



# Constructions of Children's Risk, Well-Being, and Protection among Social Workers Serving the Ultra-Orthodox community in Israel

Netanel Gemara

Supervisors: Prof. Dorit Strier, Dr. Yochay Nadan

Hebrew University- Nevet

# International study

- Nevet



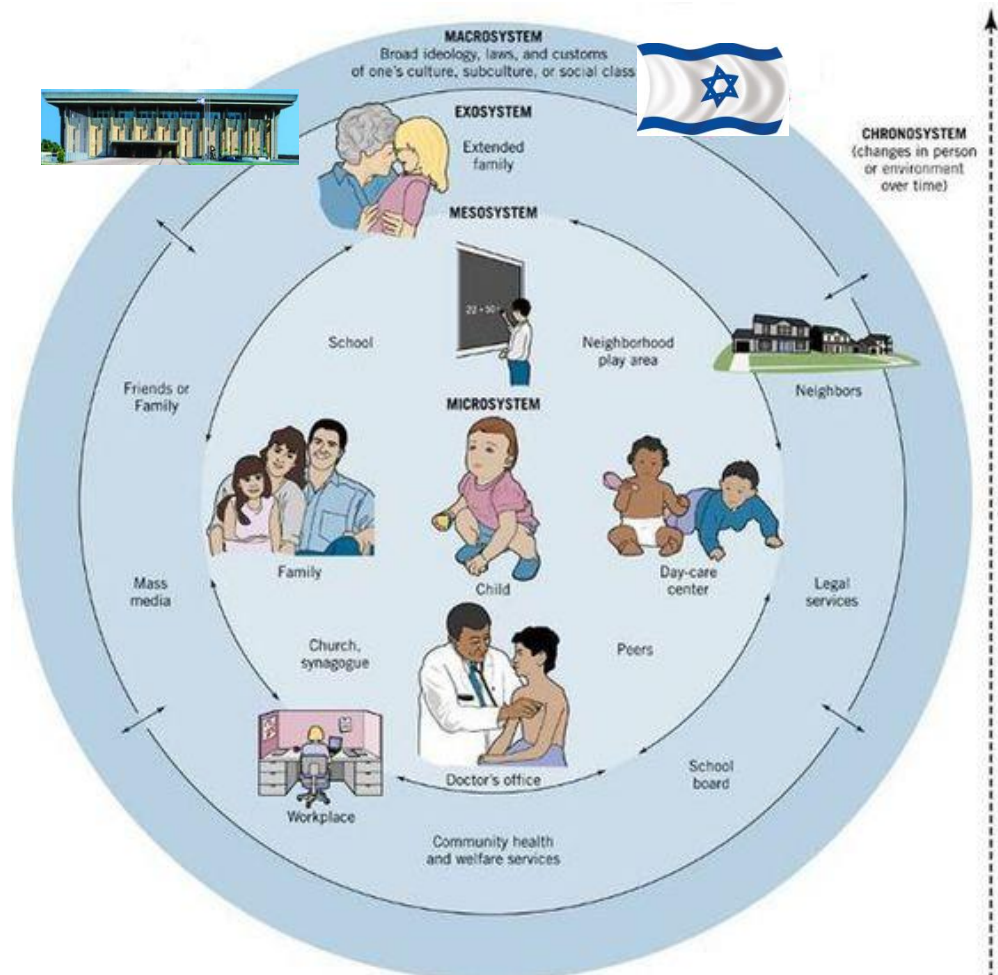
- Constructions of Children's Risk, Well-Being, and Protection among Parents and Professionals within diverse communities

# International study

- Parents who are second generation immigrants from Morocco, and social workers who work in their neighborhood - **Lital Yona (HU)**
- Social workers and mediators (cultural brokers) who work with the Ethiopian community - **Shelly Engdaw-Vanda (HU)**
- African American mothers who were child welfare clients- **Tara Keeley (Penn)**
- African-American Lesbian Mothers' Family Experiences- **Brie Radis (Penn)**
- Educators and health professionals who work with the Ultra-Orthodox community - **Rivka Keesing (HU)**
- Social workers who work with the Ultra-Orthodox community - **Netanel Gemara (HU)**

