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The effects of cult's on its members are well documented in both the research literature and the media, and focus mainly on negative aspects (Dawson, 2006; Olson, 2006).

Although the research literature has examined the perceptions of cult members and the social and psychological processes related to the formation of cults, there is almost no reference in the research literature nor even public visibility to the point of view of children that were born or raised in cults.

This is also the case regarding Goel Ratzon's cult in Israel -A famous polygamist cult that run an 'extended family' community of 17 wives and 50 children living in a Tel-Aviv poverty neighborhood. Goel Ratzon's was their husband, father and their spiritual leader.

During 2009, sexual abuse and incest of minors were exposed, leading to the cult's dissolution by the authorities in 2010. The leader was sentenced to 30 years in prison and each wife/ mother rehabilitate her life with her own children, separately from the cult's community members.



Introduction

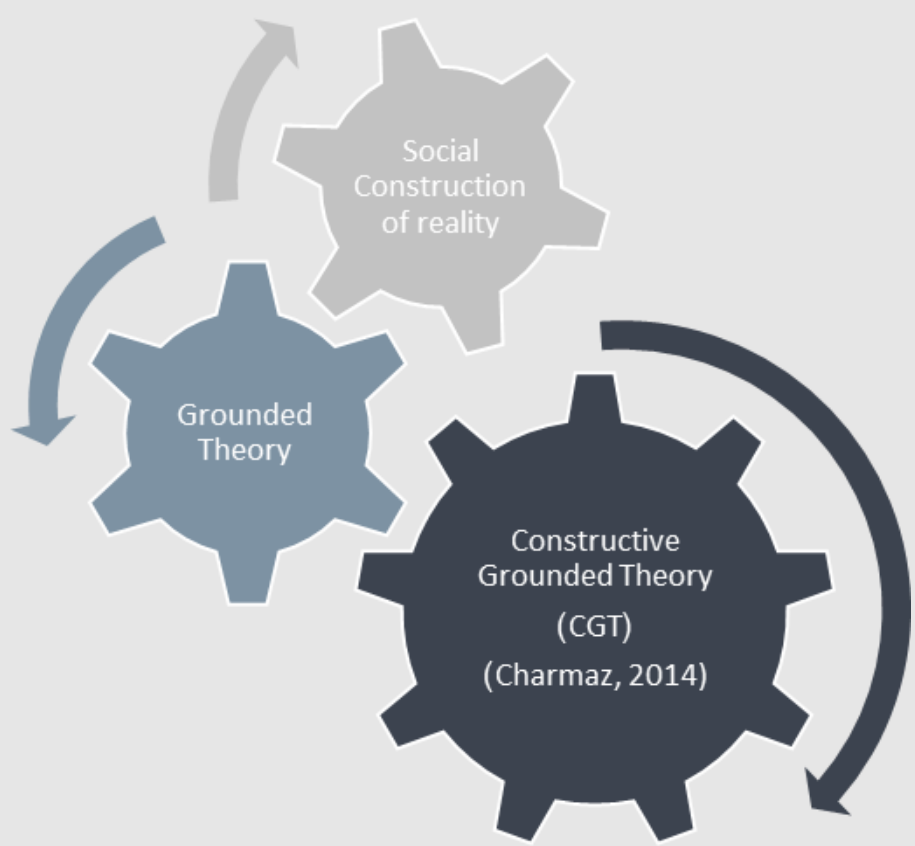
Methodology

Method was comprised out of 2 components: the theoretical perspective of social construction of reality and the qualitative approach.

Combining those two together set the notion that constructive grounded theory was the best method to use in this particular research.

Constructive grounded theory methodology (CGT), facilitates a systematic analysis of the data in order to build a theoretical model anchored in the data (Charmaz, 2014; Strauss, 2003).

The use of CGT addresses the questions of "what" and "how" in the research, which leads to the interpretation of the experience



Participants & Procedure

First, I mapped the entire community by drawing the family tree. Second, I used purposeful sampling combining snowball sampling. Data collection includes 21 semi-structured interviews which were divided into 17 children and four mothers / wives.

Results

Data analysis comprised five main themes:

- 1. Life in Tel-Aviv
- 2. 'The Day when everything fell apart': the dissolution of the cult
- 3. Relationships with significant others
- 4. Development of identity in childhood and adulthood
- 5. Relationships with society outside the cult and with the Israeli media

The second theme talks about the day when everything fell apart the day of dissolution of the cult. One sub theme that emerged from the data was the theme of the encounter with authority figures.

