19 Application of the five-phase model for dyadic analysis in qualitative research to relationships between older Israeli bereaved mothers and their daughters-in-law

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The chapter presents an application of the five-step qualitative methodological model for dyadic analysis to relationships in families of older people. The chapter describes a five-phase model for dyadic analysis and demonstrates the phases of analysis in a study dealing with the relationships between older bereaved mothers and their daughters-in-law (widows). The chapter includes a discussion of the benefits of applying the model in studies dealing with relationships in families of older people in a variety of situations. The model provides a solution to the methodological gap concerning the topic of relationships in families of older people in the research literature, and discusses the ethical and methodological challenges facing researchers who use this model to investigate relationships in families of older people. The conclusion derived from the application of the dyadic analysis model is that the model allows a systemic perspective that expands the understanding of relationships in families of older people. The analysis enables a growing understanding that begins in the first phase, with the individual and subjective perceptions of older people, extraction of the different perceptions of the two interviewees regarding their relationship in the second phase, expansion to the understanding of the relationships in the family as a whole and between the key characters in the relationship in the third phase. The fourth phase, the abductive one, provides new theoretical insights about the family through a dialog between the theory and the analysis. Finally, in the last phase, the model makes possible an overall understanding of the families that participated in the study, and its products may help social workers who assist older people and their families plan appropriate interventions that may improve and preserve family relationships.

Introduction

Owing to the increase in life expectancy, the importance of dealing with the relationships of older people with their families has increased. Demographic changes affect relationships in multigenerational families, which have become common with increased longevity and must deal with illness, dependence and loss over many years. In most cases, the family serves as the primary source of support for older people (Parker, Mills and Abbey, 2008; Piercy, 2010).

Studies about older people indicate that relationships in old age are important for their mental well-being. Loneliness of older people has been found to be related to their mental well-being. Studies show the association between loneliness and the development of depressive symptoms (Cacioppo et al., 2006), and that loneliness is a risk factor for the mortality of older people (Litwin and Shiovitz-Ezra, 2006; Shiovitz-Ezra and Ayalon, 2010). Studies have examined various types of social networks, and have shown the

importance of family relationships for the mental well-being of older people (Litwin and Shiovitz-Ezra, 2010; Park et al., 2013). At the same time, studies have shown the importance of examining the quality of the relationships and the interaction between older people and their families, with emphasis on relationships with spouses and children, which have been demonstrated to affect the mental well-being of older people (Holtfreter, Reisig and Turanovic, 2017; Santini et al., 2015; Zhang and Lu, 2019).

Family relationships depend on various components, such as family values, cultural norms, the older person's level of functioning, age and gender, as well as the psychological characteristics of family members, previous family relationships and the family tradition of division of roles. All these create a mosaic that influences family relationships and functioning (Piercy, 2010).

Despite the centrality and importance of the relationships between older people and their families, most studies that have investigated these relationships have been conducted from an individual-developmental perspective (Blieszner, 2006). Little reference has been made in the research literature to intergenerational family history in the family and the quality of intergenerational relationships in old age. Most of the research literature deals with the primary caregivers and with the support of older people (Whitbeck, Hoyt and Tyler, 2001), with the complexity of emotional relationships in the family, differences in family structures, interdependences between roles, rules in the family, and patterns and outcomes of care for older people within the family setting (Silverstein and Giarrusso, 2010). Studies that have investigated the provision of support by families to older people have focused on the older person as the recipient of family support. There is now an understanding that the provision of support by older people to younger generations is just as important, and therefore it is essential to examine in depth the relationships in families of older people, and the support that older people provide and receive in the family (Gierveld and Dykstra, 2008).

In a review of the research literature on ageing and family life (Silverstein and Giarrusso, 2010), the authors addressed the methodology used in most of the studies conducted on this topic. According to them, studies on relationships in the ageing family were based primarily on quantitative methodologies, large-scale sampling and statistical innovation. They argued that qualitative methodology and thick descriptions of micro-family environments are needed for a deep understanding of relationships in the ageing family, to discover the frameworks that older people and their families use to negotiate the gap between expectations and behaviors related to family help and support, tensions between dependence and independence, and more. The research literature on the families of older people also tends to be differentiated based on the relationships that are being explored, such as relationships between spouses, relationships of older people with their adult children and more. Thus, a holistic methodology that examines comprehensively the relationships in the families of older people is needed but missing. Dynamic models are essential for understanding why and how relationships in the families of old people change over time in response to normative and abnormal events (Silverstein and Giarrusso, 2010).

