



The "Double Identity"

Navigation of Maternal and Career Identities in
Partnered, Career-Driven Mothers

By

Kimona Premjith (679389)

Supervisor: Prof. Katherine Bain

December 2019

Dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology, University of Witwatersrand.

Declaration

I, Kimona Premjith, declare that this work has neither been previously submitted in whole, nor in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work or works of other individuals, have been attributed as well as cited and referenced. I am aware of the University of Witwatersrand policy on plagiarism and understand that disciplinary action may be taken against me in the case of a suspected act of plagiarism.

Signature:

Date:

Acknowledgments

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” –Romans 8:28

First and foremost, thank you Jesus for your abounding grace and unmerited favour. Your love knows no bounds and Your goodness and mercy follows me all the days of my life. You’ve anointed me, you’ve guided me, you’ve been my true Shepherd. I love you because you first loved me.

Thank you to Prof. Katherine Bain, one of the best academics in the field. You’ve been holding and containing during the hardest of times.

To Calvin and my family, thank you for your unwavering love and support. Your faith in me continues to motivate and inspire me every day. I could not have been utterly devoted to this research without your understanding and patience.

Lastly to the mothers in this research, thank you for your bold participation in what I imagine was at times, a very vulnerable task. I hope I have done your voices justice.

Abstract

Research on mothers, specifically working mothers, is predominantly quantitative in nature and child-centered. The current research aimed at understanding the lived experiences of working mothers through their constructions and meaning-making of 'maternal identity', 'working identity' and how these two equally demanding identities have come to be navigated. The sample consisted of six working mothers with varying racial and cultural backgrounds. These women ranged from their mid to late thirties and were all married with at least one child between the ages of 2-11 years old. Of the six women, five had daughters whilst one mother had sons. This research was qualitative in nature and applied an interpretivist phenomenological framework. The research was carried out through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The results yielded a blurring of the maternal and work identity, suggesting the intertwined nature of these identities. 'Working identity' was found to be a primary identity for most of these women as it afforded them independence and a sense of a self-made self. 'Maternal identity' was found to be all consuming and a drastic change for many of these women, as they negotiated the loss of an old self with the gaining of a new maternal self. The intergenerational transmission of maternal identity featured prominently in how these women came to understand themselves as mothers. This was further influenced by both cultural and gender discourses alike, which permeated both the maternal and the work self, resulting in feelings of guilt, judgement and pressure. Through navigating these two identities, these women understood the importance of support and explored coping strategies aligned with that. These strategies included outsourcing elements of motherhood, using feedback and building a 'mom tribe' - a network of working mothers. Despite the challenging journey of being a working mother, these women were constructing their paths in their own ways, becoming the working mothers they wished to be grounded on their own personal histories and conceptions of motherhood. Thus, leading the research to conclude that motherhood is ever evolving and intersubjective.

Key words: maternal identity; working identity; working mothers; coping; gender discourses, motherhood; working women

Table of Contents

Declaration	2
Acknowledgements	3
Abstract	4
Chapter One: Introduction	9
Research Aims	9
Rationale	9
Chapter Two: Literature Review	12
Introduction	12
Part I: Development of Identity	13
Part II: The Working Woman Identity	16
Women’s Choice to Work: Career-Driven Women and ‘Opting In’	17
Power, Independence and Autonomy	18
Gender in the Workplace	19
Part III: Becoming a Mother	20
Transition into Motherhood	20
Development of the New Mother: The ‘Maternal Identity’	22
Motherhood and Attachment	16
Motherhood Discourses	28
The Ideal Mother Ideology	29
Part IV: The Working Mother Identity	30
Mothers in the Workplace	31
Work-Life Balance	32
Maternal Guilt	33
Strategies of Coping	33
Conclusion	35
Chapter Three: Methodology	37
Research Questions	37
Research Design	37
Theoretical Framework	38
Origin of Phenomenology	38

Interpretive Phenomenology	39
Participants	40
Interview Procedure	42
Development of the Interview Schedule	42
Interviews	43
Data Analysis	44
Self-Reflexivity	45
Trustworthiness and Rigor	47
Credibility	47
Transferability	48
Dependability	48
Confirmability	49
Ethical Considerations	49
Chapter Four: Results	51
4.1. Introduction	51
4.2. The Journey from Independence to Dependence	52
4.2.2. The Contributing Self	57
4.2.3. Loss of Independence and Space for the Separate Self	59
4.2.4. The Redefined Self	62
4.2.5. Discomfort with Dependence	64
4.3. Strength and Growth	70
4.3.1. Strength as Growth	70
4.3.2. Friend or Foe in the Workplace	72
4.3.3. New Perspectives	75
4.4. Responsibility and Anxiety	78
4.4.1. Anxiety about the Unknown	78
4.4.2. A Whole New World	80
4.4.3. Responsibility	81
4.4.4. The Meeting of the ‘Maternal’ and ‘Working Identity	86
4.4.5. Predictability versus Unpredictability	88
4.4.6. Validation and Achievement as Cornerstones of a Working Identity	89
4.5. Judgement, Guilt and Pressure	90

