflectiveness and change, as it provided the mothers with a better understanding of past relationships and the impact these may have had not only on their own childhood experiences but also on present day relationships. The opportunity for change presented by the ability to interpret one's past experiences is recognised by Siegel and Bryson (2011) who describe how an 'early experience is not fate' (p.144) as the ability to better understand the past allows for a different present and future to develop. Siegel (2003) explains how the act of reflectiveness supports the development of self-understanding as it enables past experiences to be processed and considered. Earlier in this chapter reflectiveness was described as a process which entailed the ability to explore past experiences and events, evaluating and considering the views, wants, opinions, feelings and motives of one's own actions and those of others. The enhanced state of self-awareness resulting from the process of reflectiveness provides the ability to self-examine, to consider, to make conscious an awareness of present day emotions, behaviours and belief systems and their connections with past experiences, enabling reactions to become more rational rather than habitual and purely emotional. As such reflectiveness 'opens the door to conscious awareness, which brings with it the possibility of change' (Siegel and Hatzell, 2003, p.52). In other words, it is through our ability to understand and truly accept who we are that we can negotiate and generate change or, to quote Rogers (1995): 'that we cannot change, we cannot move away from what we are, until we thoroughly accept what we are' (p.10).

Fonagy et al (2004) refer to the strong correlation between the nature of the attachment formation between mother and child and the quality and nature of the reflective function which exists within the dyad. This view is further echoed by Rosenblum et al (2008) and by Meins et al (2001) who also reference the ability of the mother to decipher and appreciate the mental state of the child, looking at the emotion behind the action as an influencing factor in the development of a secure attachment between mother and child. Fonagy et al (2004) describe how the development of the self, which occurs in context and is representational of the combined experiences of the self with others, is reliant on the mother's ability to provide an empathic response which is representative, suggestive and reflective of the child's mental and emotional state rather than that of her own. This understanding of the concept of reflectiveness emphasises the importance of the mother's ability to look beyond the child's behaviour and to try to understand what is going on for her child from a cognitive and emotive perspective. Furthermore it represents the mother's acceptance of the

presence of the deeper, unseen, mental state lying beyond the behaviour and the confidence she has of her abilities to tap into and respond sensitively to those mental states.

Additionally, the above reiterate previous arguments highlighting the importance attributed to the mother's role in supporting the needs of her children within Israeli culture, and the intricacies involved in fulfilling this role arising from the historical, sociocultural and political context in which it exists. These reiterate previous discussions highlighting the many layers involved in the emotional bond between mother and child and on the variety of sociocultural experiences which shape these relationships. Furthermore, findings highlight how the open and honest dugri style of talk which exists in Israeli society and the platform for reflective processing and the opportunity for change it provides, supports mothers to better understand and consider both their own opinions regarding the role of the mother and the views of the secular Jewish Israeli context to which they belong. The following section will demonstrate how considered opinions are clearer and more strongly held than those inherited from the sociocultural milieu and result in an inner-confidence and self-belief regarding the maternal role and parenting practices.

5.9 Inner Confidence, Self-Belief and Sensitivity

The analysis of the data identified a sensitivity, an inner confidence and self-belief amongst the mothers, often witnessed at times when they are faced with the need to make choices of either following expected modes of behaviour or adopting different patterns of behaviour which may be at odds or in conflict with the expectations of the social group but are believed by the mothers to be right for their child.

The first example which illustrates the combination of sensitivity to the child's needs and the confidence to follow one's own inner voice even when it contradicts the sociocultural message is seen in Chen's description earlier on from when her daughter was born. Chen explains how during the first year of her daughter's life she dedicated herself totally to her daughter and her needs. Chen shares how this helped her, 'being in that place' where she managed to 'neutralise' herself from the outside world and be there completely for her daughter. She describes how although her husband 'would sometimes see it as a bit obsessive' she stuck by what she believed was right for her daughter, and justifies how she was right in doing so as she tells what happened when her daughter went to nursery: 'when I saw my eldest daughter go to nursery for the first time, I realised what I succeeded in giving her, she has that inner confidence, she has that understanding - knowledge - that there is always someone there for her'. Her choice of words 'everyone around me said "she will never be able to leave you"' and 'I said to my husband "I know it will be ok – I know that this is what will give her the ability to leave me"' illustrates her conviction that she herself knew what was right

for her daughter and was sufficiently confident in that conviction to persist, even though she faced questions and doubt from those around her, including her immediate family. In addition to assertiveness and inner-confidence Chen's narrative highlights an ability to incorporate conflict and handle pressure, allowing her to assert her positionality and withstand the pressures and doubts from her immediate family.

Chen's narrative in which she talks about expectations from her in-laws to regularly attend the Friday night meal further illustrates her inner-confidence, and her determination to be guided by what she believes is right for her family even when this necessitates making choices which may result in upsetting those around her. She talks about times in which she chooses to stay at home and have 'time out' instead of going to her in-laws for Friday night meals, and the consequences of this choice as she explains how 'she [her mother-in-law] hasn't spoken to me for two weeks because we didn't come Friday night, yes, yes, it's tough'. She shares how now as a mum the obligation of regularly having to go over to her mother-in-law for Friday night meal 'irritates me, but that's now, let us say that in my house in the future it is something I would like us to do, when the girls are a bit older, but today it's a real pain'. Her inner confidence and the clarity and strength of her conviction regarding her views of what it is she needs to do as a mother are further noted as she proceeds to explain how her mother-in-law is now 'playing a game', but calmly clarifies how 'that's ok, she'll get over it – I'm really not worried – mothers-in-law - hey, what can you do?' She explains that usually she would be contacting her mother-in-law to try and make up, however Chen describes how she is going through a period of change and has decided she will no longer be doing that, which emphasises her strength and capacity to process and deal with the situation and make choices guided by her understanding of her own needs, and her sensitivity to and understating of the needs of her daughters. In addition to illustrating Chen's conviction and confidence regarding the choices she makes, her narrative in which she describes the irritation of feeling obliged to go to her in-laws for the Friday night meal is also illustrative of issues highlighted previously regarding conflicts arising from familial pressures and maternal expectations to protect family time.

It can also be argued that Chen's narrative regarding issues about the Friday night meal and her previous discussions regarding expectations on women, in which she notes how 'my mother-in-law, who is a progressive woman of Ashkenazi origin, will not talk to me if the girls are not dressed appropriately' may be suggestive of a power struggle between the two women. Linn and Breslerman (1996) discuss conflicts which exist between Israeli mothers- and daughters-in-law and identify a need on the part of the daughter-in-law to create boundaries and a distance between them and the 'exaggerated interventions' (p.304) from their mother-in-law, which is in contrast to the desire on the part of the mother-in-law to be closer to her daughter-in-law. However, with regards to this

research it is difficult to ascertain if there are additional issues relating to the dynamics in the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law dyad as Chen's narrative was the only one in which conflicts of such nature were shared. It is suggested that future research exploring the dynamics of this relationship and its impact on mothers is carried out.

Having an inner confidence and an ability to respond sensitively and empathically to the needs of the child are further noted when Yaara talks about a shared time she has with her daughter before she goes to bed in which they sit together 'and we just talk and the conversation flows and spills into many different areas'. Yaara explains how although at times she does not have the energy in the evenings to have those chats she recognises the value of this shared time, not only due to the fact that her daughter really likes them and that 'it's our intimate time together' but also because, as she explains 'I believe that for example, if she's feeling angry or upset about something, these conversations often help to neutralise and calm her anger, being able to talk 'melts' her – calms her'. Yaara's account demonstrates not only an awareness regarding what her daughter likes, but also highlights a deep connection and an understanding towards her daughter's emotional needs and the confidence she has in her ability as a mother to respond to those needs. Her belief that the time they spend together 'also strengthens the relationship between us' is a further illustration of her awareness of what is required of her as a mother and the confidence she has in her abilities to fulfil this role.

Whilst reflecting on her past and on her parents' inability to understand and provide for her emotional needs, Shiri talks about her strong connection with her son and her ability to both understand and respond sensitively to his emotional needs. She talks about the strategies and behaviours she applies to support her son when he is upset or in distress, describing how she adjusts her tone of voice and gently and quietly talks to him, recounting a favourite story or singing a favourite song. Her ability to share the process and strategies she uses, adapting her tone of voice and mannerisms to respond to his emotional state, are a testament to the confidence she has that she can provide her son with what he needs, positioning her as a mother who is attuned to her child's needs and is confident and able to respond to them.

Michal's earlier account in which she shares her thoughts on survival, describing how she feels 'very strongly' about 'this notion that we need to survive', and her certainty regarding the qualities and characteristics she, and other mothers, need to provide their children with in preparation for their lives both as soldiers and as citizens, convey her confidence and trust in what is expected of her as a mother bringing up children in Israel. Her discussions about trying to pitch safety issues at a child's

level and her desire to ensure that her children maintain their 'compassion and kindness' highlight her confidence in her role as a mother and her sensitivity and empathy towards her children.

Lihi describes herself as being 'the best mother for my own children' explaining that 'I adapt myself to their needs, yeah, I feel that I do, to my own children not to anyone else's yeah?' which radiates an inner confidence in her role as a mother rather than arrogance and superiority. She describes herself as a mother who knows how to love and hug but is also a mother that gets angry and provides boundaries and proceeds to explain how 'I believe that providing boundaries, at least for my children, makes them feel better' demonstrating her awareness and understanding of what she believes her children need. Lihi confesses that sometimes she feels she struggles to provide the right balance between being the good, hugging mother and the mother that sets boundaries, and admits she would like to be a bit more balanced and calm, yet she proceeds to state that she believes that 'for my children I am the best mother there is'. Lihi revisits this topic further in the interview and says 'if you ask me again what kind of mother I think I am? I am a confident mother, you know, I am confident in my role and abilities as a mother, I think I make mistakes but then again who doesn't?'

The concept of confidence in this research refers to the inner-belief and inner trust demonstrated by the parents, not only that they were able to identify and understand the needs of their children but also that they were able to respond to and meet those needs. Bandura (1977) refers to self-efficacy as having 'the conviction that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the outcomes' (p.193) where emphasis lies not only on understanding what the desired outcome needs to be but also in the conviction in oneself of being the one able to achieve that desired outcome; he incorporates having the motivation, drive, cognitive abilities and understanding of what needs to be done and of how to do it.

Teti and Gelfand (1991) describe how 'Mothers who feel efficacious in the parenting role would be expected to be successful in establishing warm and harmonious relationships with their babies' (p.919) whilst Troutman et al (2012) highlight a correlation between parental self-efficacy, referring to having confidence in one's abilities to parent successfully, and a positive, warm, sensitive and caring interaction with the child (Hsu and Lavelli, 2005; Teti and Gelfand, 1991; Leerkes and Burney, 2007).

The above discussions and the wider literature highlight that women in Israel need to negotiate what is expected of them by Israeli society and whether these expectations translate into constructive road maps or constraints. They bring in to question the reality of free choice for Israeli women regarding family life, motherhood and traditional familial roles, and the desire to pursue a career or a decision not to have children. Furthermore they draw attention to the complexities of

motherhood and the impact of the historical and sociocultural context on influencing choices for the Israeli mother.

5.10 Concluding Remarks

Throughout this research both existing literature (Lavee and Katz, 2003; Katz, 1973; Etzion and Bailyn, 1992) and outcomes from the analysis of the data shared, present an understanding that regardless of shifts in Israeli society towards a more progressive, modern, individualistic state, Jewish Israelis share a united belief regarding the central role played by the family and a loyalty and a responsibility towards its members (Goldscheider, 2015). Furthermore it is a society which views the role of the mother as central to both the family unit and the Jewish state (Berkovitch, 1997).

This research has highlighted that although there is a shift in Israeli society towards a more progressive, modern, individualistic state, Israelis share a strong cultural heritage and a strong collective identity to their country and its people. In addition to this, regardless of the diversity of its people, Jewish Israelis share a united belief regarding the central role played by the family and a loyalty and a responsibility towards its members (Goldscheider, 2015). It is a society which views the role of the mother as central to both the family unit and the Jewish state.

Bar-on (2008) describes the development of the identity of the Israeli-Jewish collective as an 'ongoing process' (p.1) in which the identities of the collective and the individual are caught in a continuing shift between the monolithic and new-monolithic sociocultural ideologies, impacted by religion, political, economic and sociocultural changes, the Holocaust and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict. The strong link with the past and the hold which tradition and religion have on aspects of Israeli society, alongside the transmission and changes towards a more progressive and modern society which holds values and ideologies relating both to the collective and the individual, have resulted in a shift from 'a collectivistic ideal to a more liberal individualistic one' (Adamsky, 2010, p.110).

Giddens (1991) distinguishes between a post-traditional society where little concern is given to traditions and practices established by previous generations, and a more traditional society in which roles and expectations are constrained and bound by the history and traditions of its people. This would position Israeli society as a more traditionalist society rather than a modern one, which would imply that roles and expectations concerning the role of the woman and the mother are more clearly defined. However, this research has highlighted that within the strong traditional views and beliefs regarding the value of the family unit and the centrality of the role of the mother, there exists conflicts and tensions presenting mothers with a difficulty in identifying a standard, architype model of culturally defined rules and expectations to follow. Further conflicts and pressures have been

unearthed concerning issues of identity and motherhood resulting from the correlation between the traumas of the Holocaust and the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the shared sense of victimhood and awareness amongst Israelis regarding the safety and survival of its people.

It is crucial to consider that the conflicts and tensions identified are contextualised within a society which embraces the open and honest style of the dugri talk and an acceptance regarding the expression of different views and beliefs. This has meant that women are regularly faced with open and honest discussions regarding those conflicts and tensions, resulting in a need to consider and reflect their own positionality on issues concerning their identity as women and as mothers. Indeed, Giddens (1991) considers how the lack of structural framework results in the revision and reconstitution of the self and of daily life through dialectical interplay and consideration of the choices presented, whilst Bandura (2001) describes how it is the process of a 'higher level of self-reflectiveness' which enables conflicts regarding incentives and drives behind behaviours and motives to be addressed, enabling choices regarding future actions to be made.