In the area of mourning and bereavement, there is also a lack of research literature that examines post-loss intergenerational relationships, and the development of relationships over time in light of changes taking place in each family member and in the family as a system. Although it is well recognized that bereavement is a "family affair" (Stroebe and Schut, 2015; Stroebe, Schut and Boener, 2013) that affects all members of the family and their relationships, bereavement theory and research have focused primarily on *individual grief*, with insufficient attention to the effect of a death and loss on the *family* as a relational

system (Breen et al., 2018; Stroebe et al., 2013; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). Studies that adopt a systemic approach to understanding bereavement place greater emphasis on the nuclear family than on the family of origin of the deceased as a unit of investigation. These studies examined mainly the coping of bereaved parents (Bar-Nadav and Rubin, 2016), widows (Barak and Leichtentritt, 2015; Griese, Burns and Farro, 2018), and the relationship between bereaved parents and their other children (the siblings of the deceased) (Malkinson and Bar-Tur, 2005). The relationship between the nuclear family and the extended family following loss, specifically the relationships between the in-laws, remain understudied.

Research has stressed the important role of the son/husband in the relational dynamic between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law (Rittenour and Kellas, 2015). Despite this centrality of the son/husband in the relations between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, and in ensuring the continuity of the relationship (Morr-Serewicz, 2014; Rittenour, 2012), there are almost no studies on the implications of the absence of the son/husband following loss on the shaping of the relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law both in the short term, close to the loss of the son/husband, and in the long term, when the bereaved mothers reach old age.

Given the importance of examining the intergenerational relations in families of older people, the need arises for a methodological model for qualitative data analysis that would assist in examining these relationships and make possible data analysis in qualitative research dealing with these issues. The purpose of the present chapter is to fill this gap with methodological analysis methods in qualitative studies dealing with relationships in families of older people. In this chapter, we demonstrate the application of the model we developed for qualitative analysis of family dyads to study relationships in bereaved families in Israel, where the dyads included older bereaved mothers and their daughters-in-law (their sons' widows).

Sample research: relations between older bereaved Israeli mothers and their daughters-in-law (widows)

We demonstrate the application of the model through a dyadic analysis of the relationship between older people and their families in a qualitative research conducted in the phenomenological tradition (Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007). The purpose of the study was to understand the participants' perception of the relationship dynamics between mothers-in-law (older bereaved mothers) and their daughters-in-law (widows) following the loss of their son/husband. In this chapter, we present an analysis of three dyads, from three families, which are part of a broader study investigating relations between older bereaved Israeli mothers and their daughters-in-law. In each family, the older bereaved mother and her daughter-in-law (her son's widow) were interviewed. Both women in the dyad were aware of the fact that their counterpart was also interviewed.

The study population included ten bereaved mothers and ten widows whose sons/husbands died while serving in the Israeli military, the police or the security forces. The participants were identified by social workers in the Family and Commemoration Department of the Ministry of Defense, and were interviewed in 2018. The sons/husbands lost their lives between 2000 and 2010. At the time of the interviews, the widows' age ranged between 44 and 51 years, and that of the bereaved mothers' between 73 and 87 years. All the interviewees were Jewish. Most women lived in cities in the southern part of the country and in geographic proximity to one another.

In the following section, we present the analysis of three dyads, which were the only dyads of women from the same family in the sample of the broader study; all other interviewees in that sample belonged to different families, and therefore could not be included in this analysis.

Data collection

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to understand the subjective experience of the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship as perceived by the interviewees, and the dynamics of the evolving relationship between the women. To this end, an interview guide was drafted. The interviewees were asked a broad opening question about family relationships, especially about the relationship between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. Subsequently, additional questions were asked about the relationship, for example: “Tell me about the time you met your daughter-in-law/mother-in-law, and the relationship between you at that time”, and “Tell me about your relationship with your daughter-in-law/mother-in-law since the loss.”