4.5.1. The Perpetuation of Judgement.....	90
4.5.2. Mothers Challenging of the Judgements	95
4.5.3. Guilt about Missing Out.....	98
4.5.4. Pressure to Perform: Pressure from Self.....	103
4.5.5. The Ghost of the Ideal Mom: Pressure from Others	105
4.6. Coping.....	107
4.6.1. The Compromise-Reprioritise Juncture.....	107
4.6.2. Support	109
4.6.3. Role Switching.....	116
4.7. Gender and Cultural Discourses	116
4.7.1. Perpetuation of Gender and Culture: Social Conditioning	116
4.7.2. Intergenerational Influences	125
4.7.3. Mothers as Role Models to Daughters	127
4.8. Motherhood as Evolving and Intersubjective.....	129
4.8.1. Trying their Best.....	129
4.8.2. The Subjectivity of ‘Best’.....	129
4.9. In Summary.....	131
Chapter Five: Discussion.....	135
Construction of the ‘Working Identity’	135
Mothers Experiences of the ‘Maternal Identity’	138
Maternal Identity and the Transmission of the Motherhood Role	138
Redefinition of the Self.....	139
Navigating the ‘Maternal Identity’ with a Pre-existing ‘Working Identity’	139
Motherhood in the Workplace.....	140
Maternal Guilt	142
Coping with the Pressure to be a Productive Employee and Primary Parent.....	143
Motherhood as Intersubjective.....	147
Chapter Six: Conclusions.....	149
Findings of Research	149
Strengths and Limitations of Study.....	152

Suggestions for Future Research	153
References	154
Appendix A	163
Appendix B	164
Appendix C	165
Appendix D	166
Appendix E	168
Appendix F	169

Chapter One: Introduction

Everyday a plethora of women join the workforce, some out of economic necessity and some out of enjoyment for their area of work. Working women are a relatively new area of study merely because prior to the 1960's, women were relegated to the private sphere rather than the public one (Thornham, 2004). Hence, women in the workplace is a fairly new area of research with all its complexities and nuances. This research focuses on working mothers. There are two components to the working mother, firstly the woman's working self and secondly, her maternal self. This research is situated around the navigation of those two selves and how they come together in the work environment as well as in the home environment. This research is qualitative and interpretive in nature and utilises an interpretive phenomenological approach. It explores the experiences of six working mothers who self-identified as career-driven or highly invested in their fields of work. Through semi-structured interviews, the researcher gathered information around these women's lived experiences of their dual identities, as well as the meanings they make in relation to these identities, and how they navigate them.

Research Aims

The aim of this research was to understand the experiences of working mothers and how they navigate their identities as "mothers" and "working women" in their everyday lives. The objectives are as follows:

- To understand working mothers' perspectives of their motherhood identities in light of their existing identities as 'working women'.
- To understand what the "working mother identity" has come to mean to these women.
- To understand how each woman has navigated her maternal self alongside her work self, through first hand experiences of being a working mother.

Rationale

There is currently, an insufficient amount of research around maternal identity through the lived experiences of motherhood, from mothers. The majority of research conducted in this area is infant-centered with mothers found to be secondary, specifically with regards to attachment and development. Acclaimed authors around

motherhood and attachment such as Klein, Winnicott and Bowlby tended to popularise and propagate the role of “mother as object” (Kruger, 2006). Thus, the dominant literature is infant focused, perceiving the mother as merely an object, a container and often a facilitator for the babies’ development (Ainsworth, 1979; Bowlby, 2008; Laible & Thompson, 2000). This deepens and encourages the expectation of mothers to be selfless beings, devoted and dedicated solely to their baby and the baby’s development. It was with the emergence of feminist work, that the aim became to understand women as their own subjective beings and to give voices to their stories and experiences (Cole & Knowles, 2014). This led to the emergence of some research which began to shed more light on women’s roles as mothers and wives as well as mothers and their sexuality (Fengxian, 2012; Flakowicz, 2007; May, 2008; Montemurro & Siefken, 2012; Rosenthal & Lobel, 2016; Trice-Black, 2010). This research aimed at adding to this growing body of knowledge through examining how women have come to make meaning of and navigate their new motherhood identities alongside an existing identity of being a career woman.