The in-depth analysis of the data has identified how the regular open and honest dialogue and reflective processing observed in the mothers of this research has resulted in strong self-awareness and inner confidence and conviction amongst the mothers regarding aspects of their identity, their values and beliefs regarding motherhood and their confidence in being able to understand and provide for the needs of their child. Furthermore, both the findings of this research and references to existing literature have emphasised how self-awareness and reflectiveness, open and honest dialogue and emotional openness, and confidence in one's own parental abilities are all features which support and promote the development of emotional intimacy between mothers and their children.

This research has identified that for the mothers in this research mothering is a complex and intricate affair necessitating them to negotiate and consider what is expected of them as women and as mothers bringing up their children in today's Israeli society. These negotiations and considerations are set within a society which encompasses growth, development and a motivation to move forwards, yet one where its past can be described as 'a lengthening shadow that diffuses as the years goes by; yet it continues to cast a spell which few Israelis ignore' (Elon, 2010, p.322). Elon (2010) describes this past, in which the Holocaust plays a central part, as a 'heavy shadow' (p.321) lurking behind the image of modern Israel, leaving Israel resembling 'a man racing ahead with his eyes turned back in a gaze transfixed by a landscape that constantly recedes into the distance' (Elon, 2010, p.322). Furthermore this 'heavy shadow' which plays a dominant role in Israeli culture and society is strongly linked with the Arab-Israeli conflict, which 'is far from a peace settlement'

(Lieblich, 2001, p.237), and further affects issues relating to motherhood as the mothers deliberate how to bring up their children whilst considering issues of survival and safety as part of their ongoing daily life. Indeed I argue the need to consider the context within which relationships are formed, seeking to understand the sociocultural and historical experiences and the variety and depth of events shared, and the impact these may have on the development of the emotional intimacy between mother and child.

Elon (2010) describes how, in order to understand the Israeli scene an outsider must not apply 'standards of his own' but should 'look for the turbulence beneath a surface which is only seemingly smooth' (p.324). For practitioners and professionals working with parents on their emotional intimacy with their children it is precisely this approach one needs to undertake; an approach which dispels an assumption that the answers to issues between parent and child are confined to attachment theory alone. This will enable the areas of 'turbulence beneath' – the conflicts and tensions which exist - to be identified and brought to the surface, and an appreciation of the complexity of the human commitment and the emotional and intimate bond between two people.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents the contributions of this research, highlighting the complexities which lie behind the attachment process within Israeli society and the importance of context in trying to understand those complexities. A summary of the outcomes of this research highlight the challenges encountered by the women in this research as they negotiate what is expected of them as both women and mothers in modern Israeli society. Indeed the importance of understanding and exploring both context and the personal are emphasised as suggested practical strategies for practitioners and policy makers working on issues related to attachment. Finally, recommendations are made to carry out further research involving participants representative of the multicultural aspect of Israeli society.

6.2 Contributions

The aim of this research was to understand what aspects of Israeli culture, values, traditions and philosophies may contribute to the formation of secure attachments between mother and child, with the intention of exploring whether any of those qualities could be adopted by practitioners like myself working with parents on their relationships with their children in settings outside of the Israeli cultural context.

The application of narrative interview as a method of research has enabled me to explore the perceptions of eight Israeli secular Jewish mothers and share their intimate and personal accounts, rooted within a specific sociocultural and historical context. This method of research provided the participants with an opportunity to reflect on experiences past and present, positive and negative, and explore the rationale behind the 'thoughts, beliefs and behaviours' (Brocki and Wearden, 2006, p.35) held by them and others. These reflections, which can be described as providing sociocultural guides (McAdams, 2001), present an opportunity to glimpse the expected and accepted benchmarks of the sociocultural group in which the research is located. The application of a thematic process of analysis to the narrative provided an opportunity to explore the data in a more systematic manner, which led to the identification of both the building blocks and the findings presented in this research.

The initial analysis of the data resulted in the identification of the seven building blocks - themes - representing how, according to Israeli secular Jewish mothers participating in this research, the emotional intimacy occurs between them and their children. The themes identified are:

- Ensuring regular meaningful time together

- Having a sensitivity to individual needs
- Creating a safe and supporting place for the expression of emotions
- Availability - Being there for the child unconditionally
- Importance of an open and honest dialogues
- Parenting: a journey of self-discovery and self-development
- Providing foundations from which to grow

The themes, generated in the context of Israeli cultural values, beliefs and traditions, resonate with existing literature concerning attachment theory and psychotherapy and as such the identification of the themes can be said to contribute to the rich body of literature which exists on the topic of attachment theory. Both narrative and practices surrounding the themes position the participants in this research as confident mothers, sensitive and empathic, and humble as they recognise the journey of self-discovery and self-development they are on, reflective and willing to embrace changes when needed. Narrative is further illustrative of the close emotional bond that exists between the mothers and their children and the emphasis placed on the importance of creating a safe space and opportunities for emotions to be shared and communicated. Discussions relating to the themes highlight the contextual characteristics, practices and features which facilitate and challenge, catalyse and hinder the implementation and realisation of the themes.

The deeper explorative analysis which followed looked below the surface of the themes and focused on the sociocultural and historical context in which the research was set. It succeeded in identifying the complexities of mothering for the Israeli secular Jewish mother participating in this research, requiring her to navigate what is expected of her as a woman and a mother in modern Israel. The research highlighted the depth and complexities involved in the formation of the emotional bond, signifying the strong dependence which exists between the formations of these bonds and the sociocultural and historical context in which they develop.

I have argued that to understand the complexity and profundity of the emotional intimacy beyond mother and child requires an approach which stretches beyond the realm of attachment theory and which incorporates a sensitivity to cultural differences and an understanding of the importance of the sociocultural and historical context in which the parent-child relationship develops.

The following steps provide a brief outline of the outcomes, and the original contribution to knowledge generated from this research:

1. Both family and motherhood are highly valued by the Israeli secular Jewish mothers in this research

2. Conflicts, tensions and pressures exist for the mothers about motherhood, identity, aspects of survival, gender inequality, parenting and emotional support of their children
3. The dugri style of talk and the open expression of emotions that exists in Israeli society means that conflicts and tensions are openly discussed
4. Discussion spurs self-reflection and increases self-awareness, which in turn increases the acceptance of the child and of the self, resulting in considered opinions
5. Considered opinions are clearer and more strongly held than those inherited
6. The participants held clear and strong opinions regarding their maternal role as mothers, presenting a confidence in their ability to sensitively meet the needs of their children
7. To better understand the profundity of the emotional bond between mother and child requires an understanding of that relationship's sociocultural and historical context

6.3 Implications for Parent Practitioners and Policy makers

It is true that the conflicts and tensions identified in this research are specific to the context within which the research was set, and it is true that Israeli society has been identified as one which encourages and promotes open and honest dialogue amongst its people. However, the narrative shared by the mothers reveals the importance of the reflective processing which arises from the open and honest dialogue providing them the forum in which conflicts and tensions can be discussed and reflected upon. Following the explorative analysis of the data I have argued that this forum, which stimulates a cognizance of feelings, behaviours and belief systems and their connection with the past, has highlighted the mothers' strong sense of self-awareness and confidence regarding both their parenting practices and their ability to mitigate and address the conflicts and tensions which have been highlighted throughout the research.

As 'relationships and emotional processes effect how and what we learn' (Durlak et al, 2011, p.405), and as the nature of the intimate relation between the parent and the child impacts not only the child's emotional and social wellbeing but also their behaviour, school readiness, attendance and the disposition to learning (Public Health England (PHE), 2015; National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), 2016), it is important for schools to ensure that issues concerning the nature and formation of this relationship are addressed.

For parent practitioners like myself working within a primary school, or other early education settings, our role often involves working with parents to support and advise on issues concerning their relationships with their children. Discussions support the need to adopt a multilayer approach and a wider perspective when addressing aspects concerning the human commitment and the emotional intimacy between mother and child; an approach which appreciates the intricacy and

complexity of this human commitment; an approach which supports the unearthing of potential areas of conflicts and tensions which may hinder the formation of the emotional intimacy; an approach which will enable practitioners to appreciate the need to look beyond the realm attachment theory alone and explore the variety of sociocultural, historical and relational experiences which shape this commitment and the intimate bond between mother and child.

For policy-makers it is recommended that a training programme is developed in which emphasis is placed on the need to adopt a multi-layered approach when working on issues relating to the parent-child relationship. Such programmes need to stress the need to resist a temptation to assume that issues concerning mother-child relations are to be interpreted and understood within the confinement of attachment theory alone, and of adopting a wider perspective which incorporates a sensitivity to cultural differences and the importance of understanding the sociocultural and historical context in which the parent-child relationship is formed.

It is recommended that strategies such as the utilisation of semi-structured narrative interviews akin to those developed for this research are implemented to enable practitioners to elicit thoughts and views of parents regarding the following areas:

- family routine,
- their relationship with their children,
- their own childhood experiences with reference to family life,
- what does the emotional intimacy with their children mean to them, and
- perceived sociocultural and familial expectations placed on the parental role

Using the seven themes identified in this research as a framework of reference, an analysis of the narrative should then be carried out to help gauge what aspects of the themes are present within the relationship and what conflicts, pressures and tensions may exist with reference to other themes. Once these elements have been identified, practitioners can embark on generating open and honest conversations in which parents are guided through a process of reflectiveness in which past experiences and the mental states of both self and others are explored. Alongside the open and honest conversation, additional tools such as reflective journals can be utilised as these provide a 'vehicle for inner dialogue' (Hubbs and Brand, 2005, p.62) in which connections between thoughts, emotions and behaviours can be explored and better understood (Hubbs and Brand, 2005). The aim of this process is to develop self-awareness and a better understanding of both self and others in relation to the conflicts, tensions and pressures originally identified in the narrative.

For both practitioners and policy makers it is important to recognise that there may be a need to work alongside other professionals such as paediatricians, mental health clinicians and social workers, to name but a few, as the nature the conflicts, tensions and pressures identified may require their expertise.

6.4 Limitations and Suggested Further Research

This research has identified the sociocultural and historical context as highly influential in shaping both the role of the mother and the manner in which the relationship between her and her children is formed. However, as the focus of this research was on identifying cultural aspects of Israeli Jewish society, the participants selected were all specifically secular Israeli, Jewish mothers and are therefore not representative of the 'mosaic' of ethnic backgrounds, cultural traditions and religious beliefs which form part of the wider Israeli social group (Roer-Strier and Rosenthal, 2001). It is recommended that future research is carried out in which mothers representative of wider Israeli society, such as Jewish orthodox mothers or mothers of other faiths such as Muslim, Christian or Druze, are chosen. This will provide a broader lens and a more holistic perspective on what aspects representative of the Israeli society may contribute to the developmental process of attachment formations between mothers living in Israel and their children. Furthermore, it is important to note that as the sample selected was limited to eight Israeli, secular, Jewish mothers, discoveries cannot be generalised or assumed onto a wider group (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006).

As noted earlier the nature of the narrative research method utilised in this research enabled participants to engage in retrospective analysis of experiences; this highlighted the strength of reflective practice amongst the mothers. This research has argued how reflective practice enabled the mothers to carefully consider and explore their experiences and connect them to present day emotions, conducts and belief systems, and resulted in considered rather than habitual opinions and practices. However it was also noted how this method did not enable the capture of the more 'in the moment' nature of experiences, including internal dialogue and consideration given to the mental state of self and others, more typical and representative of reflexivity. This meant that although on occasion the accounts shared were representative of reflexive practice, due to the retrospective nature of the research method applied it was difficult to establish if this dialogue was indeed reflexive rather than reflective.

Bruno et al (2011) refer to reflexivity as 'a conversation with one's own and other minds' (p.530) during which the mental states of both the self and the other are processed. Tskekeris (2010) describes the self as being 'reflexively recreated' (p.29) through ongoing internal conversations with

others, where 'others' relate not only to people of importance but also to 'another perspective, another way in which the world is judged or appreciated' (Natanson, 1956, p.64).

The ability to capture the more pro-active nature of the interaction will allow researchers to analyse the level of consideration given to self and to others within that context. It is therefore recommended that further research is carried out where opportunities to capture 'reflection-in-action' (Boud, 2001) and internal dialogue illustrative of mental states of those involved are provided; these will enable researchers to evaluate the presence and nature of reflexivity which exists within the dyad. The analysis of language representative of mental states – cognitive, emotive and volitive - made possible by the utilisation of tools such as reflective journals would provide a means in which reflexive processing can be evaluated.

Finally, I appreciate that I started this research assuming that attachment theory alone provided a means through which to understand what I now recognise as the profoundness and wealth of our intimate and emotional relationships. As I reflect on the conflicts, tensions and the amplitude of interpersonal experiences which play a part in defining those relationships, I recognise the limitations of this assumption and recommend that future research incorporates both an appreciation of the intricacies and depth of this bond and a practical means of exploring the constellation of sociocultural experiences which exist within it.

6.5 Final Thoughts

This research has allowed me to better appreciate the importance of the personal story and of the sociocultural and historical context in which the story and its protagonists are based. It has enabled me to appreciate the profundity of the bond which exists between mother and child and the conflicts, tensions and complexities involved in trying to understand the nature of this bond and how it comes to be. It has revealed the need to look below the surface as this helps to identify the conflicts and tensions which lie within and are possibly hindering the formation of this special emotional bond. Furthermore, this research identifies the value of open and honest dialogue as it catalyses the reflective process, paving the path to the development of self-awareness and with it the understanding and confidence regarding the areas of conflict and tension identified.

On a personal note this research has brought me much closer to my culture, enabling me to dig deep and discover much more about the Israeli people, aspects of their history, the ongoing challenges and conflicts arising from day-to-day life for women and mothers, and gain a better understanding of who the Israeli, secular, Jewish, mother – i.e. me – is.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Ethics Application Form

Application 006556

Section A: Applicant details

Created:	Mon 19 October 2015 at 08:25
First name:	Alexandra
Last name:	Poll
Email:	apoll1@sheffield.ac.uk
Programme name:	EdD Doctor of Education
Module name:	Early Childhood Education
Last updated:	25/12/2015
Department:	School of Education
Date appl. started:	Mon 19 October 2015 at 08:25
Applying as:	Postgraduate research
Research project title:	Building blocks of emotional attachment: understanding the development of emotional attachment between Israeli secular Jewish mothers and their children
Similar applications:	- not entered -

Section B: Basic information

1. Supervisor

Name	Email
Jools Page	j.m.page@sheffield.ac.uk

2: Proposed project duration

Proposed start date:	Fri 22 January 2016
Proposed end date:	Sat 30 September 2017

3: URMS number (where applicable)

URMS number	- not entered -

4: Suitability

Takes place outside UK?	Yes

Involves NHS?	No
Healthcare research?	No
ESRC funded?	No
Involves adults who lack the capacity to consent?	No
Led by another UK institution?	No
Involves human tissue?	No
Clinical trial?	No
Social care research?	No

5: Vulnerabilities

Involves potentially vulnerable participants?	No
Involves potentially highly sensitive topics?	No

Section C: Summary of research

1. Aims & Objectives

The research aims to identify what aspects of Israeli culture, values and traditions may contribute to the developmental process and the formation of secure attachment relations between Israeli secular Jewish mothers and their children. The objective is to explore whether the identification of those aspects within a culture which holds the concept of 'the family' and corresponding socio-emotional relationships as important, offers transferable, pragmatic modes of behaviour which could be adopted by other mothers to enhance attachment formations between them and their children?
A detailed analysis of Israeli society will aim to contextualise the study providing an understanding about the sociocultural position of the secular Jewish mother in Israeli society today.