The interviews were conducted by three veteran social workers (12–30 years of practical experience with bereaved families, with an average of 24 years), with significant experience working with older bereaved mothers and widows as part of their clinical work. None of the social workers who conducted the interviews worked directly with the interviewee as part of their job. The interviews were conducted in the homes of the participants, and lasted on average from one hour to an hour and a half. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis

Analysis of the relationship between bereaved mothers and their widowed daughters-in-law, illustrated below, relies on the five-phase model of dyadic analysis (Hochman, Segev and Levinger, 2019). This application of the model for the study of older people is relevant in cases when (a) the research question is aimed at investigating the relationship of the older family member with one of the family members, or with the entire family, sharing a common experience and reality, and (b) when investigating the research question, for ethical or epistemological considerations, the researchers collect data separately from the older person and one of the family members about their relationship or about relationships within the family as a whole. This type of data collection makes possible a holistic understanding of family relationships that affect the lives of the older member, which cannot be understood by interviewing the older person alone.

According to the model (Hochman, Segev and Levinger, 2019) the analysis of interviews collected from family members includes five main steps that were conceptualized in accordance with Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory. The first phase, *microanalysis*, included an inductive thematic analysis of the subjective perception or experience of the phenomenon, to understand how each participant experienced and perceived the phenomenon, and the meaning they attach to it in their subjective accounts. To this end, each individual narrative was analyzed to identify units of meaning arising from each interview separately. Next, we searched for repeated patterns of meaning that emerged from the various interviews. The second phase included a *dyadic analysis*, where the units of analysis were the dyads. We examined the themes that emerged from each dyad and assessed the overlaps and contrasts between the individual narratives at the descriptive and interpretive levels. Our aim

was to reach an understanding of the shared dyad reality by reconstructing a relationship narrative that describes the way in which each individual perceives the other in the dyad, and how each of them perceives the relationship as a whole. The third phase, *exoanalysis of the family narrative*, explores the dynamics of family relationships through the dyadic perspective. In this phase, the focus is on the family narrative, on the relational dynamics within the family as one unit. Each member of the dyad, and the dyad as a unit, account for the systemic understanding of “a web of family relationships that was larger than the dyadic relationships” (Hochman, Segev and Levinger, 2019, p. 9). The fourth phase, *abductive top-down analysis of meaning making*, aims to develop a systemic meaning and understanding of the insights gained in earlier phases regarding family dynamics, to shed new theoretical light on the data through continual dialog between the data and existing theories. The fifth phase, *a cross-family analysis*, produces a holistic understanding of all the families as one group, including the similarities and differences between them.

Ethical considerations

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the School of Social Work at Sapir Academic College. Each participant signed an informed consent form. Privacy and confidentiality were strictly observed, and all identifying details were obscured. No information obtained in the interviews was transferred to the social workers handling the participants' cases. The interviewees received a detailed explanation from the interviewers about the purpose of the research, its importance and the protection of the confidentiality of the participants' personal information.

Five phases of analysis of in-depth interviews with multiple family members

Below we explain and illustrate each of the phases of the model, based on the analysis performed at each phase of the study, to illustrate the implementation of the model and the outcomes of each phase, as well as their contribution to the understanding gained about the relationships in the family of the older person.

Illustration of phase 1

In the first phase of the analysis, we examined the subjective significance of the loss of son/husband for the participant, both for the bereaved mother and the widow. Separate analysis of each interview revealed that all the participants described the loss as a traumatic event, difficult to cope with, whose significance received different meaning for bereaved mothers and widows. The older bereaved mothers described that, alongside coping with mourning for the son, a process in itself too difficult to bear, they had to deal with additional loss and deterioration in their physical and cognitive function, which further encumbered and challenged the ongoing grieving process. Sophie said: “When my son was killed everything was fresh. Now I have forgotten many things, so much time has passed. I didn't believe that I would live so many years after his death.” Shula, another bereaved mother, said:

My hearing is not good anymore, I have many problems at my age, I am forgetful, I want to talk, I know what I want to say but the words don't come out, but the pain is there and it will remain.

It also became evident that bereaved mothers faced new losses of family and close friends who passed away:

I have lost a child for life, and it is very, very difficult, I can no longer go out, so I have conversations with a social worker in my house.... My brother passed away recently and it's getting harder and harder.

Finally, during the interviews, the bereaved mothers often mentioned their age as a factor that makes it difficult for them to cope with the loss and with family difficulties.