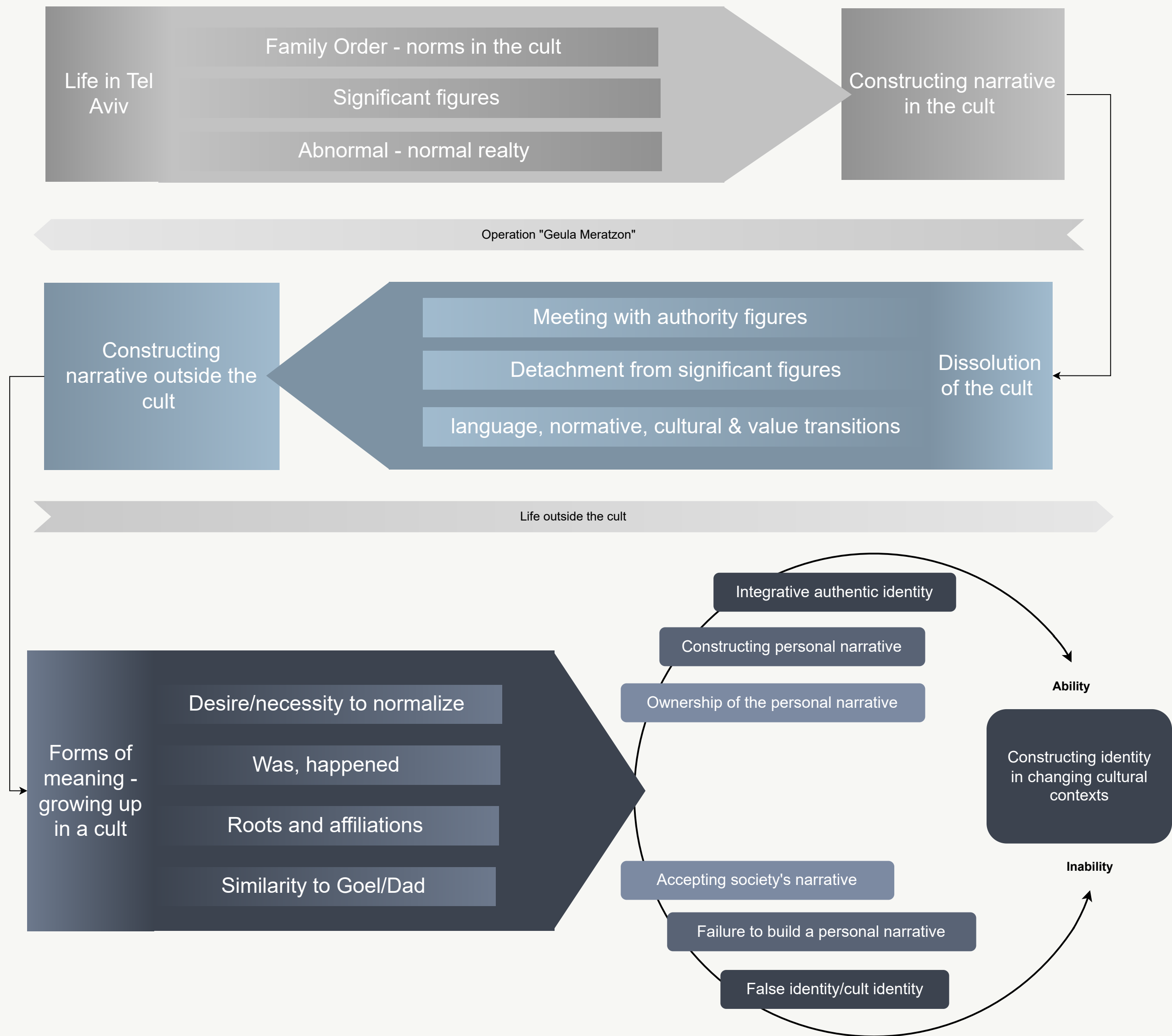
The in vivo representing this sab theme is 'I wanted to be saved but I got hurt'.

Ariel, 12 years old in the day of cult dissolution demonstrates it:

"After the police came to the house, welfare services came in and checked and saw. and there was some kind of social worker there.. who was very nice. And she would take me with her daughter too. To eat and stuff... And...then one day she wanted to take me to her house. And... on the way there she says to me something like this: 'Listen, we are now going to my house. And...don't think about the fact that it's so big and clean. Everyone have their own house..'. And I didn't think about it until then. Like... It just hit me in the face. because I arrived at her home and saw the differences. which I have not had until now. Probably... like it gave it more meaning. And then it was really with her that this whole part of the...realizing how different I am from reality started for me. And she did it in a very unprofessional way. I don't think she used the right words at all in this situation. Why did she take me to her house anyway?"

A summary model anchored in the data:

"For you it's just a story, for me it's life, that I experienced firsthand"



Discussion

This research set out to examine the perceptions and experiences of children who grew up in Goel Ratzon's cult



The findings correlate with the literature in three main axes:

- 1. The axis of socialization - movements between the 'normal' and the 'abnormal'- discuss the similarity and differences between life in the cult and life in the Israeli society in terms of primary socialization for second generation cult members (SGA) (Burr, 2006; Gergen, 2010; Roar-Strier & Nadan, 2020; Matthews & Salazar, 2014).
- 2. The axis of narratives - 'between loss and salvation'- discuss the collision between the personal narrative (loss) and the public narrative (rescue) that causes to adopt a dichotomous perspective (Semmler & Williams, 2000).
- 3. Forming an Identity on the axis of society - Individual: between the 'I' and the 'we'- transitions and adjustment to society for SGA meaning they need to be 'reborn'. Therefore, Constructing a complex narrative can suggests whether children can form the ability or inability to constructing identity in changing cultural contexts (Bromberg, 2000).

Conclusion

This study depicts the life narrative of children who grew up in Goel Ratzon's cult

- When encountering with people who were born and raised in cults, professionals should take into consideration the personal perspective in order to provide suitable care and proper tools for adjusting life outside of the cult.
- Professionals also needs to examine their own personal perspective regarding cults in order to prevent being harmful and judgmental.
- policy makers should allocate budgets to form special services for second generation cult member (SGA) as well as to provide professional Training

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