2. Methodology

The aim of the research is to elicit information from up to eight Israeli secular Jewish mothers regarding the emotional relationship they have with their children. The data the research aims to explore is therefore of a personal and potentially complex nature and as such I have chosen to apply a qualitative method of research. More specifically the focus is on discovering and examining the 'how' and 'what' with reference to the perceptions held by the participants regarding the 'building blocks' of the development of emotional attachment between them and their children; for this reason I have chosen one-to-one narrative interviews as my method of research. This method will allow for the subjective and personal meaning of events to be expressed and shared by the mothers as individuals within their particular sociocultural context.

The interview process will comprise of two sessions per participant of 1.5 to 2 hours each and these will take place at intervals of approximately three months to accommodate travel to Israel during school holidays. I will also allow for a third round of interviews for contingency. The interviews will be conducted in Hebrew on an individual basis and recorded on two separate devices for contingency.
The interviews will be transcribed and then sent to the participants inviting them to check that the information is correct and to make any additions or amendments to the data. The interviews will then be translated from Hebrew into English. I will personally transcribe the interviews and carry out the translations; this will enable me to truly engage and familiarise myself with the content of the data. By utilising thematic analysis during the data analysis stage in conjunction with the ORIM

framework (Opportunities Recognition Interaction Model) (Hannon and Nutbrown, 1997) which adopts the Vygotskian sociocultural understanding to learning and development, the research will seek to identify common themes and beliefs emerging from the narratives.

3. Personal Safety

Raises personal safety issues? Yes

The quality of the narrative relies in part on the ability of the researcher to develop a trusting and sincere relationship in which the participant feels empowered and able to share the deeper and more intimate levels of their narrative. Achieving this state of trust and comfort will also depend on the time and location in which the interviews will take place. I propose to find a time and location which are mutually convenient to both researcher and participant and which would also support the more practical aspect of the research which involves the recordings of the interviews. To ensure personal safety I will make sure that I leave details regarding the location, date, time and approximate duration of the interview with someone close to me in Israel. Furthermore I will familiarise myself with the local emergency numbers.

Section D: About the participants

1. Potential Participants

Due to the complexity of the data researched and the desire to uncover multiple and potentially hidden layers of meaning the aim is to have a small group of up to eight participants. The initial identification and approach to the participants will involve the assistance of friends and relatives in Israel who will be able to contact mothers with children between the ages of four and eight and ask them directly if they would be willing to take part in the research.

2. Recruiting Potential Participants

Due to the fact that the participants would need to share certain common characteristics, selecting and recruiting them will necessitate some form of selection process and I propose asking them the following questions (these will be translated into Hebrew):

- Where were you born?
- Where were your parents born?
- What is your mother tongue?
- What language do you speak to your children?
- With regards to your religious beliefs do you consider yourself to be secular, traditional or orthodox?
- Do you have children between the ages of four and eight?

Once a group of eligible participants is identified I will arrange an initial conversation with them over the phone. During this conversation I will provide them with a short description of the nature of the research and how they will be involved in it. This will include a brief outline of their participation which will reflect both the anticipated time commitment and emotional involvement which the research may entail. Once they have provided verbal consent I will arrange a time for the first interview to take place. I will also establish with each participant a preferred means of

communication such as e-mail, phone or Skype to enable ongoing communication for any queries or issues which may arise between interviews.

2.1. Advertising methods

Will the study be advertised using the volunteer lists for staff or students maintained by CiCS?

No - not entered -

3. Consent

Will informed consent be obtained from the participants? (i.e. the proposed process) Yes

Prior to the first interview I will send each participant more detailed information about the research which will include:

- The purpose of the research and information about the topics and questions which will be discussed in the interview
- Why that participant has been chosen to take part and their right to withdraw from the research at any time without needing to provide any reasons for doing so
- Information about the possibility that the topic discussed in the interviews may cause uneasiness and how this will be managed
- Issues regarding confidentiality and anonymity of participants, their identity and identifiable data
- Contact information for any questions

During the first interview I will ensure that any questions are answered and I will then seek written consent by asking them to sign a 'Participant Information Sheet Consent Form' (which will be translated into Hebrew).

4. Payment

Will financial/in kind payments be offered to participants? No

5. Potential Harm to Participants

What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm/distress to the participants?

The process of narrative research is an interactive process between researcher and participant which can result in the vocalisation of inner thoughts and themes which may otherwise be left internalised or suppressed. The nature of the research involves discussions of a personal and potentially more sensitive nature as they are concerned with relationships within the family. This may evoke uncomfortable feelings for the participants and I am proposing to implement several measures to mitigate this (as detailed below).

How will this be managed to ensure appropriate protection and well-being of the participants?

Within the scope of the research's time scale, in addition to the two interviews of 1.5-2 hours allocated per participant allowance will be made for a third session in case interviews need to be stopped or rescheduled. The style of questioning adopted in the research will be that of open-ended questions as this will enable the narrative to be participant led, choosing the information they wish

to share without feeling compelled or coerced to address themes they feel uncomfortable in sharing. Following each interview a copy of the transcript will be sent to each participant inviting them to review the content and make any amendments or additions to the information if they so wish. Furthermore a list of local counsellors (as provided by The Israel Association for Couple and Family Therapy) will be provided to participants who may require additional support.

I will explain clearly to the participants the issue of confidentiality which highlights that if there are any safeguarding issues my responsibility is to share them with the relevant professionals at the university (The University of Sheffield, 2015) and with the local Social Services team in Israel.

Section E: About the data

1. Data Confidentiality Measures

I will start the interviews by explaining that data and personal information will be kept confidential, however my duty of care is towards the wellbeing of those involved directly (and indirectly) in my research and as such if any safeguarding issues are brought up I would need to share them with the relevant professionals - the local Social Services team and The University of Sheffield. Additionally with consultation from the participants, names will be changed to maintain anonymity.

2. Data Storage

I will seek permission from the participants to record the interviews on two digital devices which will be kept in a safe place, either with me or in my personal draw at home. The interviews will be transcribed, translated and analysed on my personal computer which is password protected. Personal data of the participants will not appear in the actual research and information which is stored in digital format will be stored in separate files on my computer. Once the interviews have been transcribed, translated and analysed they will be destroyed.

Section F: Supporting documentation

Information & Consent

Participant information sheets relevant to project?
Yes
Document 1014016

Am attaching separately the final version of the Participant Information Sheet –

Consent forms relevant to project?
Yes
Document 1014017 Add new version Remove document

- Version1 (EdD_research_Example_Consent-Form.doc)

Click to add a consent form

Additional Documentation

Click to add an additional document

External Documentation

- not entered -

Section G: Declaration

Signed by: - not entered -
Date signed: - not entered -

Official notes

- not entered -

Editing your application

You can make basic changes to your application on this page by clicking any field that is highlighted in blue.

If you need to change your answer to any other field we may need to collecy more information so you will need to click the edit button on that section to take to you the main form.

Close

Additional supervisor comments

- not entered -

Appendix 2: Ethical Application Approval Letter

Downloaded: 01/02/2016

Approved: 29/01/2016

Alexandra Poll

Registration number: 130113780

School of Education

Programme: EdD Doctor of Education

Dear Alexandra

PROJECT TITLE: Building blocks of emotional attachment: understanding the development of emotional attachment between Israeli secular Jewish mothers and their children

APPLICATION: Reference Number 006556

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 29/01/2016 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 006556 (dated 04/01/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1014589 version 1 (04/01/2016).

Participant consent form 1014017 version 1 (05/12/2015).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

My main concern is of the deeper ethical questions that the research raises but are not made explicit. For example,how is attachment being understood here, what models etc? Are attachment models from particular cultural and historical contexts transferable to other contexts in this way? Is it ethical or valid to do this exporting of concepts? I think the research would benefit enormously from discussing these issues. The information sheet mentions 'decontextualising' the findings to apply

them to parenting in England. Why is this your intention? There is already a process of decontextualisation within this work, through taking models of attachment that originate from other cultures and times and exporting them to understanding attachment between mothers and children in Israel. Yet this decontextualisation remains unacknowledged in this proposal. What problems might there be with then taking the findings from this research and applying them to the UK? This raises a deep ethical question about validity (i.e. what is the validity of using decontextualised models that may lack validity in one culture and applying them to another culture? There is also a slight risk within the proposal of homogenising 'Israeli' culture - this may mean different things to different people and requires more specificity in this research. Whilst this is not perhaps primarily an ethical requirement I have made this comment as I think the lack of clarity offered in the ethical proposal, in reference to the points below may have ethical implications. My point is that within the study there will need to be clarification with regard to behaviours that are defined as aspects of Israeli culture and those that are not, also clarity with regard to how judgements are made of what behaviours are understood to contribute to the developmental process and the formation of secure attachment relations and which are not. Do parents make these judgements (i.e. say they believe this way of being with their child is a particular cultural expectation) or the researcher? If the former do mothers need to be familiar with the theory of attachment?

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Rushton

Ethics Administrator

School of Education

Appendix 3a: Participant Information – English version

Participant Information Sheet

Research Project Title

Building blocks of emotional attachment: understanding the development of emotional attachment between Israeli secular Jewish mothers and their children

Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether to accept it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information and please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the project?

The research is being carried out for my doctoral research study which I am undertaking at the University of Sheffield, England. The aim of the project is to identify those aspects of Israeli culture that contribute to the developmental process and the formation of secure attachment relations between Israeli secular Jewish mothers and their children. By applying a narrative approach to the research the objective is to explore the stories of a group of Israeli mothers about their perceptions and understandings regarding their relationships with their children. The aim is to discover what they consider to be the aspects which contribute to the development of secure attachment formations.

Why have I been chosen?

You are one of a group of eight mothers who expressed an interest in taking part in the research and have been chosen because you were all born in Israel, Hebrew is your mother tongue, it is the language you speak to your children, you consider yourself secular and you have one or more children between the ages of four and eight.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You can withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Participation in the research will involve you and I meeting in private on two or three occasions over the next year at a mutually agreed time and place. I envisage each meeting lasting approximately an hour and a half. I would also like us to establish a preferred means of communication such as e-mail, phone or Skype for any queries or issues which may arise between interviews.

I will be using narrative as the method of research and this will involve me asking you questions and listening to your thoughts and views on areas relating to the research. I will email you the questions and topics we will discuss before our meeting so that you are familiar with them. Please rest assured that any concerns you may have can be discussed each time we meet up. I will guide you through the process in such a way to ensure you have a secure understanding of what is being asked of you and understand your rights to withdraw at any time without penalty. It is important for you to feel safe so please let me know if there are any topics you would rather not discuss. Prior to the first interview I will seek your permission to record the sessions. The interviews will be conducted in Hebrew, transcribed (by me), then sent to you so you can check that the information is correct and make any additions or amendments to the data. The recordings will be translated into English (again, by me) and all personal information will be removed. At the end of the research the original recordings will be destroyed.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The nature of the research involves discussions around relationships within the family which may evoke uncomfortable feelings for you. The nature of narrative as a form of research is intended to enable you to share inner thoughts and themes which may otherwise be left internalised or suppressed. You do not have to answer any questions or discuss any topics if you do not wish to. Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason. I will also ensure that I have a list of local counsellors in case you may require additional support.

The information shared is confidential but I need to make you aware that if during our discussions I become concerned about the wellbeing of a child it is my duty to share this information with the relevant authorities and if this is the case then your right to anonymity will be waived.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those participating in the project it is hoped that this work will identify components of Israeli Jewish culture which will help me to better understand the

development of secure attachment between mothers and their children in the Israeli context. It is my intention that these elements can be decontextualized and considered within parenting approaches in England.

What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

If for some reason the research needs to end earlier than expected you will be given an explanation as to why this has happened.

What if something goes wrong?

If for some reason you are not happy with the way in which the research is conducted please let me know. If you are not happy with the way your complaint has been handled you may contact my supervisor Dr Jools Page: j.m.page@sheffield.ac.uk thereafter you can contact the Chair of the ethics committee at the School of Education University of Sheffield; Professor Dan Goodley: edu-ethics@sheffield.ac.uk

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential unless there is a safeguarding issue in which case, as mentioned above, it is my duty to share this information with the relevant authorities. With your consultation, names will be changed to maintain anonymity. After the study has been completed and marked the original voice recordings will be destroyed.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The data gathered during this research project will inform my doctoral thesis which will be submitted to the University of Sheffield; a copy of the thesis will be kept in the University's library. If you wish, I will be happy to send you a summary of the findings of the research. . It is likely that I will want to publish the findings more widely in the public domain as part of my ongoing work with parents. The anonymised data gathered during the research may also be used in further research but I will request your permission if necessary.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is funded by me – Alex Poll.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This research has been approved by the School of Education University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) at the University of Sheffield.

Contact for further information

Alex Poll

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You will be given a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in this project.

Appendix 3b: Participant Information – Hebrew version

<u>טופס פנייה להשתתפות במחקר</u>

אנו מבקשים ממך להשתתף במחקר בנושא: בניית תהליכים של התקשרות רגשית יציבה: הבנת ההתפתחות של התקשרות רגשית בין אימהות ישראליות יהודיות חילוניות, וילדיהם.

חשוב לנו להבהיר את מטרת המחקר ובמה השתתפות כרוכה.