In writing about the *Female Economy*, Silverstein and Sayre (2009) observed more women entering into the workforce than men. In terms of retrenchments, men are seen to be more likely to be retrenched than women suggesting that women play a valued and important role within the workplace (Silverstein & Sayre, 2009). Therefore, it is highly worthwhile to take notice of and understand women’s roles and the meanings they attribute to being in the workplace. The growing economy and cost of living has forced many women to work. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018), in families composed of two married parents with children between the ages of 6-17 years old, at least 61,9% of them were both employed. Whereas families who were maintained only by mothers saw 73,2% of women working. Lastly, families where only the mother was employed whilst the father was unemployed was 67,3% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). This evidences a large portion of women in the workplace, largely due to economic necessity in order to contribute or solely support their families. Although, most research on women in the workplace has been quantitative, focusing on trends around women in the workplace, with little focus on what a working identity has come to mean to these women (Albrecht, Edin & Vroman, 2000; Del Boca, Locatelli & Vuri, 2005; Losoncz & Bortolotto, 2009; Marshall & Tracy, 2009; Morgenroth & Heilman, 2017; Okimoto & Heilman, 2012; Patel, Govender,

Paruk & Ramgoon, 2006). Even less research has focused on working mothers' experiences. In understanding the experiences of women, it is also crucial to explore broader socio-political and gender dynamics, especially in understanding women's position in the workplace. Issues such as gendered role expectations, patriarchy and inequality, as well as human beings' innate quest for growth and self-actualisation have been shown to shaped women's experiences in the workplace. Thus, this research aimed at adding to the body of literature through exploring working mothers' experiences in an attempt to understand their subjective experiences of straddling the domains of work and motherhood simultaneously.

The last point of motivation for this research to be conducted, especially in a country like South Africa is it's potential to add to the multiplicity of women's voices in a research area that it largely Western-dominated. There is existing, albeit limited research in this area, but the majority of that research was conducted in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom (Arendell, 2000; Bailey, 2000; Laney, Carruthers, Hall & Anderson, 2013). In these studies the sample predominantly consisted of white, middle class women. In South Africa however, one will find a range of diversity with regards to race and culture. This variety of influence, added another dimension to this study. The diverse backgrounds, upbringing and cultures found in this group of working mothers, provide different understandings of the ways that these women have come to negotiate their identities both as mothers but also as career women.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

In her book *Feminism and Postfeminism*, Sue Thornham (2004) wrote about the journey of feminism and the strides which women have been brave enough to make. For many years, through socially constructed gender norms, women were relegated to the private sphere of life. This sphere was connected to childbearing and rearing, housekeeping and managing of the family whilst isolating her from politics, the economy and the workplace. She reminisced of the period during the 1960's when the first wave of feminism inspired the second wave, women came forth demanding equality in more areas than merely voting and property rights. Women wanted to actively participate in the public sphere, as their male counterparts did. She spoke about feminist writers such as Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem among many, who began advocating for these rights. It has been over 50 years since that fight transpired. Women are currently flooding the public sphere, participating in jobs and interacting with their male colleagues on an intellectual level (Silverstein & Sayre, 2009). A large number of women are currently as educated as men, holding degrees equal if not higher than their male counterparts (Silverstein & Sayre, 2009). Yet one thing has not changed in all these years. Women are still mothers. There is still an imperative for women to birth, raise and care for their offspring (DiQuinzio, 2013). Therefore, this research aims to understand how women with careers come to navigate their identity as a mother with their identity as a working woman.

The concepts of 'identity', 'motherhood identity', the process of becoming a mother, as well as 'working women' as a phenomenon are central to this research project and therefore shall be explored more in-depth. The literature surrounding the topics of maternal identities and working woman identities, is rather limited. There is a general lack of research around women's identities as mothers and even less on how they come to navigate that identity along with their identity as career-driven women. Hence, this literature shall discuss the studies which have arisen over the years in this area of interest.

Part I: Development of Identity

Erik Erikson has become well known as one of the forefathers of personality and identity development. In his works, *Childhood and Society* (1963) and *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1994) Erikson presents the psychosocial theory of development. According to Erikson (1963, 1994) there exist eight stages within one's lifetime where development of the individual occurs. Hence, as argued by Erikson, this development is a lifelong process (Erikson, 1963, 1994). The core characteristic of Erikson's psychosocial theory is his concept of 'ego identity' (Erikson 1963). Ego identity is the development of the conscious self through social interaction (Erikson, 1963). He believes at each stage of development, a crisis presents itself and the individual is faced with a decision. The individual has to react to the crisis in a manner which may either be negative or positive, thus developing new traits going forward. Societal norms and all that this encompasses, along with friends, family etc. and relationships cultivated by the individual come to shape his/her identity and manner of responding to the world.

Insofar as social interaction is considered as shaping an individual, one can agree and understand that the theory put forth by Erikson (1963, 1994) is beneficial in understanding identity development. It is almost inevitable that societal norms, values and cultures will be significantly influential in the way an individual comes to see and understand the world, thus shaping their responses to it. However, criticism has arisen in response to Erikson's psychosocial theory. This criticism, predominantly from feminist writers, argues for the lack of insight in Erikson's theory with regards to the development of women. Much of Erikson's theory assumes a masculine identity as the normative subject (Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). When viewed through this lens, women's development, which has a different trajectory, is seen as deviant (Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). This deviance is attributed to biology (Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). At the time of Erikson's writings, there existed an irrefutable gendered division of labour. Men were expected to participate in the public sphere which meant access to the economy, politics and the like and women were relegated to the private sphere, which confined them to the household, as well as child bearing and rearing. These societal norms are reflected in Erikson's writing.