Unlike the bereaved mothers, who were preoccupied with their present subjective experiences in their old age, the widows noted their difficult coping in the past, when they became widowed, and were caring for young children. For example, Anna described the loss as a young woman, caring for a small child who was orphaned from his father:

I won't lie, after he was killed I didn't want to live. I was only 24, with a small child.... Some people find a solution in alcohol and drugs, but I wasn't like this, and I said, how would it help if the child lost his mother too?

In the interviews, the widows describe the children as a motivation for continuing to live. Noa said:

You realize you must go on living, there's no choice. You have a choice of going into depression and drug therapy, or standing on your feet and saying, there's nothing to do, we have to go on living for the children.

Sarah said:

You think about the children and think about yourself, what do I do and how will I cope. I had many difficulties and many thoughts, I was confused. I feel that I had a life before and a life after. When my husband died half my strength was gone.

Another theme that emerged from the widows' interviews touched on loneliness and the social stigma that manifested itself in distancing and labeling on the part of society, which they endured for many years. Noa said:

I would talk about my difficulties and they would say, so what if you're a widow, don't make yourself out to be helpless. They didn't understand what it means to raise children without a father when you're 32 years old.

This stigma was also evident to partners. Noa related: "Some people think widowhood is a contagious disease, some men I went out with were frightened by the word widow. On one hand pity, on the other hand it frightens them." Anna said: "I felt very alone, I didn't want to, I didn't want to phone and cry, and I felt caution on the part of everybody, as if they were telling me 'how would you feel, we have spouses and everything?'"

In sum, the first phase of the analysis highlighted the difference and uniqueness in the subjective personal experiences of older bereaved mothers and of their widowed daughters-in-law. Each woman appeared to be preoccupied with the concerns and struggles associated with the phase of life in which she found herself, ascribing a different meaning to the

struggle with grief: the widows focused more on the period following the loss, whereas the mothers spoke about the loss in the context of their own old age.

Illustration of phase 2

In the second phase of the analysis, we examined how the older bereaved mother and the widowed daughter-in-law perceive their relationship over the years, from the time of the loss to the present. In their descriptions, alongside similarities in the perception of the relationship, contradictions emerged, as well as information that expanded our perception of the relationship between the two women, which helped to broaden the perspective of the delicate and fragile dynamics between bereaved mothers and their daughters-in-law. Thus, we obtained a picture from two perspectives on the relationship, as perceived by both parties.

Similarity and overlap can be found in the dyad in which one of the bereaved mothers, Sophie, described the deterioration of her relationship with her daughter-in-law after the latter met a new partner:

When she first started to go out with her second husband it was very difficult for me. When I walked into the apartment and saw an army uniform I almost fainted. I told her, you're joining a new family, and it isn't ours.

Her daughter-in-law, Anna, described the distancing and the difficulty in their relationship when her second husband moved into the picture:

The truth is that the relationship went somewhat sour once I had a partner and I remarried ... I was very much afraid of her reaction, I was afraid it would ruin our relationship, and when she found out, there was a period when they took it very hard.

The analysis at this phase made possible a rich understanding of the complexity of the relationship in each dyad of a bereaved old mother and a daughter-in-law.

Alongside the similarities presented above, contradictions were also found between the perceptions of the women. For example, Sarah described the present relationship between her and her mother-in-law, after they were reconciled: "Today, my mother-in-law respects me very much, to this day she calls me 'my daughter-in-law.' My mother-in-law is a kiss and a hug; we're really in good relations." By contrast, the bereaved mother, Dalia, describes a more complex picture: "I'll tell you the truth, I concede to her but I don't forgive. Because she cursed my son, I will not forgive her in my life." Dalia described the gap between how she feels about her daughter-in-law's behavior and her own easygoing appearance: "We meet, laugh, talk as if nothing happened. What I feel inside me is something else, and what you must show outwardly is something else." Sarah, her daughter-in-law, described the forgiveness and her present relationship with her mother-in-law as close and loving: "I love my mother-in-law and I maintain excellent relations with her. She has always loved me and done things for me and pampered me."

Thus, implementing dyadic analysis made it possible to understand the relationship described by both sides beyond the descriptive level. We found similarities in some of the descriptions of conflicts and reconciliations between members of the dyads, and, at the same time, difficulty on the part of the bereaved mothers to fully forgive their daughters-in-law. Our findings show that in addition to recognizing support, help and mutual respect,

bereaved mothers placed blame on their daughters-in-law, which resulted in conflict or disconnect between them. This understanding was obtained from the combined analysis of the two interviews, and would not have been possible without it.