הינך מוזמנת להשתתף במחקר. אנא עייני במידע הנתון בכובד ראש ותרגישי חופשיה להתייעץ בעניין ההשתתפות במחקר עם אנשים אחרים. את מוזמנת לפנות אלי אם יש משהו לא ברור או אם ברצונך לקבל מידע נוסף. אנא שקלי היטב אם ברצונך להשתתף במחקר. תודה מראש.

מטרת המחקר

מטרת המחקר היא לזהות אספקטים של התרבות הישראלית שתורמים להתפתחות ובניית תהליכים של התקשרות יציבה בין אמהות חילוניות וילדיהן. השימוש במתודולוגיה במחקר של בניית נרטיב תאפשר לקבוצת האימהות שתבחרנה לחקור ולהבין טוב יותר את ההתקשרות שלהן עם ילדיהן. המטרה היא לגלות מה הוא האספקט, לפי הבנתן, שתורם הכי הרבה להתפתחות התקשרות יציבה עם ילדיהן.

לפי איזה נתונים נבחרו המרואיינות

את שייכת לקבוצה של שמונה אימהות שהביעו את הסכמתן להשתתף במחקר. נבחרת לאור העובדה שנולדת בארץ, עברית היא שפת אמך ושפת הדיבור עם ילדיך, ואת רואה עצמך כחילונית ויש לך ילד אחד או יותר בין הגילאים 4- 8. השתתפותך במחקר תלויה בהסכמתך לעשות זו. ניתן לפרוש מהמחקר בכל עת ללא צורך במתן הסבר.

במה השתתפותך תהיה כרוכה?

במהלך המחקר אני מצפה שנפגש פעם או פעמיים במשך השנה הקרובה במועדים ובמקומות שיהיו מקובלים על שתינו. אני מעריכה שכל מפגש ימשך כשעה וחצי. הייתי רוצה שנקבע דרך מועדפת בה נוכל לתקשר כמו למשל בסקייפ, מייל או בטלפון במקרה ונרצה ליצור קשר בין המפגשים שלנו. המחקר יעשה בשיטת הנרטיב. הדגש בפגישות שלנו יהיה על הנרטיב והדעות **שלך**. לכן אני אשלח לך מראש במייל את הנושאים שעליהם נדבר ואדריך אותך לגבי אופי המידע שאני מבקשת לקבל ממך. המטרה היא שתרגישי בטוחה ונינוחה ואנא אמרי לי מראש אם יש נושאים שלא היית רוצה לדון איתי עליהם.

לפני הריאיון הראשון אני אבקש את הסכמתך להקליט את הפגישות שלנו. אני אתרגם את השיחות לאנגלית כאשר כל מידע אישי ימחק ובסוף המחקר ההקלטות תמחקנה.

מה עלולות להיות המגרעות והחסרונות בהשתתפות במחקר?

המחקר כרוך בשיחות סביב יחסים בתוך המשפחה דבר שעלול אולי להעלות גם רגשות לא נעימים לך, המרואיינת.

אינך מחויבת לענות על השאלות או לדון בנושאים שאינך רוצה וביכולתך לפרוש מהמחקר בכל עת שתרצי בלי לתת סיבה או נימוק. במידה ובעקבות המחקר תהיי מעוניינת להתייעץ עם איש מקצוע בתחום תהייה ברשותי רשימה עדכנית של אנשי מקצוע שבהם תוכלי להיעזר.

המידע שתשתפי אותי בו יישאר חסוי אלא אם כן יעלה מידע שנוגע בסיכון טובת הילד. אז מחובתי לשתף את המידע עם הרשויות הנוגעות בדבר.

מה הן היתרונות בהשתתפות במחקר?

בעוד שאין יתרונות בהשתתפות במחקר השאיפה היא שהמחקר יזהה מרכיבים בתרבות היהודית ישראלית שתומכים בהתפתחות של התקשרות יציבה בין אימהות וילדיהן. התקווה היא שאפשר יהיה ליישם ולהעביר את המרכיבים הללו לתרבות אחרת – במקרה הזה לאנגליה.

מה קורה באם המחקר יפסק מוקדם מהצפוי?

אם במידה כלשהי המחקר יפסק מוקדם מהצפוי תקבלי הסבר לדבר.

במידה ואינך שביעת רצון מהדרך בה המחקר מתנהל אודה לך אם תביאי את הדברים לידיעתי. בנוסף אם אינך שביעת רצון בדרך שבה תלונתך טופלה תוכלי לפנות למרצה האחראית עלי.

דר. ג'ולס פייג'

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האם השתתפותי במחקר תישאר חסויה?

כל המידע שיצטבר במחקר יישאר חסוי אלה אם כן יש חשש לשלום הילד. אז מחובתי לדווח את המידע לרשויות הנוגעות בדבר.

בהתייעצות אתך השמות ישונו על מנת לשמור על אנונימיות. אחרי שהריאיון המוקלט יודפס, ויתורגם, ויעובד ההקלטה תושמד.

מה קורה עם תוצאות המחקר?

הנתונים שיאספו במשך המחקר יהוו חלק מהתזה שלי שתוצג לפני האוניברסיטה של שפילד, אנגליה. עותק אחד ישמר בספרית האוניברסיטה. באם את מעוניינת אשמח לשלוח לך את סיכום המחקר. המידע האנונימי שייאסף במחקר עשוי להיות בשימוש במחקר נוסף בעתיד. במקרה כזה אבקש את הסכמתך מראש.

מי מארגן ומממן את המחקר?

המחקר ממומן על ידי, אלכס פול.

מבחינה אתית מי בודק את המחקר?

המחקר אושר על ידי הוועדה האתית של האוניברסיטה של שפילד, אנגליה.

למידע נוסף אנא פנו אלי, אלכס פול.

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אני מאוד מודה לך על זמנך ועל השתתפותך במחקר!

Appendix 4a: List of topics to be discussed during the Interview – English version

Hi

Here is a list of the topics we will aim to cover in the interview:

1 – Family routine

2 – Relationship with your child

3- Your childhood

4 – Attachment

5 – Expectations – as a mum and as a woman

You do not need to prepare anything in advance and please let me know before we start if there are any topics you would prefer us not to talk about.

Thanks again

Alex

Appendix 4b: List of topics to be discussed during the Interview – Hebrew version

הי

אני מצרפת רשימה של נושאים עליהם נדבר כשנפגש:

שגרה משפחתית

מערכת היחסים שלך עם ילדיך

הילדות שלך

התקשרות

ציפיות – כאם וכאשה

את לא צריכה להכין שום דבר מראש ואנא תאמרי לי מראש אם יש נושאים שלא היית רוצה לדון איתי עליהם.

שוב תודה

אלבס

Appendix 5a: Participant Consent Form – English version

Title of Research Project: **Building blocks of emotional attachment: understanding the development of emotional attachment between Israeli secular Jewish mothers and their children**

Name of Researcher: **Alex Poll**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet/letter (delete as applicable) dated *[insert date]* explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. *Insert contact number here of lead researcher/member of research team (as appropriate).* ☐

3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential (only if true). I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. ☐

4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research ☐

5. I agree to take part in the above research project. ☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
(*or legal representative*)		
_____	_____	_____

Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature
(*if different from lead researcher*)		
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant		
_____	_____	_____
Lead Researcher	Date	Signature
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant		
Copies:		
Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.		

Appendix 5b: Participant Consent Form – English version

טופס הסכם השתתפות במחקר

הכותרת של פרויקט המחקר: בניית תהליכים של התקשרות רגשית יציבה: הבנת ההתפתחות של התקשרות רגשית בין אימהות ישראליות יהודיות חילוניות, וילדיהם.

שם החוקרת: אלכס פול

1. אני מאשרת כי קראתי ואני מבינה את המידע וההסבר על המחקר ושהיו לי מספיק הזדמנויות לשאול שאלות ולקבל תשובות על המחקר. ☐

2. אני מבינה שהשתתפותי במחקר היא וולונטרית וביכולתי לפרוש מהמחקר בכל עת בלי לתת סיבה או נימוק ולא יהיו לחץ כל השלכות שליליות לגבי. בנוסף אם יש שאלות עליהן איני רוצה לענות, אין בחובתי לעשות זאת. ☐

פלפון 529166 7973 (0) 44+ Email: alex@nigelpoll.com

3. הפרטים האישיים והמידע שיימסר על ידי ישמר חסוי ואנונימי והנני מאשרת את הסכמתי שלצוות החוקרים תינתן גישה למידע זה. אני מבינה ששמי לא יצוין ולא יינתן לזיהוי במחקר. ☐

4. אני מסכימה שהמידע האנונימי שייאסף במחקר יינתן לשימוש במחקר בעתיד. ☐

5. אני מביעה את הסכמתי להשתתף במחקר. ☐

_____ _____ _____

שם המרואיינת תאריך חתימה

_____ _____ _____

שם החוקרת תאריך חתימה

Appendix 6: The process of designing the interview questions

Research Questions	How does the Israeli, secular, Jewish mother participating in this research, raising her children in a diverse society such as Israel, define her identity as a woman and her role as a mother? Are there any aspects of Israeli cultural, values, beliefs and/or traditions uncovered in the narratives that contribute to the developmental process and formation of attachment relations between the mothers in this research and their children? Are there any common elements amongst the perceptions held by the participating mothers regarding the attachment formation process?	
Areas for discussion and initial ideas for questions	Family life: family activities – family routine – are there any activities which are special to you and if so what is it about them that is special? Where have those activities come from? Relationship with children: do they feel that their relationship is a close one? If yes, what is it that makes them say that? Your own childhood: childhood relationships with parents or with any other close relationships? What was it about the relationships that made them special? Attachment: Israeli culture and Israeli traits – are there characteristics or modes of behaviour which may support the formation of attachment relations? Pressure and expectations: any pressures and expectations from the society and/or family on women regarding professional development, education, family life?	
Sample of final questions incorporating open ended questions	<u>Questions in Hebrew</u> **משפחתית שגרא** תארי לי ,ספרי לי קצת על חיי המשפחה - מה קורה ביום חול רגיל - האם יש חוגים או תחביבים) שעושים בצורה קבועה ?האם יש	<u>Questions in English</u> **Family routine** Can you describe a typical week - Are there any weekly routines such as clubs, hobbies, family gatherings?

Are there any regular family activities? Are there any family traditions you have? Can you tell me about family routines or traditions you particularly value? Where have they originated from? What do you value about them? **Your childhood** Can you tell me about family relationships from your childhood? **Expectations – as a mother and as a woman** What expectations – if any - did you feel there were on you as a woman in Israel in terms of having a family, career, marriage?	דברים רגילים שהמשפחה עושה ביחד? האם את יכולה לספר לי על עיסוקים או דברים שאת אוהבת או מעריכה במיוחד ?מאפה הם באו - ?מה מקורם **הילדות שלך** ספרי לי על מערכות יחסים במשפחה מהילדות שלך. **ציפיות – כאם וכאישה** איזה ציפיות – אם בכלל - הרגשת היו ממך מהחברה הישראלית כאישה לא נשואה ובלי ילדים ,מבחינה של קריירה ,משפחה ?'נשואים ,ילדים וכו	

Appendix 7a: List of Interview Questions – English version

The interview questions are divided into five categories and include question which will be used for prompting and facilitating discussion during the interviews with the participants.

Family routine

- Can you describe a typical week? Are there any weekly routines such as clubs, hobbies, family gatherings?
- Are there any regular family activities?
- Are there any family traditions you have? Where have they come from?
- Which family routines or traditions do you value the most?
- Where have they come from? Are they from your childhood? That of your husband, friends, environment?
- What do you value about them?

Relationship with your child

- How would you describe your relationship with your child/children?
- Do you think you have a close relationship with your child/children?
- Why do you think that?
- How does your relationship compare to that of other people?

Your childhood

- Can you tell me about family relationships from your childhood?
- Are there any traditions/behaviours/parenting techniques from your childhood which you have consciously adopted or rejected?
- How do you implement discipline? do you and your husband have a similar approach to the way in which you discipline the children? Where did the discipline style come from?
- Are there any things you wish your parents did more of? Certain activities? Behaviours?
- How would you compare those close relationships for example with your parents with the relationship you have with your children?

Attachment

- Are there aspects of Israeli culture which you feel promote attachment formations between mothers and their children?
- Are there any things you do which you feel are helpful in promoting/encouraging your attachment with your child/children?
- For example, how you approach sensitive topics, honesty about things, regular time for sitting and talking?
- What qualities do you feel are important to have as a mum?
- Are there any particular things you like / or enjoy about being a mum?

Expectations – as a mum and as a woman

- What expectations did you perceive were on you as a woman in Israel in terms of having a family, career, marriage?
- Now that you are a mother what do you perceive are the expectations on your role as a mother?
- For example, do you feel there was an expectation that you 'deal with the children' that you also have a career, that you carry out all the household chores? where do you think that expectation came from?
- And finally, to summarise, what do you feel are the important factors which help develop a close attachment to your child?

Appendix 7b: List of Interview Questions – Hebrew version

שאלות לראיון

שגרא משפחתית – (חיי יום יום)

תארי לי ספרי לי קצת על חיי המשפחה - מה קורה ביום חול רגיל - (האם יש חוגים או תחביבים שעושים בצורה קבועה? האם יש דברים רגילים שהמשפחה עושה ביחד? פעילויות משפחתיות – משחקים? ארוחות ערב? הסתכלות בסרטים, טלוויזיה, יציאות?)

האם יש מבנה קבוע של פעילות המשפחה במשך השבוע?

האם יש מסורת משפחתית של פעילויות או דברים מיוחדים שאתם עושים?

איזה עיסוקים או דברים את אוהבת או מעריכה במיוחד? מה את מעריכה במיוחד? מאפה הם באו - מה מקורם? הילדות שלך? של בעלך? חברים? סביבה?

מערכת היחסים שלך עם ילדייך

איך היית מתארת את מערכת היחסים שלך עם ילדיך?

האם את חושבת שיש לך מערכת יחסים קרובה עם ילדיך? למה? במה זה מתבטא?

איך היית משווה את מערכת היחסים שלך עם ילדיך לעומת אימהות אחרות?

הילדות שלך

ספרי לי על מערכות יחסים במשפחה מהילדות שלך.

האם יש תפוסי התנהגות מהילדות שלך שבכוונה אימצת או יישמת או להפיך דחית עם ילדייך?