Despite Erikson developing such a strong initial theory of identity development, it is difficult to understand women's identity development through this lens. The lens through which Erikson came to understand identity development, is indeed androcentric at its roots. Among Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development, only three stages dealt with caring relationships in individuals (Kroger, 2002), namely trust versus mistrust; intimacy versus isolation and generativity versus stagnation. However, the other five stages promote separation and individuation more than caring (Kroger, 2002). As individuation and separation are seen as more masculine themes, it reiterates the idea of Erikson's psychosocial model being more androcentric. This leaves the more caring trajectory of women's identities unexplored. However, as this study will explore, it may also be possible that having entered career realms, previously regarded as masculine, that women's identity negotiation may in fact have become more similar to those of men. However, this could result in conflictual interaction between identity development trajectories that involve care-giving and selflessness and those that involve independence and separation.

Given shifting gender roles, the best way to then understand how women have come to develop and transform their identities, is perhaps through exploring their lived experiences of their identity development. That is the core aim of this research. It aims to give a group of women a chance to discuss their maternal and working identities, what those identities mean to them and how they have come to navigate the experience of these two concurrent identities, through their lived experiences. The importance of this was understood by Josselson (1987) who argues for a more narrative approach in understanding the way women have come to make sense of their identities through gaining knowledge from women's lived experiences. She believes that women are presented with choices about how their life ought to be, and whether they seek out a situation or not, women will have to make certain choices. These choices in and of themselves, make the development of one's identity particular, rather than universal. It is these choices which create diversity among women, and this diversity which comes to mold their identities in various ways. Carol Gilligan (1982) built upon this notion of narratives and sought out women to understand their lived experiences. In her book *In a Different Voice* (1982), Gilligan sat down for face-to-face interviews in order to understand key aspects of women's identities. What she discovered is that women tend to have a 'voice of care' whilst men seem to have more

of a 'voice of justice'. This indicates that women tend to see their morality in relation to others, especially in their relationships with them. Women are more concerned with cultivating and preserving these relationships than men are. This suggests a more nurturing side to women, who see their responsibilities as being linked to caring for others. Men are more likely to see their morality as being linked to the rights of every individual and as having a responsibility to respect and protect those rights. In that way, men are seen as having the notion of right and wrong at the core of who they are. Inspired by Kohlberg's stage theory of moral development, Gilligan formed her own understanding of how women develop into caring individuals. Similarly to Kohlberg, Gilligan (1982) also presents the 'preconventional', 'conventional' and 'postconventional' stages. The preconventional stage for women is preoccupied by selfishness (Gilligan, 1982). At this stage, girls and young women are solely concerned with themselves and their own wants and needs (Gilligan, 1982). Gilligan (1982) argues that this is due to women's goal to survive. Women then transition into the conventional stage. During this stage, women transition from selfishness to selflessness, in which they come to regard being self-interested as a negative aspect and seek here to be more concerned with the wants and needs of others, often disregarding their own wants and needs (Gilligan, 1982). Here Gilligan (1982) argues that marriage and motherhood can be seen as evidence of this selflessness and interest, as well as investment in others' wants and needs. The goal here, according to Gilligan is a realisation that self-sacrifice is goodness. For Gilligan (1982), the final transition into the postconventional period is for the women to come to the realisation that she too is in fact in need of care. The concept of selflessness for many women, tends to lead them into caring, worrying and investing in others whilst neglecting themselves. This is not a healthy trajectory and therefore causes a need for the last stage, which is that of realisation. This realisation is that women in and of themselves need care too and should be prioritised in their own lives. However, Gilligan (1982) suggests that most women very rarely reach the final stage as they are so caught up in caring for others and tending to their needs as mothers, wives, sisters and friends. Therefore, caring for others becomes an intrinsic part of their identity and how they come to view themselves. It is evident how motherhood may come to demand these attributes from a woman. A baby is brought into this world, helpless and completely dependent upon its caregivers to feed, protect and nurture him/her. This caring nature of women, may become more defined after giving birth. A core part of this study is in

understanding what this maternal identity has come to mean to the women who are established career women and how their identities may have transformed since.

Men and women develop differently and separate into different trajectories with different ways of seeing the world (Langdale, 1986). This should not however be seen as women being on a deviant trajectory, but rather a different one (Langdale, 1986). Due to men and women having different experiences as gendered beings, it is these gendered experiences which are shaped so differently within a gendered society (Langdale, 1986). It is that difference that leads to the manner in which men and women construct their identities. Women have come to be seen in society as having identities that are more nurturing and caring which makes them better equipped at dealing with motherhood. While the above theories have taken account of gender in the development of identity, Butler (2006) has since theorised and critiqued the origins of gender and suggests that gender roles for women are compelled by historical social practice. She also argues that gender is performative, (i.e. performed for a particular social audience) which influences our desires (Butler, 2004), and that through repetitive practices of gender, certain roles become norms. Butler (2006) believes that the rules of gender performance are transmitted intergenerationally. Most notable in her theory, however, is her argument that gender is neither chosen nor imposed, rather it is reproduced by individuals within their particular contexts (Butler, 2006). Butler (2004) also introduced the idea of ‘undoing gender’ so that people who resist social norms may have more ‘possibilities of living’. Over the past few decades, through working identities, it appears that women have slowly been shifting the performance of femininity.