Illustration of phase 3

In this phase, we examined the dynamics of the entire family from the perspective of the bereaved mother and widowed daughter-in-law dyad. Each participant in the dyad described the network of family relationships, which is more extensive than the relationship between the two of them, and which has affected their relationship over the years. Thus, we obtained information on family dynamics from a dual and broad perspective. In this phase, we identified similarities in the depiction of key family figures by each member of the dyad, including the father-in-law, the children/grandchildren, the siblings of the deceased son/husband and the parents of the widow/daughter-in-law. We also obtained descriptions of key family events, and similar expressions. Thus, we were able to achieve a broader understanding of the network of relationships in the older bereaved mother's family, facilitated by memories, descriptions of family history and family stories.

In addition, at this phase, the information obtained on the family history of pre-loss and post-loss relationships included a description of other family members and of their roles in the relationship between the older bereaved mother and the daughter-in-law. In all the dyads, we found that the key figures and the central motives for preserving the relationship between the bereaved mother and the daughter-in-law were the children/grandchildren. For example, one of the older bereaved mothers, Shula, described the role of her grandson in the reconciliation between her and her daughter-in-law after seven years of disconnect: "The child caused our reconciliation ... He wanted us all to come to his bar mitzvah, refused to celebrate without us, and we all came and then we were reconciled." Her daughter-in-law, Noa, provided a similar account of the role of the son/grandson in the reconciliation between them:

After we haven't spoken for seven years, it was my son's bar mitzvah, and the poor kid felt in the middle; on one hand he was in touch with my mother-in-law and wanted his grandmother to be at the party, and on the other hand, I wasn't talking to her and I didn't know how I would invite her with all this conflict. In the end my mother called and invited her, and at first she didn't want to, but finally my sister-in-law persuaded her: there's no way out of it, we must do it for the sake of the child. And they really came, and there was a lot of crying and was very difficult. They brought presents to the child, and that's how we were reconciled.

Participants provided information not only about specific figures but also concerning the general dynamics of the family. Periods perceived by them as times of distancing and disconnection between family members were described alongside periods of reconciliation and closeness. For example, in one of the dyads, the older bereaved mother, Dalia, described the change in family relationships from close and cohesive to remote, following the loss of the son:

Before the disaster we were a happy family, a good one, there's nothing to say. We were together, and all the time enjoyed life together, until this trouble came and since everything has been destroyed, the whole family was destroyed, everyone lives for himself, no more no less.

Her daughter-in-law, Sarah, described the relationship in the family after the loss as follows:

That period was difficult for the whole family. This blow crushed them and me as well, a distance was created, arguments started in the family. From people who were supportive and generous, loved and respected each other, we became disconnected and remote.

Thus, we obtained information from two different perspectives about relationships in the family as a whole. In most cases, the descriptions of family dynamics were quite similar. In some cases, one perspective expanded our understanding and the picture that emerged about family relationships. In most cases, similar references were made by both women to key events and turning points in family relationships, such as bar mitzvah, funeral, the period after the loss, etc. This information was necessary for understanding the relationships in the family as a whole, and not merely between the older bereaved mother and the daughter-in-law.

Illustration of phase 4

In this phase, abductive analysis made it possible to make the transition from the inductive understanding that we obtained from the older bereaved mothers and their daughters-in-law to a systemic understanding of the way in which they experienced the shared family reality, through a continual dialog between the theory and the data analyzed in the previous phases.

In the present case, we chose to analyze the relationships in each family based on the McMaster model (Epstein et al., 1993; Miller et al., 2000), which is used by family counselors to assess family functioning in six areas: (a) problem solving, (b) communication, (c) roles, (d) emotional response, (e) emotional involvement and (f) behavior control. The McMaster model is by nature systemic, and made it possible for us to make the transition to a systemic level of meaning, which is what was needed to conceptualize the relational dynamics and ascribe meaning to the family dynamics, as they emerged in the previous phase.