איך אתם מיישמים מבצעים משמעת בבית? האם את ובעלך מיישמים או ניגשים לנושא של משמעת באותה צורה?

האם יש דברים שחבל לך שהורייך לא עשו יותר? כמו תפוסות התנהגות מסוימות, בילויים, פעילויות?

איך היית משווה את מערכות היחסים הקרובות שלך מילדותך למשל עם הורייך לעומת זאת עם ילדיך?

התקשרות

האם יש דברים בתרבות הישראלית שלפי דעתך עוזרים ליצירת התקשרות רגשות קרובה בין אימהות וילדיהן?

האם יש תפוסי התנהגות שאת מיישמת שאת מאמינה עוזרים לפיתוח התקשרות רגשית חזקה עם ילדייך? (כמו למשל זמן מיוחד בו אתם עושים דברים ביחד? זמן אחד על אחד? איך נגשים לנושאים יותר רגשיים? כנות? פתיחות?)

איזה תכונות את חושבת חשובות לתפקיד של אם?

איך היית מתארת את עצמך בתר אם?

ציפיות – כאם וכאישה

איזה ציפיות הרגשת היו ממך מהחברה הישראלית כאישה לא נשואה ובלי ילדים מבחינה של קריירה, משפחה, נשואים, ילדים וכו'?

האם היו ציפיות דומות או שונות ממשפחתך?

עכשיו שאת אם האם את מרגישה שיש איזה שהם ציפיות מתפקידך כאם? למשל בדברים שקשורים למשמעת וחינוך, שתהיה לך קריירה, שאת תטפלי בילדים? בבית? מאיפה את חושבת הציפיות האלה באו?

ולסיום, ולסיכום, מה את מרגישה הן התכונות החשובות שעוזרות לפיתוח קשר קרוב והתקשרות רגשית קרובה בין אם וילדיה?

Appendix 8: The Pilot Study

The 'trial run' of the questions was carried out in a café, with a friend – Rebecca - who considers herself to be secular Jewish; she has lived in Israel for 8 years and was happy to help. I brought two devices on which to record the interview which worked out well as one of the devices stopped recording half way through as the battery went flat! Rebecca also pointed out that it was quite off putting to see the seconds on the timer on the iPhone and it made her feel very aware that she was being recorded. We initially talked about the information I sent her about the research and she said it was very clear and professional and provided a good understanding of what the research was about. We then moved on to the interview questions and the conversation progressed naturally from one topic to the next often without any need for prompting. Rebecca seemed happy to share information and talk openly about the issues raised, her family life and relationships within the family and was very reflective regarding her role both as a daughter and as a mother. In fact, when we finished I felt that parts of what she talked about in terms of her experiences as a child and mother could be explored further, particularly in terms of expectations and feelings of pressure placed on women today. This resulted in my decision to introduce the following section – Expectations as a mum and as a woman - to the interview which would explore expectations on and perceptions of women living in Israel prior to them being married and as mothers building their own families:

Expectations – as a mum and as a woman

- What expectations did you perceive were on you as a woman in Israel in terms of having a family, career, marriage?
- Now that you are a mother what do you perceive are the expectations on your role as a mother?
- For example, do you feel there was an expectation that you 'deal with the children' that you also have a career, that you carry out all the household chores? where do you think that expectation came from?
- And finally, to summarise, what do you feel are the important factors which help develop a close attachment to your child?

Appendix 9: Extracts from Reflective Journal

The ability to self-reflect proved valuable on a practical, personal and emotional level. On a practical level sharing observations and impressions enabled me to understand what worked well and what could be done differently regarding the interviews; an example of which is shown in the following journal extract:

21st March 2016 (First Interview)

The interview took place in a room in the participant's house which she uses for her work with her clients. Her family – three children, husband and the dog - were in the dining room next door making costumes for 'purim'[7] and although we couldn't hear specific conversations, their voices could be heard. As the interview was drawing to an end I felt that the mother was ready to finish and join her family; more than that I got the impression that she felt almost guilty that her husband was making the costumes, bonding with the children and helping them whilst she was talking about 'bonding and spending time with your children'…to me. I felt she was almost keen for me to leave so that she could join her family and be mum.

In future, I would aim to meet the mothers either in a neutral place such as a café, or if it is at the participant's home then I would recommend meeting at a time when the children are either not there or are asleep so as to allow the mothers 'time-out' from their motherly duties which might help them feel less pressurised or conflicted about how they were spending their time.

Being quite a tactile person, as we said goodbye I moved forward to give the mum a hug but recognised straight away by her response that this was not something she welcomed. In future I must refrain from giving the mothers a hug unless it is a gesture that comes from them, as although I recognise that this is something I do almost instinctively, I am not sure it is something everybody welcomes…!

On a more personal and emotional level, I observed how the process of sharing inner thoughts and observations throughout the research and reading them at a later stage depicted a personal journey of self-development and change; some of these thoughts are highlighted in the following reflections:

1st August 2016

I felt through the process of the research I got to see Israeli society in a different way, as I am realising that despite the politics, religion and other cultural differences, it is a society in which

[7]Purim is a traditional and joyful Jewish holiday which celebrates the salvation of Jewish people living in Persia by Esther, a favoured member of the king's harem; the story of Purim appears in the Biblical book of Esther (Rich, 2011).

people are open and welcoming and very supportive of one another particularly to close friends and family. It is a society in which people seem genuinely interested in one another, happy to openly share personal information including emotions and feelings which appears to provide a supportive network during good times and bad.

17th August 2016

I felt a certain amount of inner peace and sense of achievement as I realised that the way in which I brought up my girls appeared to be 'typically Israeli' in the sense that the values I brought them up with, such as the importance of the family, friendships, expressing and sharing emotions – were strong aspects found in the Israeli culture. I do recognise however that there is a danger of carrying out a research and being left with a sense of guilt or remorse if aspects arising from the research raise questions regarding personal aspects of the researcher's life. This is certainly a reflection for future research and the need to be aware of the risks of researching topics to which we are personally connected and in which the outcomes or realisations uncovered throughout the process may lead to negative feelings such as guilt or regret.

8th October 2017

Throughout the research my mum and I would have endless conversations about the research, my experiences about the research, observations, relationships in general and personal reflections on our relationship as a family and as mother - daughter. I have always considered my relationship with my own mother to be a very close one. However, I do feel that as a result of this research and the conversations had, our relationship has become even closer and stronger. I feel our ability to share and discuss honest thoughts and feelings about our relationship has evolved from being an emotional and at times explosive experience to a calmer, more reflective, honest conversation perceived as opportunities for change and above all of acceptance. Furthermore, this has enabled me to accept and understand observations and criticisms from my own daughters about aspects of my parenting, accepting them as opportunities for change rather than personal attacks.

Appendix 10: Information about participating mothers

The following table provides a summary of information collated during a phone conversation with the participants prior to the interviews. It is important to note that due to Israel's small size, and the strong sense of community and closeness that exists amongst Israelis (Gannon and Pillai, 2010), maintaining anonymity of the participants would not be easy and as such the level of information provided regarding each participant has been kept to a minimum. However, this consideration has been weighed against the desire to ensure that enough information regarding the participants is provided so as to enable the reader to connect with the participants and with the narrative and data provided (Seidman, 2013).

The participants

Name	Employment status	Ethnic origin	Place of birth	Place of birth of parents	Language spoken at home	Number of children	Marital status
Daphna	Professional qualification – working part time	Ashkenazi	Israel	Father Israel Mother Poland	Hebrew	1	Long term partner
Tal	Professional qualification – working part time	Ashkenazi	Israel	Father Holland Mother Israel	Hebrew	2	Married
Lihi	Working part time	Ashkenazi	Israel	Father Israel Mother Israel	Hebrew	4	Married
Lola	Professional qualification self-employed	Ashkenazi	Israel	Father Israel Mother Israel	Hebrew	3	Married
Chen	Professional qualification – working part time	Sephardi	Israel	Father Argentina Mother Argentina	Hebrew	3	Married
Michal	Professional qualification	Sephardi	Israel	Father Israel	Hebrew	3	Married

	– currently not working			Mother Israel			
Shiri	Working part time	Half Mizrahi Half Ashkenazi	Israel	Father Israel Mother Israel	Hebrew	2	Married
Yaara	Professional qualification Working part time	Ashkenazi	Israel	Father Israel Mother Israel	Hebrew	3	Married

Appendix 11: Items of Interest from Transcription Process

Direct quote of 'items of interest' in Hebrew	Translation of 'items of interest' into English[8]	Name of participant
אני מאד תמיד מרגישה שאני מבינה אותו, אני לטובתו אני יודעת שהוא נורא מרגיש את זה שאני לטובתו	I always feel that I really understand him *(her son*) and I know that he can feel that I am on his side	Daphna
אני חושבת שזה נורא חשוב שילד ירגיש שההורה רוצה את טובתו	I think it is really important that the child feels that the parent wants what is best for him	Daphna
מעוד תחושה מהילדות שאני יכולה להגיד שהייתה לי תחושה שמקבלים אותי ב100% שנורא אוהבים אותי של גב גם היום יש לי הרגשה נורא חזקה של גב ושל קרבה של באמת	I can honestly say that during my childhood I felt 100% accepted, I felt I was very loved and that someone had my back – even today I have a very strong feeling that someone has my back and a very strong feeling of true closeness	Daphna
כן כן אני נורא מבינה אותו, ואני נורא מזדהה אתו, נורא עצוב לי אם עצוב לו, גם אמא שלי היא כזאת, מהבחינה הזאת אמא שלי היא עד היום הזדהות מוחלטת, אני מרגישה שאם אני במצב רוח רע אני ממש לפעמים מצליחה להעביר לה את זה, היא מאד מבינה	Yes, yes I really understand him and I can really identify with his feelings – I am sad if he is sad – my mum is the same, from that point of view even today my mum can totally identify with my feeling and I feel that if I am in a bad mood and manage to get her to feel it too, she really gets me – understands me	Daphna
כן הזדהות גדולה	Yes, strong ability to identify with them	Daphna
הדבר הזה שכאילו אין מקום לעבודה ולחיים באופן כללי אני ...אלה הכל ביחד מתערבב אני חושבת שנגיד אנחנו עובדים קשה פחות או	It is as if there is no separate time for work, and life and everything is mixed in together…on the whole I feel that we both work	Daphna

[8]I would like to note that although the Hebrew citations of the 'items of interest' have been translated into English this was done for presentation purposes and that the coding process of the interviews which followed was still conducted in Hebrew.

יותר אותו דבר ובכל זאת האשה היא זאת שעושה את עבודות הבית יותר	equally hard but still it falls down to the woman to do more of the housework duties	
אני מרגישה שבכלל כל הנושא של האימהות באמת שבא לי בגיל מאוחר יחסית, מאד מאד מפגיש אותי עם עצמי זאת אומרת אני זאת אני, אני, אני לא יכולה לתכנן איזה מן אמא אני, אני כאילו כמו שאני מתנהגת בעולם אני מתנהגת גם עם דני	As a whole I sense that the whole motherhood topic – to which I came to at a fairly later age – really makes me 'meet myself' an opportunity for self-reflection, a process of self-discovery, truly look at myself	Daphna
ההליכה שלי עם הגדול היה לי קשה מאד אבל אני חושבת שעכשיו שיש לי איזה משהו לא יודעת שגם אצלי קצת קבלה וזה אני משהו אצלי מסתדר ואני מתחילה לדבר איתם יותר נכון יותר מתאים לכל אחד ולשים את הקשר הזה שאני רוצה	I think I now have more acceptance and it's something I am starting to understand more and I can start and see them and behave with them on a more individual basis, talk to them in a way that matches their individually	Lihi
כאילו הדבר הראשון שקופץ לי לראש וזה מעניין זה הפיזיות, המגע, הקרבה הפיזית	The first thing that comes into my head, interestingly is the physical side, the contact, the physical closeness	Tal
הקרבה הזאת להישאר באמת קרוב אלי כשהוא נרדם זה כמו קצת להמשיך לינוק אז פיזית ברגעים של העייפות או ברגעים הקשים יותר הוא נורא קרוב אלי פיזית – הוא ילד שהוא קרוב פיזית	That sense of being close, really close to me when he falls asleep, it is a bit like a continuation from breast feeding, so physically, in the more difficult times he is really close to me, he is a boy that is physically close	Daphna
לראות מה הילד שלך ולעזור לו להעצים את הדברים שבו גם נראה לי חשוב	To see what your child is and can do and to help them fulfil, empower them	Lihi
תנצל את הפוטנציאל שלך, תמצא אותו.	Try and make the most of your potential – fulfil that potential	Lihi
שאפשר לצאת לשעה וחצי אחר הצהרים ולהיות בגינה אז גם מוציאים אנרגיות, גם מתעייפים, גם קוראים יותר אינטראקציות כאילו את יוצאת למסע בזה פתאום יש כלב, או	The fact that you can go out in the afternoon, for like an hour and a half and be in the garden, allows you to release energy, get	Tal

שאתה עם חבר אז כל מיני דברים קוראים, יש איזה זרימה אנרגטית את רוצה לקרא לזה?	tired, and you have more interactions, like, you are going on a kind of journey, suddenly you see a dog, or you are with a friend, so different things happy, it's like there is a flow of energy, not sure how to call it?	
אני מבינה בעצמי שהאינטימיות של הנפש, הרבה יותר קשה לי להוציא אותו, כאילו אין לי בעיה לדבר עם אמא שלי על סקס שלי כאילו אני לא אדבר אתה על שלה זה לא (צחוק) אבל את יודעת ושהיא תראה אותי במערומי כאילו את יודעת היא ליוותה אותי בלידות כאילו חבל לך על הזמן...	I understand that the intimacy of the soul, of what I am feeling inside that's harder for me to express and let out, I mean I have no issues talking to my mother about sex – I mean I won't talk to her about her sex life (laughs) but you know I don't mind her seeing me naked you know she was there during the births of my children, I mean I am not shy with	Lihi
אני יושבת לידה על הפוף היא במיטה ואנחנו משוחחות על כל מני דברים, השיחה מתגלגלת להמון כיוונים לא תמיד יש לי כוח לפעמים אני מאד מאד עייפה בערב ואני אומרת לה "היום אין לי כוח לדבר יותר " אבל אני משתדלת כי היא מאד אוהבת את זה וזה זמן אינטימי שלי ושלה	I sit next to her on the bean bag, she's in bed and we just chat about lots of different things, the conversation just develops and spills into many different directions, I don't always have the energy, sometimes I'm really very tired in the evenings and I will say 'I have no energy to talk tonight' but generally I try because I know she really likes it, it is our intimate time together	Yaara
יש את השלב הזה לפני שהוא נרדם שמה הוא מוציא הכל ואז הוא, שם הוא חושף בפני את סודות ליבו	There is that period of time just before he falls asleep in which he lets it all out and he shares his deepest secrets with me	Tal
אני חושבת שאיתי הוא שואל את השאלות שמטרידות אותו נגיד, הוא מתחיל לשאול	I think that with me he asks the questions about things that really bother him, I mean he will ask	Daphna