Part II: The Working Woman Identity

As previously discussed, any trajectory which deviated from women developing into mothers and keepers of the household was seen as deviant (Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). Through writings around gender specific attributes of women, they were understood as better suited to the household (Dillaway & Paré, 2008). However, women have challenged these constraints. One of the ways in which this was achieved was by the entering of women into the labour market. According to StatsSA (2017), 44% of women in South Africa are working women. These women are positioned in skilled jobs such as managers, professionals and technicians (StatsSA,

2017). However, those statistics fail to account for the number of women in unskilled jobs, suggesting that the actual percentage of working women are much higher. Therefore, this section of the review focuses on the realities of women who work and how research accounts for women's occupation of the working space.

Women's Choice to Work: Career-Driven Women and 'Opting In'

When researching 'career-driven women' in relation to their ability to choose their work, the most common findings are around women opting-out within the workplace. The idea of 'opting-out' refers to women choosing to leave the workplace due to external obligations such as marital, children or change of career-focus (Zimmerman & Clark, 2016). In 2005, Mainiero and Sullivan developed the Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM) in order to better predict the trajectory of an individual's career path. They posited three constituents of KCM, namely authenticity, balance and challenge (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Authenticity related to the degree in which individuals could be true to themselves. Balance related to the degree in which individuals could manage work as well as other role obligations, and challenge related to the degree to which individuals could learn and grow within the job (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). For women, as their lives developed and transformed, so too did their career aspirations. As evidenced by Zimmerman and Clark (2016), it became difficult for women to have all three of those elements and thus often opted out of the work space.

However a recent study by Elley-Brown, Pringle and Harris (2018), with the use of KCM, uncovered that more women were currently opting in rather than opting out. Similarly to Zimmerman and Clark (2016), the three aspects of the KCM overlapped throughout women's lives. However, women valued each of these aspects differently throughout their careers. Elley-Brown et al. (2018) discovered that during their early and mid-careers, women were more intrigued by pursuing authenticity and challenge. However, as women entered into the latter stages of their career, they valued balance far more but still sought out the element of challenge. Authenticity seemed to be undervalued at this stage (Elley-Brown et al., 2018). One of the factors which influenced these women's choice to opt in, was a supportive partner which allowed these women to achieve more balance. Thus, Twenty-First Century career-driven

women, given the choice, will more often 'opt in' – and choose to remain in their jobs while continuing to pursue their passion in the workplace.

Power, Independence and Autonomy

Throughout history roles were ascribed according to gender. Men were traditionally the breadwinners in the family whilst women were responsible for the home (Tichenor, 2005). The concept of breadwinning was pertinent to the masculine identity and conferred with it advantages of both privilege and power (Tichenor, 2005). As men found themselves in the labour market providing for their families financially, their power lay in their ability to sustain the household. Through wielding of the monetary power, men were able to make sole decisions regarding the family, thus providing them with control of the family structure (Tichenor, 2005). Their ability to be the sole breadwinner also afforded men the exclusion from the domestic responsibilities, relegating that to women. This unequal distribution of power and dependence was one of the motivational factors in women entering the labor market. This striving for independence through self-made careers appeared contradictory to all literature on women as relational beings (Gilligan, 1982; Portman, Bartlett & Carlson, 2011). According to this theory, women's development trajectory is in accordance with her relationships with others (Portman et al., 2011). She is always thought to prioritise others needs over herself. However in striving for independence and power through work, it would appear that career-driven women are rejecting the relational framework in return for a more individualistic path.

Relatively recent research around gender relations within the household domain, aimed at understanding the process of decision-making between men and women, as well as working and non-working women. The biggest influence contributing to decision-making was the employment status of the individual (Kumar & Maral, 2015). It was evidenced that men were assigned decision-making power due to gender prescriptions and the role of masculinity within a family (Kumar & Maral, 2015). However regarding women, it could be observed that they were only afforded decision-making power if found to be a financial contributor to the family. Thus concluding that power within a family is ascribed by money (Kumar & Maral, 2015). With women participating in the unpaid work of childcare for many years, they lacked the ability to acquire the power within the family structure. This striving for

power provided these women with the autonomy and independence they were never previously able to obtain whilst simultaneously enabling women to challenge the gendered structure which oppressed them.