Because of limited space, we demonstrate below the analysis of family dynamics based on two of the six dimensions of the McMaster model, communication and roles, as expressed by a bereaved mother and her daughter-in-law. Dahlia, an older bereaved mother, described communication in the family as an act of concession and forbearance, she being the one who makes the concessions and shows restraint, demanding it also of her daughters, the widow's sisters-in-law:

When I used to sit at the table and we all sit together, and she says something to one of the kids or something, I don't get involved, I pretend I don't even exist. They talk, and I see one of my girls wants say something, and I tell them "girls come to me". I go with them to the kitchen and tell them: "Don't say a word to her about what she said, no matter what she said, don't answer her, because if you answer her a fight is going to break out, and who's going to pay the price? Only I, who won't see the grandchildren."

The widow, Sarah, described the same pattern of communication from her point of view:

We have a good relationship, we meet, talk. It's not self-understood that every time my sisters-in-law see me, they come and hug me and tell me "how are things", and still call me sister-in-law. They understand that it doesn't pay to spoil things because in the end it's the kids who will be hurt, not me. That's what got them to make peace and show love and pamper and talk.

Examining the relationship from the point of view of the division of roles in the family reveals that in the presence of mutual respect and good relations, the older bereaved mother and her spouse (if he is alive) are assisted by the younger daughter-in-law in various functional areas such as transportation, shopping, repairs in the home, etc. At times of disconnection and separation, they are deprived of these functions. On her part, the grandmother plays an important and significant role in the lives of the children/grandchildren, as Noa, one of the daughters-in-law, said:

If I can help, I help her. Often I take her to the doctor, or if there is a bereaved mothers' day, I take her. And it doesn't go without saying that she's taken by her daughter-in-law because her daughters have no time, this is not supposed to happen. She is an 82-year-old woman, and very active. For every remembrance day I took her and also brought her back.

She went on to say: "She's a very warm, pampering woman, buys gifts for the children on birthdays, calls them all the time and worries about them. She cooks and exerts herself for them, she does everything for them." The bereaved mother, Shula, said:

Our relationship today is excellent. She helps me a lot, I can't complain.... When I'm sick she comes and helps, calls. Helps me a lot. She gives of herself, cooks and brings me food, and overall she's okay ... with me and the children.

She adds: "Even when we were not on speaking terms, I was constantly available for the children. Would take them for a walk, take them out, pamper them, feed them. Until they are grown, they come and I pamper them."

Illustration of phase 5

In the final phase of the study, we conducted a cross-family analysis to expand our understanding of the similarities and differences between the three dyads. Its purpose was to obtain a view of all the families as one group, and to find connections between the different themes and the patterns of relations in the different families. This was intended to achieve a fuller understanding of the dynamics and processes of development of the relationship between the older mothers and their daughters-in-law, and, overall, of the relationships in the entire family.

Based on the understandings gained for each family in the earlier phases of the analysis, we identified three patterns of connection that were found in the various families who participated in the study. We referred to these patterns as (a) narrow bridge over turbulent waters (Dalia and Sarah), (b) break and forgiveness (Noa and Shula) and (c) the war over the connection (Sophie and Anna).

In the family in which we identified the pattern of connection in general, and between the daughter-in-law and the older bereaved mother in particular, as a bridge over turbulent

waters, we found many difficulties in family communication and in the relationship between the two women, since the time the daughter-in-law joined the family. Similar perceptions were described by both participants. These complex relationships led to a break and prevented meetings between the grandmother and with the grandchildren for several years. Following this break, the two seemed to have succeeded, with the help of the family (the daughter-in-law's parents, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law) to reconcile. But the phases of analysis indicated gaps and differences in the perception of the connection today: whereas the daughter-in-law described reconciliation and a loving family, the bereaved mother described resentment, inability to forgive and continual restrained behavior and concessions on her part to be able to see her grandchildren. The restrained communication, full of obstacles, and the non-reciprocal division of roles revealed in phase 4 exacerbated the fragile nature of this pattern of relationships.

In the second type of family, development of the relationship appears to have shifted from bad to better, after relations of mutual respect in the past, described by the two women in the dyad, have suffered from a turbulent and difficult conflict that led to a seven-year break following the death of the son/husband. But the turning point, which was mediated by the son/grandson, has led to mutual forgiveness, warm and open communication, and mutually supportive and helping roles.

In the third type of family, despite difficulties experienced and described by the two women from the beginning, they reported a mutual decision not to give up on the relationship for the sake of the son/grandson. The description is one of struggle of each woman with her own emotions, with the age differentials and with developmental tasks they were facing to preserve the relationship, of mutual help and support roles over the years, without breakdowns, even during difficult periods.