שאלות נורא גדולות וקשות כן, אז הוא שואל את השאלות האלה ככה לפני השינה בלילה	really big and difficult questions, and yeah he asks these questions at night, before he goes to sleep	
כן אני מנסה לראות אותם ו גם להפגיש עם קושי אבל להפגיש עם קושי שהם יכולים, לרמתם	I try and really see them and to allow them to face difficulties but difficulties I believe they can handle	Tal
נורא פתיחות, נורא לקבל... קבלה לגמרי לקבל את מי שהם בכלל לא לשפוט אותם	It's a lot about openness, about acceptance... totally accepting who they are and not judging them	Yaara
אני רוצה להגיד כאילו רגישות וראייה לראות אותם להצליח להסתכל על הילדים שלי ולראות אותם, באמת זאת אומרת שאני רואה כל אחד בנפרד אז להמשיך לראות ולהבין את הילד שלי אז כאילו גם לראות וגם את הרגישות לפעול לפי כל אחד ומה שמתאים לו	I want to say that sensitivity and really seeing them for who they are, to succeed at looking at my children and really seeing them, I mean to see them as individuals, and to continue and understand my child and to see his feelings, to provide each child with what they each need	Lihi
סבלנות, אני צריכה בשביל עצמי לשים שם הרבה סבלנות	Patience, I need patience for myself, I need a lot of patience	Lihi
זה מנטרל בעסים כל השיחות האלה אם היא קצת יותר עצבנית או כועסת השיחה מפשירה אותה וזה מחזק מאד את הקשר	Those conversations neutralise anger, I mean if she is a bit angry or upset, those conversations calm her down and they strengthen our relationship	Yaara
מקום מאד מאפשר, מותר להם לעשות מה שהם רוצים, מותר להם לבכות, מותר להם לצעוק, מותר להם לצחוק, מותר להם		Chen
כי יש משהו בבועה הזאת של הלהיות ביחד שהוא מחבר משהו שפחות קורה ביום יום		Lola
בטיולים יש המון הזדמנויות ככה באמת לדבר באמת להיות באמת		Lola
אני גם נורא נהנית לראות איך הם נהנים		Shiri
אם אני יכולה להגיד מה אני אוהבת זה הביחד שלנו הזה של רק שישתינו של המשפחה שלנו		Lihi

אבל גם ככה זה מאד כיף הם מרגישים סוג של גיבוש		Lihi
ואני אומרת בסדר כשיהיה הזמן זה בדיוק יקרה והנה אני תמיד אומרת לו הנה אתה רואה דאגת עם הטיטול וזה קרה בדיוק בזמן		Daphna
אני חושבת שאני האמא הכי טובה לילדים שלי	I believe I am the best mother for my children	Lihi
שבשנה שהיא הייתה כל הזמן היא הייתה שנתיים עלי אבל בשנה הראשונה זה היה ממש כאילו בחופשת לידה, הייתי בחופשת לידה אז כולם אמרו לי "היא לא תזוז ממך היא" וכל הזמן אמרתי לאהוד "אני יודעת, אני יודעת שיהיה בסדר- אני יודעת שזה מה שייתן לה את היכולת ללכת ממני" וככה היה		Chen
בהרבה מאד דברים אני מצליחה בגדול ואני מאד מאד גאה במה שקורה כאן זאת אומרת גאה זו לא אולי המילה – אני שלמה		Michal
הם ילדים שמקבלים המון חם ואהבה פיזית		Tal
קרבה זאת אומרת הרגשת קרבה אמתית, אהבה קודם כל שירגישו שאוהבים אותי		Daphna
נראה לי שהחם, החם הישראלי שאין אותו בכל, הפתיחות הזאת והחם והטמפרמנט הזה הישראלי הוא נורא קל לעשות את כל הדברים האלה אני חושבת זה מרגיש לי שכן, נראה לי הרבה יותר קל להתחבר לילד שלך כשאתה שזה הטמפרמנט מסביב שזה בסדר לא יודעת זה משהו שהוא סביבתי	I think that the warmth, that Israeli warmth, that openness and warmth, this Israeli character, helps to make these things (that closeness) much easier, I mean I feel that it is easy to be close to your child when that's the spirit and outlook of your environment, it's all around you	Lihi
מאד אוהבים אותנו אבל מצד שני אנחנו לא מקבלים את מה שאנחנו צריכים כילדים אנחנו מקבלים את ה כאילו בבסיס כמובן את יודעת את ה טיפול אבל מבחינה רגשית לגמרי לא	I knew our parents really loved us but on the other hand we did not get what we really needed, I mean our basic needs were being met but our emotional needs, totally not	Michal
תכונות חשובות אני חושבת שאחד הדברים הכי חשובים בעיני או כשאני חושבת על רגעים	I think that an important quality, one of the most important things in my eyes, or when I think about	Shiri

קשים שלי ומה היה לי הכי כיף בעולם מאמא זה הרך והחם והליטוף	difficult time, the best thing in the world was the mother's gentleness, warmth and hug	
אבל בסך הכל יש כאן בעיקר המון אהבה	On the whole there is a lot of love in this household	Lola
קודם כל הדבר הכי טריוויאלי זה חם ואהבה ופשוט להיות שם בשביל הילדים שלך פשוט להיות שם ושהם ידעו שאת שם, בשבילם	First of all the most important thing is that trivial thing of that love and warmth and just being there for your children, I mean to be there for them and that they know you are there for them	Yaara
ההתכנסות המשותפת פשוט התכנסות משותפת לשבת לדבר להיות ביחד	The important thing is that getting together, I mean sitting and talking and simply being together	Yaara
יותר דברים פשוטים כאלה של היום יום – ביחד –	I think that important things are the simple day to day things – that being together	Chen
אני חושבת שפתיחות הדדית, שקיפות – להגיד את האמת גם כשהיא גם כשהיא כואבת כשהיא לא נעימה אז זה אני חושבת שזה חשוב, זה נותן לך קצת גם את התחושה שאתה יודע אפה אתה נמצא ואפה אתה עומד, ומה חושבים עליך ומה מרגישים כלפיך וגם אה..השיתוף, אז זה פתיחות ושקיפות ושיתוף אז זה מה שמייצר את ה, גם יש משהו בעיני ההתנהגויות האלו הם מייצרות גם איזה שהוא כוח בביחד המשפחתי את מבינה	I think the important things are that mutual openness with one another, transparency – being honest even when that honesty hurts and might not be comfortable, I think that's important, it gives you the feeling that you know where you are and what people think of you and feel towards you, oh and that sharing of things, so openness, transparency and sharing that's what makes this closeness, I also think these qualities create a kind of family strength, that family togetherness	Michal
אני אוהבת את הזמן ביחד.	I love our times together	Tal
אני אוהבת את הביחדנס הזה שלנו רק שלנו	I love that togetherness, just us being together	Lihi

Appendix 12 - Extract from interview with Lihi

So I went to see a psychologist and I am so glad I did that – get some help that is – as she really helped me and she described my son as powerful in all senses *Powerful?* Powerful, strong, intense yes – he is cute in a strong, intense way, and amazing, I mean really amazing, amazing, amazing but event when he is annoying and when he is cross it is in an incredibly powerful / intense way - he is a child with extremes / intensities	אז הלכתי לפסיכולוגית ואיזה מזל שעשיתי את זה לטפל בעצמי אז היא נורא עזרה לי והיא הגדירה לי אותו כילד עוצמתי מכל הכיוונים ?עוצמתי עוצמתי ,עוצמה ,כן – הוא חמוד בצורה עוצמתית וכאילו מדהים ובאמת מדהים מדהים מדהים אבל גם כשהוא מרגיז וגם כשהוא כועס בעצמו זה בעוצמות הוא ילד עם עוצמות

Appendix 13: Examples of Data from interviews and the identification of initial themes

Original 'item of interest' (Hebrew)	**Original 'item of interest' (translated)**
Initial Theme: Quality time together one-on-one	
אני אוהבת שאנחנו עושים את זה כי יש משהוא נגיד יותר מזה אני מאד מתאמצת, הרבה שנים הצלחתי גם שניסע לשבועיים שלושה לחול כי יש משהו בבועה הזאת של הלהיות ביחד שהוא מחבר משהו שפחות קורה ביום יום,.. בטיולים יש המון הזדמנויות ככה באמת לדבר באמת להיות באמת ואני פתאום גם מקבלת ילדה אחרת, פעם ראשונה שהשארתי אותו לבד והייתי אתה לבד הייתי בשוק, פתאום הילדה, שחקנו, נהנינו כששניהם פה בבית הם ממש נלחמים שניהם על צומת הלב שלי אמא שלי הייתה שרה לי שירים מאז שאני זוכרת את עצמי ובאילו אני חושבת שאני מכירה את כל השירים של ארץ ישראל הטובה והישנה בזכותה עם שרון היא נורא נורא אוהבת שאנחנו יושבות ומדברות אני יושבת לידה על הפוף היא במיטה ואנחנו משוחחות על כל מני דברים, השיחה מתגלגלת להמון כיוונים לא תמיד יש לי כוח לפעמים אני מאד מאד עייפה בערב ואני אומרת לה " היום אין לי כוח לדבר יותר " אבל אני משתדלת כי היא מאד אוהבת את זה וזה זמן אינטימי שלי ושלה אז יש לפעמים שאני באה ואני מלווה אותו לעשות ביחד פיצה, אוכל או קרקרים או דברים כאלה זאת אומרת הוא אוהב לעזור לי בדברים כאלה זה דבר שאני נורא אוהבת לעשות הוא נורא אוהב מוזיקה וזה דברים שלפעמים אני הולכת אתו אני יודעת אם אני שומעת על איזה קונצרט או משהו	I love going away, - more than that I make an effort to make it happen, for many years I succeeded in making it happen and we went abroad for 2 or 3 weeks, as there is something uniting about being in a bubble, together which is something that happens less in day-to-day life –on trips you have many opportunities to really talk and to really be And all of a sudden, I felt I was with a different child – the first time I had her on my own I was shocked, all of a sudden she… we played, we had a lovely time, I mean when they are both here they are constantly fighting for my attention. Since I can remember myself my mum used to sing to me and I think I know all the good old Israeli songs thanks to her I sit next to her on the bean bag, she's in bed and we just chat about lots of different things, the conversation just develops and spills into many different directions, I don't always have the energy, sometimes I'm really very tired in the evenings and I will say 'I have no energy to talk tonight' but generally I try because I know she really likes it, it is our intimate time together So there are times when I am next to him and we prepare pizza, food, crackers or stuff like that I mean he loves helping me do these things, I love doing that kind of thing

He loves music and we will sometimes we you know if I hear of a concert or something, we sometimes go and see shows – in the winter we do lots of walking together in town, I take him out of nursery and we will go for a walk and he might say 'mummy look what an interesting house' I said to him ' let's go for a walk just you and me just for a walk / jog' and he agreed which is amazing and I felt he understood me and that I understood him, it felt like it was the beginning of something - we must preserve this yeah I understand and I would love for this to happen more often I read to him in bed, and sing to him There is one song I have to sing three times (she laughs) – can't get out of that, it's really boring We have lunch together just me and her– then she might watch TV, we play together, just spend a nice afternoon together, sometimes we might go and eat out, you know once a week, depends on the mood- that's our quality time together Friday morning our eldest is still at nursery but the twins are not so we spend the morning with them But I truly didn't want anyone else in my life at that time, I really, really celebrated her, the breastfeeding, the togetherness, she is a very special girl, I didn't put her down during the first two years of her life	אנחנו הולכים להצגות לפעמים – בחורף אנחנו הרבה הולכים ברגל בעיר אני מוציאה אותו מהגן ולוקחת אותו ברגל ואז הוא אומר לי "אמא תראי איזה בית מעניין" באילו אמרתי לו "בו נעשה הליכה רק אני ואתה סתם נלך ג'וגינג כזה סתם נלך" והוא הסכים שזה אחלה והרגשתי שהוא מבין אותי ואני מבינה אותו ויש איזה שהיא התחלה – אנחנו חייבים לשמר את זה כן אני מבינה ברור לי אבל ברצון שלי הייתי רוצה שזה יהיה יותר כן אני מקריאה ספרים, נכנסים למטה, שיר ערש יש שיר אחד שאני צריכה לשיר שלוש פעמים (צחוק) אסור לצאת ממנו – נורא משעממם כבר אנחנו אוכלות ביחד צהריים היא מסתכלת בטלוויזיה אנחנו משחקות ביחד מעבירות את אחר הצהריים בכיף, לפעמים הולכות לאכל בחוץ פעם בשבוע תלוי במצב רוח – כן זה - כאילו הזמן איכות שלנו יום שישי שירן בגן הבנות לא אז אנחנו מבלים את הבוקר איתן אבל באמת באמת לא רציתי אף אחד בחיים יש לי רק אותה אה, ממש חגגתי אותה ממש ממש ממש ההנקה והביחד היא גם ילדה מאד מיוחדת לא הייתי מורידה אותה ממני כל היום עד גיל שנתיים מהילדות: אבל לא, בערב כשכולם היו יוצאים אני העדפתי להישאר עם ההורים שלי כי אח שלי לא היה בסביבה וזה היה את הרגע הזה להיות איתם בשקט אני יודעת שאני נותנת להן משהו שלעתיד כמה שהוא יותר קשה לי והייתי רוצה לפעמים לחזור הביתה ב 1 וחצי וללכת לנוח – במיוחד בהתחלה עם התאומות, לא קל תמיד להוציא אותה ב2 ולהתחיל להפעיל אותה ולהיות אתה עכשיו שהיא לא ישנה נגיד, אבל אני כל הזמן אומרת לעצמי אני יודעת מה זה נותן לעתיד