Gender in the Workplace

The workplace has been a male-dominated arena for many years. With the insertion of women into these spaces, a certain degree of adaptation was expected. However, the structure remained unchanged forcing women to assimilate to a male-dominated role. Regarding gender stereotypes in the workplace, it was uncovered that gender followed two trajectories (Heilman, 2012). Firstly it was the descriptive assumptions made about gender roles, which are bred into individuals through social conditioning (Heilman, 2012). Secondly, but still connected to the first trajectory, are the prescriptive assumptions now carried out in the workplace (Heilman, 2012). Heilman (2012) uncovered the stereotyped perceptions workers had about one another based on ascribed gender roles. It was evidenced from these findings that men were thought to embody agency whilst women embodied communality. Agency was associated with attributes such as competency, assertiveness, independence and logic which were linked to male colleagues whilst the associations made with communality were caring, kind, warm, friendly, obedient, respectful, intuitive and understanding (Heilman, 2012). The traits women assumed to embody were not understood as conducive to an executive position. Thus, the slogan 'think manager, think male' became prominent (Heilman, 2012). The message communicated to women was their inability to be enough in the workplace but perhaps through assimilation, could embody the role of the executive, the more man-friendly role.

Consequently, women were faced with a decision, either assimilation or no progression. Many women internalised more masculine traits. The most common one being aggression (Heilman, 2012). However, it was observed that when women began demonstrating more masculine aligned traits within the workplace, she was vulnerable to facing punishment. It was believed that this was a consequence of prescriptive gender roles (Heilman, 2012). Once assigned a gender, the individual is expected to perform that gender and solely that gender in the workplace. Any behaviour contrary to prescribed behaviour is seen as deviant and thus insubordinate and punishable (Heilman, 2012).

Therefore, as much as women attempted to challenge gender in the workplace, strongly held gender ideologies challenged women in return. Referring back to the opting-out notion of women in the workplace, it was believed that rather than opting-out, women were realistically being pushed-out (Kossek, Su & Wu, 2017). As in Heilman's (2012) findings women were not understood to fit into the work environment. Gendered ideologies were so strongly held, they were almost impossible to dismantle. Women were perceived as not possessing suitable innate attributes for higher-up positions, which limited their progression within the workplace. Thus leaving women no choice but to opt-out. However women were finding new ways in which to challenge these ideologies. Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Facebook believes she developed a way in which women may challenge these ideologies within the workplace. Sandberg developed the 'Lean-in' movement (2013) in which she encouraged women to say yes to more opportunities. In Sandberg's expression of her 'lean-in' movement, women are understood as hindrances to their own progression (Eddy & Ward, 2015). This hindrance is believed to occur when women decline current opportunities due to concern of future conflict with future life choices. Hence, Sandberg is encouraging of women using their sense of agency through saying 'yes' to any and all opportunities (Eddy & Ward, 2015). As motivational as Sandberg appears, it is also important to acknowledge that 'leaning in' may not change all the deeply ingrained ideologies of gender in the workplace. For a large majority of women, in order to say 'yes' to opportunities, these opportunities need to be afforded to them. Once again it is evident that hegemonic gender ideologies in the workplace are far from dismantled.

Part III: Becoming a Mother

Transition into Motherhood

The transition into motherhood is one that brings about an array of transformations for women. For some women, the transition begins during pregnancy when a woman begins to experience the physical changes associated with pregnancy. For others, the transition only begins after the woman has given birth and through the nurturance and care for her new baby. However, for some women, motherhood is captured through a different journey all together. For some women neo-natal motherhood (i.e. adoption) or women who have not physically birthed a child but hold the space as the child's

mother all constitute and highlight the diversity and complexity of the term “motherhood”. Despite the timeline varying for women regarding this transition, there is a period of transition into motherhood after the birth of the baby. It is during this transitional process of becoming a mother in which she develops a maternal identity. According to Mercer (2004, p. 226), "becoming a mother moves from a known current reality to an unknown, new reality. This transition requires restructuring goals, behaviours and responsibilities to achieve a new conception of self". It is this very new conception of self in response to having a baby, which comes to be understood as the maternal identity.

In her work with mothers a year postpartum, Mercer found an expansion of variables which in fact play a role in the development of motherhood identity, namely maternal age; socioeconomic status; perception of the birth experience; early mother-child separation; social stress; social support; personality traits; self-concept; child rearing attitudes; perception of the child; role strain and health status (Mercer, 2004, p. 227). This expands on previous work which merely includes developmental stage; sex; physical condition and behaviour of the child as influences on the development of the maternal identity (Mercer, 2004). Through this expansion, Mercer was able to develop her four stage process of becoming a mother. The four stages include "Commitment, attachment and preparation", "Acquaintance, learning and physical restoration", "Moving towards a new normal" and "Achievement of Maternal Identity" (Mercer, 2004). The first stage "commitment, attachment and preparation" deals with the pregnancy stage. During this stage, the soon-to-be mother needs to come to terms with the new chapter in her life and needs to adjust to all the upcoming changes as well as the changes in her identity. This also incorporates learning and understanding social expectations attached to motherhood along with fantasizing about the future as a mother. It is also at this stage where the woman would seek prenatal care in order to better prepare for the upcoming birth of the baby (Mercer, 2004). The second stage, "acquaintance, learning and physical restoration", is the stage immediately after the baby is born and the mother is able to bring the baby home from the hospital. At this stage, first time mothers tend to be overwhelmed with the reality of the newborn baby and hence, less secure in their own decisions. Therefore during this period, new mothers tend to mirror learned behaviours and are more likely to conform to both societal and family norms of child rearing (Mercer,