# Context Informed Research

- Bronfenbrenner's model, Context informed research



# Research Study

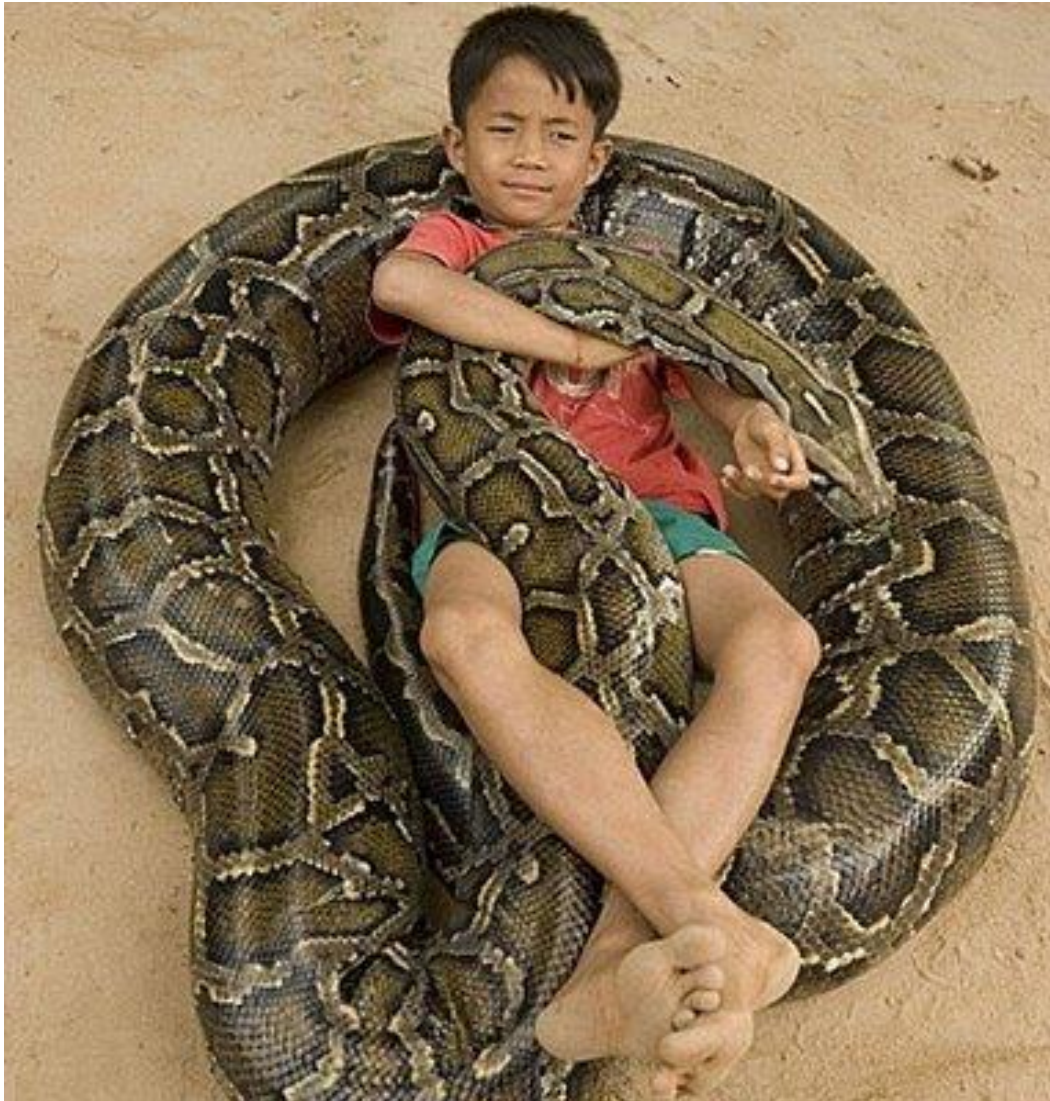
Constructions of Children's Risk,  
Well-Being, and Protection  
among Social Workers Serving  
the Ultra-Orthodox community  
in Israel

# Child maltreatment- a social problem





# What is dangerous?



# The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Children at risk are those who live in situations which harm their ability to actualize their rights in the following domains:

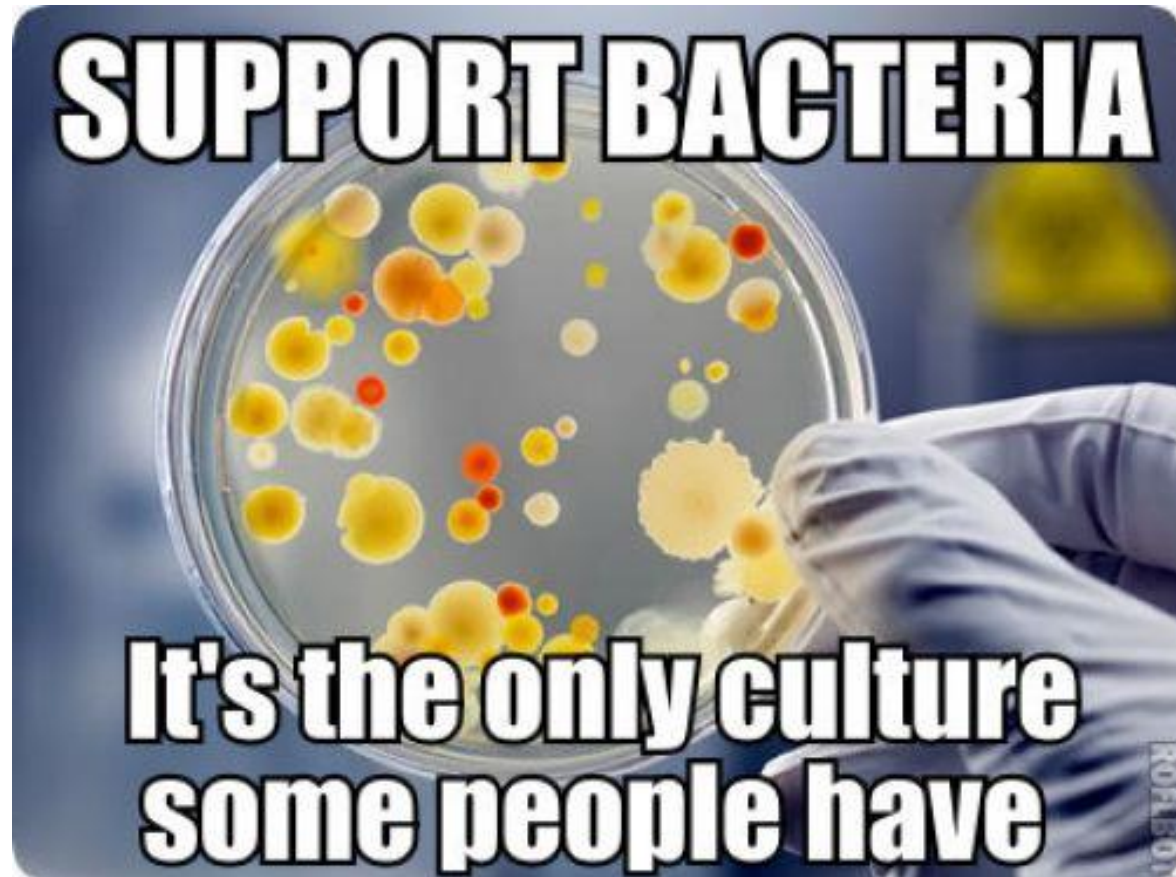
1. health, development, and physical existence
2. attachment to family
3. acquiring and studying skills
4. mental and emotional health
5. social connectedness
6. protection from others and from themselves



# Culture, Context and Risk

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlfy9LplmB4&t=4149s>

# Culture and Risk



# Professionals' Perceptions



**LEAVE IT TO THE  
PROFESSIONALS**



**KEEP  
CALM  
I'M A  
SOCIAL  
WORKER**



# Ultra-Orthodox





# Ultra-Orthodox

- 800,000 Israel; 500,000 World-wide
- Religious devotion
- Obedience to Rabbis
- Large Families
- Collectivism, Patriarchal, Gender Roles
- Segregation



# Research objectives and Significance

- Generating a contextually-informed model of “risk,” “well-being,” “protection,” “neglect,” and “abuse” for Ultra-Orthodox families and children
- Exploring explanations of the etiology of these constructs; identifying help-seeking and help-provision strategies and pathways; assembling ideas regarding effective prevention and intervention vis-à-vis diverse groups.

# Research objectives and Significance

- Developing knowledge that will be applicable and enrich practice and will help facilitate the provision of culturally competent and context-informed prevention and intervention programs for Ultra-Orthodox children and families. The study also stands to contribute to the field by informing policy and the training of professionals working with diverse populations.

# Research Questions

- What are the constructions and perspectives of social workers working in the Haredi community regarding “risk,” “well-being,” “protection,” “neglect,” and “abuse” for families and children?
- What are the strategies and pathways used to seek and provide help in the Haredi community when encountering families and children in risk situations?
- What are the barriers (personal, familial, cultural, contextual, institutional, etc.) that prevent the seeking and provision of help within the Haredi community, and how do social workers contend with them?
- What are the context-informed and effective means of prevention and intervention in the Haredi community when children are at risk of neglect or abuse?
- How has the social workers’ training contributed to their cultural competence, and what are their recommendations for this area of training?

# Method

- Grounded-Theory
  - understanding phenomena holistically
  - examining individual perceptions, worldviews, and meaning
  - examining relationship with broader interpersonal and social processes
  - Considering environmental contexts



# Sample

- Participants:
  - Social Workers working with the Ultra-Orthodox community in the area of children at risk.
  - Haredi and Non-Haredi Social Workers
- Sampling:
  - Purposeful convenience sampling

# Data Collection and Analysis

- Data collection:
  - In depth semi-structured interviews
  - Interview guide
- Data analysis:
  - Thematic analysis
    - Open/Axial Coding, Integration

# Research methods for studying child maltreatment

## **Insider/Outsider in Qualitative Research**

“The qualitative researcher’s perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be acutely tuned-in to the experiences and meaning systems of others- to indwell- and at the same time to be aware of how one’s own biases and preconceptions may be influencing what one is trying to understand” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1995 p. 123)

# Insider/Outsider



**inside**



**outside**

# Research methods for studying child maltreatment

- What other aspects of Outsider/Insider position should I take into account?
- How do I utilize my advantages as an Insider and an Outsider?
- How do I deal with obstacles of being an Insider and an Outsider?



Thank you