	When Chen was a child: But in the evening, when everyone else went out, I preferred staying at home together with my parents, my brother was not around and it was that peaceful quiet time of being with them I know I am giving them something for the future I mean as much as it would be easier to come home at 1.30 and go and have a rest, especially with the twins that was not easy taking her out of nursery at 2 and starting to do activities with her and be with her, you see she doesn't have an afternoon sleep but I keep on telling myself that I know how much it gives her in the long term
Initial Theme: Journey of self-development - having self-awareness; not repeating mistakes from the past	
התגעגעתי פשוט לתחושה שאני הייתי אדון לעצמי שעשיתי מה שאני רוצה ופתאום כל דבר כרוך ב..יש לי פה דבר קטן שתלוי בי, היה לי מאד קשה עם זה מאד מאד הנושא של האימהות באמת שבא לי בגיל מאוחר יחסית, מאד מאד מפגיש אותי עם עצמי אני מנסה את הדברים הפחות טובים לתקן איך אני מגדירה את עצמי עכשיו בתר אמא.....אני חושבת שאני האמא הכי טובה לילדים שלי – אני חושבת שאני מתאימה את עצמי באילו נראה לי, כן, לילדים שלי, לא לאף אחד אז אני לא מספיק מאוזנת הייתי שמחה להיות יותר מאוזנת, יותר רגוע הייתי רוצה להיות, אני לא מספיק רגועה, אם, אבל אני חושבת שלילדים שלי אני האמא הכי טובה שיש – באמת	I missed the freedom the feeling that I was my own master – it took me time to adjust to the fact that there was someone dependent on me The experience of being a mum which came to me at a relatively later stage in my life, has enabled me to get to know myself and connect with myself better I try and change the things I'm not happy about I believe that I'm the best mother for my own children – I feel I adapt myself to their needs, yeah for my children, not anyone else's – perhaps I am not quite as equally balanced as I would like to be, I would like to be calmer, I am not calm enough but for my kids I believe I am the best mother, really – I can honestly say I

feel very confident in how I am as a mother – I mean if you ask again what kind of a mother I am? I am a confident mother, I trust myself as a mother, I accept that I make mistakes – but who doesn't?	אני כל כך בטוחה ב אימהות שלי אני יכולה להגיד שזה, אגב אם את שואלת אותי את השאלה הקודמת איזה אמא אני? אמא בטוחה באילו את יודעת אני בטוחה בעצמי בתר אמא, אני חושבת, אני עושה טעויות אבל מי לא עושה טעויות?
I'm learning – I have ongoing discussions with myself in which I look at situations and I ask myself if I have done the right thing – I have ongoing discussions with my husband about what I think went well and what was not so good	אני לומדת אני עם הרבה דיונים עם עצמי, אם זה נכון, אני מסתכלת על הרבה סיטואציות ומנסה לשאול זה נכון זה לא נכון, אני מדברת הרבה עם בעלי באילו אפה עשית נכון אפה עשינו לא נכון, אפה באילו
With my middle son – I find parenting challenging – he challenges me and in my relationship with him as a parent I often find I face parenting dilemmas… I find I am questioning myself, and asking myself difficult questions	האמצעי שלי הוא ילד יותר מאתגר מבחינת הורות, הוא הבי מאתגר אותי, דווקא מערכת היחסים שלי איתו מעמידה אותי הרבה פעמים בדילמות הוריות ב.....ו.....ב את יודעת כל מיני תחושות של שאני בוחנת את עצמי או שאני שואלת את עצמי שאלות לא פשוטות
I have two philosophies about life: first parenting is not about perfection and about being a perfect parent because we are not perfect, and secondly – and I love this belief and it is a belief I have held from a young age and I share it with my children - in its essence life is about change, and we are constantly changing and evolving and the beauty is that you know that tomorrow is a different, a new day, and you can decide that this day will be different and even if what happened today was the hardest and most awful thing and you were awful as well you can decide for yourself that from tomorrow things will be different and even if you see only small improvements you have already succeeded in achieving change	יש לי שתי אמונות קודם כל הורות היא גם לא מושלמת כי אנחנו לא מושלמים והדבר שאני כל הזמן אומרת לילדים שלי שזה הדבר הכי יפה בחיים שמלווה אותי מגיל מאד צעיר ואני גם מאמינה בזה כתפיסת חיים החיים הם שינוי במהות שלהם הם שינוי אנחנו כל הזמן משתנים אנחנו כל הזמן עוברים שינויים והכי יפה הוא שאתה יודע שמחר יש יום אחר ואתה יכול להחליט שהיום הזה יראה אחרת ומה שהיה היום גם אם הוא היה הכי קשה והכי נורא וגם אם אתה היית הכי נוראי עבור עצמך אתה יכול להחליט עם עצמך שזה יהיה אחרת ממחר וגם אם קצת משתפר אז כבר עשית איזה שינוי קטן
	אני חושבת שבמשפחה של אמא לא דברו על רגשות לא הראו רגשות...לקח לי הרבה שנים ללמוד לבכות, ללמוד להגיד, ללמוד אה...לא לריב את זה, אלא להגיד את זה, להרגיש את זה אני חושבת שהבנתי את זה כשהלכתי ללמוד הנחיית קבוצות, זה היה נורא דינמי, אם הייתי מבינה לא הייתי מעיזה להתקרב, בדיעבד זאת הייתה המתנה הכי גדולה שנתתי לעצמי בחיים

My mum's family did not talk about feelings, they did not show feelings…it took me many years to learn how to cry, to talk and express, not to argue but just to say how it is and to feel it, I learnt it when I did my training, it was very dynamic, if I would have known it in advance I wouldn't have done it but in hindsight it was the best I have ever given myself I experienced violence as a child both from my brother and my dad – my dad stopped when one day when I was 8 years old I turned around and said 'you will never hit me again' and I believe that any person that has experienced violence has that violence in them, and I recognised it in me and that it could burst out with one of the kids so I walk out of the room as there is no way on this earth that this would happen in my house I have learnt to stop and I walk away – I have learnt that it is normal that they sometimes fight – it is part of their relationship as siblings	אני חוויתי אלימות בתר ילדה מאח שלי ואבא שלי היה מכה אותנו אבל הוא הפסיק איתי ברגע שאמרתי לו בגיל 8 "אתה לא נוגע בי יותר" אז אני יכולה...אני חושבת שכל אדם שחווה אלימות יש בו את האלימות הזאת שזה מקום שאני לא חוויתי אותו עם שירן חוויתי אותו עם עומר שראיתי את עצמי כבר, שזה עומד לפרוץ ממני זה עומד לקרות אתה אז הייתי יוצאת מהחדר – אז זה משהו שאין מצב שיקרה בבית שלי אה...לפעמים אני פשוט עוצרת, אני פשוט הולכת – זה בסדר שהיא מרביצה להן לפעמים באילו אין מה לעשות זה אחים, זה טבעי, זה בריא, זה נורמלי לפעמים אני פשוט הולכת אם אני רואה, היא לא תרביץ חזק, אז אני פשוט הולכת
Initial Theme: Sensitivity to individual needs – someone gets me	
After he fell, I said to him 'nothing happened right?' he gave me such a hurt look and said 'mum, nothing did happen – it hurts' I was left speechless, choked, and have never used that expression again, it was an invaluable life lesson for me, 'nothing did happen – don't deny me to feel what I am feeling' I love going to the beach, really, really, really do, I really enjoy seeing how much fun they are having, because to go to a restaurant is something that I enjoy doing more and they just	– אמרתי לו "לא קרה כלום נכון?" הוא הסתכל עלי במבט נורא נעלב ואמר לי "אמא כן קרה כלום – כואב לי" עכשיו אני כמו שאת רואה מדברת הרבה, אני נשארתי בלי מילים, נחנקתי, לא השתמשתי במינוח הזה בחיים יותר, זה היה שעור מאלף, כן קרה כלום, אל תמחקי לי את התחושות. אז אני משתדלת שתחושות יהיו נוכחות פה אני מאד אוהבת ללכת לים מאד מאד מאד מאד, אני גם נורא נהנית לראות איך הם נהנים כי למסעדה אולי אני יותר נהנית והם פשטו אוכלים (צחוק) אבל בים...את צריכה לראות את העיניים שלהם, זה כיף, זה כן זה הרבה עבודה אבל אני אוהבת

, הייתי יושבת לידו, הייתי שרה לו שירים, זה היה יכל להמשך לפעמים זה היה שבועיים באלה כל ערב, יכולתי לשבת לידו שעה וחצי והוא עדיין היה ער, בסוף הוא איבד את השינה הוא היה מתוסכל, והייתי מרימה אותו הוא היה נרדם עלי בכל זאת, אבל כאילו שבועיים שלמים ככה ניסיתי, עד שהבנתי שהוא עייף והוא לא צריך אותי ואני מפריעה לו בזה שאני יושבת לידו	eat but in the beach, you have to see their eyes, its great fun, a lot of work but I love it For a long time I would sit by his bed, sing to him, this went on for a couple of weeks, every evening I would sit by his side for over an hour and he would still be awake, he just got so frustrated as he could not fall asleep, and I would pick him up and sometimes he fell asleep but after two weeks I finally realised that he was tired and he didn't need me to sit there by his side, to the contrary, my presence there was disturbing him and stopping him from falling asleep.
היה לה מאד קשה למשל היא הייתה עושה כמה תרגילים והיא הייתה אומרת לי "יו אני חייבת אני חייבת לצאת החוצה לקפוץ בטרמפולינה" הייתי אומרת לה "יללה צאי תחזרי נמשיך"	She struggled for example when she had to do a bit of homework – she would say to me 'wow, I really need to go out and jump on the trampoline for a bit and I would say – right, off you go and we can carry on when you are ready to come back'
אבל אני חושבת שעכשיו שיש לי איזה משהו לא יודעת שגם אצלי קצת קבלה וזה אני משהו אצלי מסתדר ואני מתחילה לדבר איתם יותר נכון יותר מתאים לכל אחד ולשים את הקשר הזה שאני רוצה	Give them what they need – respond to their individual needs Now that I am more accepting – I feel I understand things a bit better and I can start to connect and communicate with them according to their individual needs
אני בדיוק אתמול חשבתי על זה, על הזמן הזה לפני השינה אם אני באמת צריכה לקצר אותו כי ככה אומרים, כי אצלו זה זמן כזה שהוא מאד אה, שם הוא מדבר איתי ושמה הוא נפתח ושמה, אז נכון שהוא עייף נורא והוא צריך ללכת לישון כאילו הרבה דברים, זה כאילו הזמן שאני מרגישה שאני מגיעה אליו אז אני לא כל כך רוצה לוותר על הזמן הזה, אני כן חושבת שאני מבינה אותו או שאני מצליחה לקרוא אותו הרבה פעמים מה עובר עליו	I was just thinking about that yesterday, about that time before he goes to sleep, should I really try and shorten that time together, because that's what we are advised to do? because for him it's a time when he talks and he really opens up, so I know that he is tired and he needs to go to sleep but I feel it is a time when I really manage to reach and connect with him – I do
בגיל שנתיים הייתי מדברת אתה כמו שמדברים עוד פעם בהתאמה, אני יורדת לגובה העיניים ואני מדברת אותי גם מה שכן היה לי בבית לטוב ולרע שתמיד הדברים היו בגובה העיניים, לא הנחיתו עלי, הם התייחסו אלי ההורים שלי מגיל מאד מאד קטן בילדה מאד מאד גדולה, לטוב ולרע	
בהתחלה הרגשתי המון מצפון כלפי אלה שאני לא מחזיקה אותה, באיזה שלב הסתכלתי עליה ואמרתי, כל הזמן ניסיתי לפצות אותה, ואז אמרתי אני מגבירה כאן איזה משהו לא נכון, ראיתי שהיא לא צריכה אותי כמו עדי צריכה אותי, היא צריכה אותי אחרת. היא לא צריכה שאני כל הזמן אחזיק	

אותה ו יערסל אותה, היא צריכה לרוץ, היא רוצה להשתולל, היא רוצה, אנחנו הולכים למוני, היא בכלל לא מסתכלת עלי, היא עם כל הבנות שם והחברים משתוללת והולכת וחוזרת ושירן ועדי עלי, צריכות משהו אחר לגמרי	feel that I really understand him and often I can really see what he is feeling or going through I talk to her at her level, I explain things like when we need to go and why, give details about what will happen and why we need to do things – I don't just give orders – I feel it helps with the attachment as it builds trust and feeling safe and secure My parents always talked to me at eye level, they didn't talk at me but to me, they always treated me like a big girl, for the good and for the bad Initially I used to feel really guilty towards Ella that I am not holding her, until at one point I looked at her and said, I am constantly trying to compensate her, and I am intensifying something that is actually not an issue, I saw that she did not need me like Adi does she needs me in a different way. She doesn't want me to hold her and cradle her, she wants to run, be wild, when we go to Miri she doesn't even look at me, she's with the girls and friends having a good time, she goes and comes back whilst Shiran and Adi are on me, they need something completely different.
Initial Theme: doing something different from the rest of the week; time out but also time out on an individual level	
יש פתאום איזה מן שקט כזה ורוגע כזה ונעים כזה ומן הפוגה כזאת מכל השבוע אני מאד מאד אוהבת את זה ואנחנו בית חילוני לגמרי, לגמרי, לגמרי, לגמרי אבל אני מאד מאד אוהבת את השעות האלה לפני שהשבת נכנסת	I love that time before the Shabbat comes in around 5.30 6, 7 – everything is really quiet and feels calm and peaceful, it's like a break, respite from the week, I love that and we are a completely secular household, but I love those hours before the Shabbat enters