2004). The third stage, "moving towards a new normal", occurs after a mother spends a few weeks with her baby and is growing more attached to her baby, which leads to the mother becoming more confident with decisions regarding her baby (Mercer, 2004). According to Mercer (2004), it is at this stage where the mother develops her own maternal identity through gaining confidence in her ability to mother. The final stage is the "achievement of the maternal identity" which Mercer suggests is around four months postpartum. At this stage, the mother is fully emerged into her maternal identity and role as a mother with the ability to draw upon prior learning through her own personal experience with her baby (Mercer, 2004). This is the final and ultimate goal of maternal identity development.

Mercer's theory of becoming a mother is useful for this research as it describes the process in which a woman with an autonomous identity, now has to develop one in relation to another being. It describes the journey through which women go, when they discover they are pregnant. However, it is important to take into account that not every journey is experienced the same way. Mercer (2004) suggests that maternal identity is achieved around four months postpartum. One can see how that statement is highly generalised in an attempt to make it appear as though all women are on a universal timeline of when this maternal identity develops. It would also be incorrect to think of maternal identity as a static equilibrium-once achieved, it forever remains unchanged. But is rather entrenched in a process of constant maturation as the baby develops and the needs of the baby change. Hence, as the baby grows, so too does the mother in her maternal identity.

Mercer focuses mainly on the transition into motherhood and maternal identity prior to and shortly after giving birth, however, fail to address the possibility that maternal identity may be continuously changing and adapting, as the baby moves into later developmental stages and as circumstances in the mother's life changes, for example returning to work. Exploration of the lived experience of these mothers, with particular reference to how the inclusion of a maternal identity into pre-existing identities might take place, could further extend these theories.

Development of the New Mother: The Maternal Identity

Whilst some report feeling a sense of maternal identity during pregnancy, other women mention only feeling a sense of maternal identity after their baby is born (Ladge, Clair & Greenberg, 2012). Despite this difference, many mothers state that actual interaction with one's baby is quite different than the fantasy prior to the birth (Ladge et al., 2012). In understanding the psychological underpinnings of the maternal psyche through the development of motherhood, Stern and Menzel (1996) developed the 'motherhood constellation'. This 'motherhood constellation' is built on a psychic organization and restructuring of the infant-mother relationship, which becomes centralised. This constellation constitutes three fundamental elements, namely, the infant remaining alive and protected; the love and attachment bond between mother and infant, and lastly, the maternal matrix (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998).

Alive and protected. A newborn infant is highly dependent on the mother for survival, merely due to the helpless nature of a newborn. New mothers are quite aware of the risks in this and the many ways in which an infant may come into contact with harm. Thus, the first element for any novel mother is the ability to keep her child alive at all costs as well as protect her dependent infant from any possible future harm (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998). The weight of this responsibility often leaves new mothers highly anxious and susceptible to burnout due to the large amount of energy exerted in protecting her child (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998). Thus a supportive and safe holding environment is required.

Love and attachment. The second core element in this constellation is the love and attachment abilities of the mother with others but also towards herself and the infant (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998). This part of the mother-infant bond development is non-linear and often requires the mother to grasp the peculiar nuances in connecting with her child and meeting his or her needs. Thus Stern (1998) believed this aspect of the constellation invites mothers to observe other mothers within their interactions with their infants (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998). Often leading mothers to mimic aspects of mothering in order to achieve the goal of love and attachment (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998).

Maternal matrix. The last core element in the constellation is the maternal matrix (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998). This matrix is the support network a mother sets up for herself with other experienced mothers or parents (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998). It has been observed that during this phase, the woman's relationship with her own mother becomes centralised and significant, thus leading the new mother to draw on support and mothering techniques from her own mother. Stern (1998) believed that through the existence of the new infant, the mother is reminded of her maternal experiences when she was younger and how she has come to make sense of them (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998).

Therefore, the 'maternal constellation' all together provides an opportunity for the new mother to garner a supportive holding environment where the transition and development of her maternal identity is met with empathy and understanding. This is pertinent as the transition into the maternal identity is often difficult to embrace due to the fracturing, loss and emergence of a new self. Laney, Hall, Anderson and Willingham (2015) conducted interviews with a group of mothers postpartum and found three stages of change:

1. Fractured Identities
2. Losing of the self and regaining of the self
3. Redefining the self

Fractured identities. Women go through a period known as the fracturing of identity. This fracturing is described as a woman's sense of losing herself and the person she used to be. Prior to having a baby, the woman's identity is solely focused upon her own wants, needs and desires, where her identity forms through her own personal, lived experiences. However after having a baby, a shift of identity needs to occur in order to accommodate the new baby, especially for women. Arendell (2000) discusses the way in which child rearing is closely associated with mothering, which is predominantly done by women. According to Hays "mothering is exclusive, wholly child-centered, emotionally involving and time consuming" (as cited in Arendell, 2000, p. 1194). Therefore, if mothering is so wholly incumbent on women and in need of time and devotion, one can see why the fracturing of a woman's previous identity occurs. The woman needs to make space in her life for this dependent baby

with his/her own wants, needs and desires, which need to be fulfilled, first and foremost. This process of identity fracturing is different for all women (Laney et al., 2015). Some women experience the fracturing instantaneously upon hearing of the pregnancy whereas other women were slow to this process and let it occur over a more gradual process, as she grows more comfortable with her new role (Laney et al., 2015).