Discussion and conclusions

In the present chapter, we demonstrated an application of a data analysis model in qualitative research appropriate for examining various issues relating to relationships in the ageing family. This model allows analysis of data derived from interviews with older people and at least one other family member. We illustrated an analysis of interviews of bereaved mothers and their daughters-in-law with a view to examining the dynamics of the relationship between them after the loss of their son/husband, and the relationships in the entire family following the loss.

In light of the paucity of qualitative studies examining relationships in the ageing family in general and intergenerational relationships in particular (Silverstein and Giarrusso, 2010), the present chapter offers a methodology for qualitative data analysis in studies aimed at investigating relationships in the families of older people. The model implemented in this chapter is that of the five phases of dyadic analysis (Hochman, Segev and Levinger, 2019). These phases were detailed and illustrated to show that this methodological model can be used to study relationships in the families of older people. The model makes possible a holistic and systemic understanding of how older bereaved mothers and their family members perceive and construct family relationships and experience a shared family reality (Reczek, 2014).

The chapter proposes a way of using qualitative methodology that allows in-depth study of issues related to relationships in the families of older people, and provides a holistic understanding of relationships in families of older people in a variety of normative and non-normative situations. The model can help explain and interpret information about

family experiences in a range of ageing-related situations, such as older people in need of nursing assistance from family members; older people and families dealing with various family crises, stress, and trauma situations; and older people who have become widowed.

The first three phases of the analysis were inductive. The first phase, which focused on the subjective experiences of the research participants, highlighted the diversity and uniqueness of personal experiences and of the perception of loss at various developmental stages in the life cycle: old age and young adulthood. Because the two women are at different developmental stages, their grieving processes are different. This is consistent with the research literature on the subject of the mourning of widows and bereaved parents, which indicates that the mourning of bereaved parents is an ongoing process, whereas that of the widows is tempered with passing time. A few years after the loss, widows begin to recover, are better able to accept the loss, restore their lives and usually return to normal daily functioning (Blackburn, Greenberg and Boss, 1987; McCrae and Costa, 1993).

In the second phase, we expanded the perspective regarding the different conceptions of the relationship between the two women, and how each perceives the other. The dyadic analysis of the interviews revealed gaps and contradictions, together with overlaps and parallels in the narratives of the old bereaved mothers and their daughters-in-law. Such understanding of the complexity of the relationships would not have been possible without the analysis of the two interviews as one dyadic unit. In the third phase of the analysis, we expanded our perspective regarding the key figures involved in the relationships formed between the older bereaved mothers and their daughters-in-law, and of the relationships in the family as a whole. The fourth, abductive phase helped the conceptualization of research findings by providing new theoretical understandings of family relationships through a continual dialog between the data and the theory (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012). The McMaster model, whose purpose is to examine family functioning, which we used in the fourth phase, served as an organizing interpretative framework for the units of meaning that emerged in the first three phases of the analysis. Thus, we achieved a systemic understanding of various dimensions of the relationship between the older bereaved mothers and their daughters-in-law, and of the functioning of the family as a whole following the loss. The fifth phase allowed for a broader understanding of different relationship patterns in different families.

Alongside the methodological contribution of the implementation of this model, the products of the analysis have implications for the practice of social workers and family caregivers working with bereaved and multi-generational families where the bereaved mother is of old age. The findings provide a systemic understanding of relationships in families under their care, and may form the basis for planning family interventions with the entire family. These interventions should be based on an understanding of the common reality shared by the older people and their families.

Implementation of the five-phase model for dyadic analysis must address several challenges. The first is to integrate the socio-cultural element to which the family belongs, and address those elements, as for example, the perception of loss in a given culture, the place of the older person in the family from the perspective of that culture and the social affiliation of the family. Another challenge has to do with the fact that the model is based on data collection in separate interviews. On one hand, this allows each family member to openly express her views about her experiences, but on the other, it presents ethical challenges during the data collection phase, such as the dilemma whether to inform the interviewees that their family member also participates in the study (Taylor and De Vocht, 2011). Other challenges arise at the time of reporting the findings, when various issues may

surface, including aspects of the family that have not been mentioned, exposure of which has the potential to harm one or both interviewees and exacerbate an already fragile relationship in the family.

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