אבל אז אנחנו עושים הרבה פעמים ארוחת ערב בבית ואז היא קצת אחרת שאנחנו אמרתי לך שאנחנו מדליקים נרות לא ב שעה הנכונה (צחוק) לפעמים אחרי שנכנסה שבת ושרים קצת שירים לקבלת שבת שהוא שר בגן אז הוא שונה באמת שונה אז כשבבית עושים ארוחה יותר חגיגית פותחים יין, או שהולכים להורים שלי לפעמים אנחנו נוסעים לשישי שבת להורים של אורן לא שישי שבת זה בדרך כלל – כל פעם משהו אחר אין איזה שהוא, אנחנו די מבלים, באילו אנחנו מבלים רב הזמן ביחד, או שהולכים לחברים, או למשפחה, נוסעים לים, מטיילים, מאד באינטנסיביות הפעילויות	(Friday evening) If we are at home we will light candles – often at the wrong time - sing songs for Shabbat – sometimes we might invite friends over Friday evening is different, if we are home we have a more festive meal, bottle of wine or we go to see my parents, or we go to see Oren's parents Friday Saturday are usually – well every time its different we have a good time, we spend the time together, we see friends, family, go to the beach, walks, quite full on
Initial Theme: Importance of family and family time together	
אבל אנחנו אנשים מאד זורמים לא נצמדים לא ללוז לא לשעות ...אבל אנחנו מאד מחכים לשישי עם המשפחתיות ואנחנו לא מפספסים את הארוחה וזהו ארוחת ערב משפחתית בדרך כלל אנחנו מארחים כאן את ההורים של בעלי ולפעמים אנחנו נפגשים עם האחיות שלו אני מאד אוהבת את הטיולים שהיינו עושים *טיולי טבע כאלה וזה* כן, כן, מגיעים עושים מסלול, אחר כך עושים פיקניק חוזרים הביתה אחרי הצהריים זה היה מאד כיף, אני מאד אוהב ארוחת ערב משפחתית – מאד חשוב לי ההתכנסות המשותפת פשוט התכנסות משותפת לשבת לדבר להיות ביחד יום שישי, כל יום שישי אנחנו הולכים לאכל ארוחת ערב אצל ההורים שלי ... שאר האחים שלי רב הזמן עושים שבוע	Usually we are people that go with the flow we are not set in to strict routines… but we both really look forward to our Friday evening meal with the families and we try to never miss a Friday night We always have a family diner, either with his parents, sisters as they all live on the kibbutz I love the nature walks, you know, you finish your trek and you sit down and have a picnic and then come home it was really good fun, I also love our family dinners, they are really important for me Those gatherings, just being together sitting and talking and being together Dinner with her family every Friday - Every fortnight my brothers and sisters are there too –

all the cousins are there, there is a real feeling of family, noisy, messy, amazing –late night, sleep over with the cousins - very, very strong bond – but I love that togetherness when it's just us and we don't often get much of this time out of the house but it is magical when it happens…we don't have enough of it but also because we don't create it enough	שבוע אז לא כולם תמיד נמצאים. מאד כיף כל הבני דודים מגיעים ואווירה משפחתית, רעש, בלגאן, מהמם ואז הולכים לישון מאוחר כמובן, הולכים לישון אצל הבני דודים, מאד מאד מגובש, מאד
Regular meal time together – I make a point to ensure that this happens After my mum died my dad spent every Saturday with us which meant Saturdays looked different, and although the kids love him and all that he can't really walk far which meant spending many Saturdays at home which has now changed as he has a new partner so we have our Saturdays back – Sometimes there is a sense of duty and obligation towards family members – dictates / restricts /requires/ obliges What is very present in our household is the effort to do things together…I think here the activities are more suitable – then when I grew up - to the ages of the children, but that importance of being together, doing things together yeah, that came from my childhood	אבל אני אוהבת את הביחדנס הזה שלנו רק שלנו ואין אותו הרבה מחוץ לבית אבל זה מקסים כשזה יוצא ואין אותו הרבה גם כי אנחנו לא מיצרים אותו מספיק ונסענו רק אנחנו – באילו זה היה חמשתנו אז לסוף שבוע במצפה רמון – זה היה מדהים – זה היה הכיף הזה הביחד הזה שהצלחנו ליצר אבל אם אני יכולה להגיד מה אני אוהבת זה הביחד שלנו הזה של רק שישתינו של המשפחה שלנו,
Regarding things within Israeli culture that encourage the development of a secure attachment – first of all there are so many Jewish celebrations, holidays, and even amongst secular families they are holy rituals that you don't break, lots of intermixing and coming together around food	ארוחת ערב משותפת כן אני מאד מקפידה על זה כן אחרי שהיא נפטרה אבא שלי היה הרבה זמן פה אז זה מכתיב שבתות מאד אחרות כי אמנם הילדים מאד אוהבים אותו וזה וזה אבל הוא לא מסוגל באמת ללכת ו זה הרבה שבתות ככה בבית עכשיו למרבה שמחתי יש לו חברה חדשה אז הוא הרבה פחות פה ויש שוב ככה שבתות שלנו זה דבר אחד שהוא נורא נוכח פה גם- את הניסיון לעשות דברים ביחד אה....אני חושבת שאצלי בבית הם יותר מותאמים לגיל של הילדים, אבל המקום של ה להיות ביחד, לעשות ביחד כן בא מהבית שלי כן, בטח .....אני חושבת שבסוף יש המון המון ...קודם כל החגים – יש מלא חגים – וגם במשפחות שהן חילוניות יש דברים ...ש...כמאט פרות קדושות שקשה לשבור כמו שאומרים – פסח, חנוכה – מין כאלה....המון מיזוג סביב אוכל
Friday evening, we usually go to his family, his brother is there too so all the cousins and brothers are together, and they play	אז אנחנו בדרך כלל בשישי בערב נלך לשם אז הם ישחקו ביחד יותר דברים פשוטים כאלה של היום יום – ביחד

אז בדרך כלל אני אוכל איתן ואהוד אוכל עם שירן – בדרך כלל אני אובלת עם הבנות ואהוד אוכל עם שירן בדרך כלל זה מה שיוצא מאד חשוב לי האחיות שלהן כל הזמן אני "אחים זה הכי חשוב, אחים זה הכי חשוב" נורא מכניסה לה את זה לראש	I enjoy the day to day more simple things – being together One of us always sits with them during meal times – not necessarily all together because of timing but one of the parents with the girls Their sisterhood is very important to me and I keep on saying to them 'siblings are the most important thing, siblings are really important' I try and get it into their head
Initial Theme: Being sensitive and understanding; catering to their needs; confidence in parenting role	
אני מאד אוהבת ללכת לים מאד מאד מאד מאד, אני גם נורא נהנית לראות איך הם נהנים כי למסעדה אולי אני יותר נהנית והם פשטו אוכלים (צחוק) אבל בים...את צריכה לראות את העיניים שלהם, זה כיף, זה כן זה הרבה עבודה אבל אני אוהבת ואז השינה מה שקורה בדרך כלל זה שהוא נרדם אצלנו במיטה – הוא ישן איתנו בחדר, המיטה שלו צמודה למיטה שלנו, הוא נרדם אצלינו במיטה, אני שוכבת לידו עד שהוא נרדם (צחוק) כל מה שלא צריך לעשות אנחנו עושים ואני אומרת בסדר כשיהיה הזמן זה בדיוק יקרה והנה אני תמיד אומרת לו הנה אתה רואה דאגת עם הטיטול וזה קרה בדיוק בזמן ואם היינו עושים את זה מוקדם מדי אני מרגישה שהפוטנציאל לנזק הוא נורא גדול אני מאד תמיד מרגישה שאני מבינה אותו אני נורא מבינה אותו, ואני נורא מזדהה אתו, נורא עצוב לי אם עצוב לו, גם אמא שלי היא כזאת אני חושבת שזה נורא חשוב שילד ירגיש שההורה רוצה את טובתו	Really, really, really love going with them to the beach and see how much they enjoy themselves – it's a lot of work but I love it He sleeps in our room next to us – he falls asleep in our bed, I lie next to him until he falls asleep – we do everything you are not supposed to do And I say to myself, ok when the time is right it will happen and I say to him (my husband) you see you were worried about the nappies and it all worked out and if we would have pushed for it to happen earlier I feel that this could have been damaging I feel I really understand him I get him, I can identify with his feelings – my mum is the same I believe it is really important that a child feels that the parent wants what is best for him

Being able to identify with your child – gives a feeling of being close, it's part of the closeness	הזדהות גדולה שזה גם מצד אחד נורא נותן תחושה של קירבה זה לא נותן תחושה של קירבה זאת הקרבה זה חלק מהקרבה
It's funny because when we went for a walk I felt he understood me and that I understood him, and there was something about our responses to things, our attitude to things, sensitivity, I call it sensitivity but I'm not sure if it is the right thing but I feel that sensitivity is the right thing, he is very sensitive and I believe that this sensitivity helps the closeness between us	סתם זה מצחיק שבדיוק הלכתי איתו אבל היא הראתה לי ש הוא גם מבין אותי, אני יכולה להבין אותו והוא גם מבין אותי, ואני מבינה אותו משהו בתגובות שלנו לדברים, ביחס שלנו, לרגישות, אני קוראת לזה רגישות אבל אני לא יודעת אם זאת ההגדרה הנכונה אבל מרגיש לי שרגישות זה הבי נכון להגיד שהוא נורא רגיש יש בו איזה שהיא רגישות שכן עוזרת לקרבה בינינו
I need patience for myself – lots of patience – sensitivity and ability to really see them and their needs, to continue to see them as individuals and to see and understand every child and to be able not only to see the needs but to have the ability to act on it and give them each what they need	סבלנות, אני צריכה בשביל עצמי לשים שם הרבה סבלנות אם, אני רוצה להגיד באילו רגישות וראייה לראות אותם להצליח להסתכל על הילדים שלי ולראות אותם, באמת את אומרת שאני רואה כל אחד בנפרד אז להמשיך לראות ולהבין את הילד שלי אז באילו גם לראות וגם את הרגישות לפעול לפי כל אחד ומה שמתאים לו
I really try to be free in the afternoons, when I'm with them I rarely answer the phone – I want to be there for them – I believe being attentive to their needs and really trying to see them – I don't always succeed but I try	אני מאד מנסה להיות פנויה אחר הצהרים כמאט לא עונה לטלפונים באילו, שאני לא אהיה בבית ואדבר בטלפון עם חברה בשעות האלה אני חושבת שקשובה, ומנסה לראות אותם – לא תמיד מצליחה אבל מנסה
I put my eldest to sleep – she still sleeps in bed with me I think that all children need routine but with Shiran having that routine was calming – knowing what was happening next I understand that it's for a period of time it's not for life it's now when they are still young that they need me to be there for them 100%	אני מרדימה את שירן, שירן עדיין ישנה איתי – אני חושבת שכל הילדים צריכים שגרא אבל אצל שירן זה ממש היה מקום מרגיע עוד פעם אני תמיד זוכרת שזה לתקופה זה לא פור לייף (באנגלית) זה עכשיו שהן קטנות שהן צריכות אותי ב 100%, טוטאלי – אני מאד טוטאלית

Appendix 14: List of 56 Initial Themes

Initial Themes
1 Quality time together one-on-one
2 Importance of social interaction – being active - rather than electronic devices
3 Journey of self-development - having self-awareness not repeating mistakes from the past
4 Sensitivity to individual needs – someone gets me
5 Spending time with family –
doing something different from the rest of the week
6 time out but also time out on an individual level
7 Importance of family and family time together
8 Being sensitive and understanding - catering to their needs
9 Importance of family and family time together
10 Keeping them present in your mind
11 Strong connection – part of you
12 Physical connection
13 Sensitivity
14 Strong connection – open dialogue – strengthens the connection
15 Sociocultural influences / expectations
16 Wanting to be there for them and with them
17 Believing in the importance of the mother's role
18 Strong emotional bond
19 Connection to grandparents
20 Wanting to please the child – having the child in your thoughts
21 Being involved in their lives
22 Open and honest relationship – always there for them (emotionally and physically) unconditionally
23 Doing things for them – being reliable
24 Encourage to try things
25 Don't play psychological games
26 Giving credit, support, admiration – make them feel good about what they have done - genuine, unselfish delight or pride in the accomplishment of the other
27לפרגן - Give credit when credit is due; be complimentary when someone has done well
28 Forgiveness – acceptance
29 Focus on the journey not the final destination or product
30 Fair and proportionate consequences
31 Embracing familiarity warmth – intimacy shared emotional sociocultural bond
32 Prioritising your children over your career
33 Boundaries – routine – stability
34 Story time – story telling – quality time together – shared experiences
35 Uniqueness of the role of the mum – something that you are, conveyed through the actions that you do
36 Providing the sense of being safe, secure, protected - always there for them
37 Sociocultural values, expectations, pressures and behaviour

38 Importance of family – importance of role mum plays in the family
39 Acceptance – of character, of strengths and weaknesses,
40 Empower and trust
41 being confident – being calm – self-belief - and in control (but not controlling)
42 Consistency in bringing children up
43Taking responsibility for your actions
44 Legitimization – enablement - of expressing feelings -
45 Someone that makes you feel good –
46 Finding similarities / things they have in common
47 Mum as a role model
48 Someone's got their back
49 Shared experiences
50 Sense of connection – belonging – being part of a community of a people
51 Have confidence – trust – in yourself
52 Positive image of the mother – seeing the role of the mum as unique – important
53 Being able to communicate on an intimate level, intimacy of the spirit/ soul
54 Enjoy the moment – enjoy your time together
55 Finding – creating opportunities to connect
56 Having support

Appendix 15: Example of how a final theme was developed from initial items of interest

Initial item of interest	Initial theme	Higher level theme	Final theme
My dad tried using tactics of saying to me 'forget it, don't bother studying, what do you need it for anyway? You probably won't manage to do well so it will be a waste of time no? just go to the army and be any clerk' - he hoped that I would say to myself 'I'll show you what I can do' and that this might give me a push to prove him wrong and take my studying seriously – but instead I ended up believing him and feeling 'wow, that's what my dad really thinks of me?' I don't think I really realised how much I believed the things he said, until I remember how one day, well it was more a point in my life when I decided to take myself and my studying more seriously but I was so scared that	Encourage your children to try things Giving credit support, admiration – make them feel good about what they have done -	Empower לפרגן Lefargen - Have a genuine, unselfish delight or pride in the accomplishment of the other Foundations from which to grow	Foundations from which to grow Foundations from which to grow

I would try and fail, that I would crush and burn, do you see what I'm saying? ...in essence, what I remember from my childhood is that my parents forgot to allow the time and place to recognise the good things children do, that's really what I remember.			

Appendix 16: List of Final Themes

Final Themes
8. Availability – being there for the child unconditionally 9. foundations from which to grow 10. meaningful time 11. parenting - a journey of self-discovery and self-development 12. a safe and supporting place where emotions can 'just be' 13. open and honest dialogue 14. sensitivity to individual needs

Appendix 17: Example of a Mind Map