Losing and regaining of oneself. The second stage deals with the loss of the old self in order to incorporate the maternal new self as well as regaining oneself to the point where the mother does not feel like a stranger to herself any longer. The loss of oneself can be rather difficult and strange for some women. A number of women struggled with this loss, mainly because they were incorporating a new little being into their lives who was utterly dependent on them (Laney et al., 2015). Hence, during this process of acclimating to one's baby and making the baby's needs a priority, these new mothers felt as though their own needs were not being met (Laney et al., 2015). However, as time moved on these mothers grew more attuned to their babies, grew in confidence and began feeling like their old selves (Laney et al., 2015). Therefore, one can see as these mothers became better at understanding their babies' needs, wants and temperaments, they learned how they could best respond to their babies. This hence, raises their confidence levels and leads them to be able to envision themselves as competent mothers who can do the job of mothering. Once they gain this confidence, they become more settled into their new identities as mothers.

Redefining the self. Of the three stages, this stage of the development of the maternal self is the most important because it signals a new type of self for the mother, a new beginning. The redefining of the entire self is the birth of a new woman with the incorporation of her maternal identity (Laney et al., 2015). Most of the women describe motherhood as increasing their self-worth to the point where they feel fulfilled by their new role (Bailey, 1999). Women describe their lives as having a greater purpose and deeper meaning now that they are mothers (Arendell, 2000). Therefore, motherhood seems to enhance these women's already existing sense of themselves and can be seen as a continuation and growth from their old selves (Laney et al., 2013). Through firsthand accounts of these mothers, we can now focus on the

specific traits they reported to acquire through the development of their maternal selves.

Laney et al. (2013) found four ways in which women's lives are enhanced through motherhood. These women seem to have grown personally, relationally, generally and vocationally through their new maternal identities. The biggest growth for these women is found in their personal expansion. Laney et al. (2013), in interviewing these mothers, found that these mothers describe their new experience as having changed them. They mention a sense of fulfilment and completion in now having a child, something that was missing before but was not yet realized. They discuss being more compassionate towards others, now that they have a little child to take care of and being made aware of how difficult it can be at times. In a later study, Laney et al. (2015) also found living as a mother makes life and certain experiences more intense, because these mothers are seeing everything through the eyes of their baby. From this viewpoint, mothers report that everything is more anxiety-provoking. Laney et al. (2015) describes this as mothers having expanded their consciousness. These mothers show a heightened awareness for their children. Mothers are able to know what the child needs, even if their child is not there (Laney et al., 2015). Laney et al. (2013) found that mothers now see the world differently. They begin blending their child's perspectives with their own perspectives which makes the world look like a very scary place. Mothers tend to have heightened fear and concern for their child but they are also more sensitive to the pain and suffering of others. This is described by Laney et al. (2013) as mothers becoming more relationally expansive. Mothers find that they relate to people differently after having a baby and that they become more attuned to others' needs (Laney et al., 2013). Through this new way of seeing the world, mothers feel they become better equipped at understanding others in a deeper and more meaningful way. Laney et al. (2013) also found that women become generally more expansive. Mothers feel that being a mother and raising this child is a cause bigger than them (Laney et al., 2013). They see this as their opportunity to contribute positively to the future of the world and therefore, take raising their children very seriously (Laney et al., 2013). Lastly, Laney et al. (2013) found that women are vocationally expansive. They feel as though the new constraint of time is difficult but mentions being more authentic in their work spaces and being able to participate in a more real and genuine way (Laney et al., 2013).

Motherhood and Attachment

Predominant research around the mother and the infant draws heavily on Bowlby's work on attachment. According to Bowlby (1969), attachment is a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings" (p. 194). Essentially, the foundational attachment between a mother and her infant paves the way for future ways of relating. Many studies have been done around the mother-infant dyad and its relation to attachment (Ainsworth, 1973; Ainsworth, 1979; Bowlby, 1969; Kelly, Slade & Grienenberger, 2005; Mangelsdorf, Gunnar, Lang, Kestenbaum & Andreas, 1990). However for the purposes of this study, this research is focused on factors affecting maternal attachment in the South African context. As South Africa is a developing country rife with poverty, research has been conducted on mothers with low-socioeconomic backgrounds (Cooper et al., 2009; Tomlinson, Cooper & Murray, 2005). The results yielded in these studies evidenced higher rates of maternal depression and poverty which coincided, in some cases, with lower attachment security. This suggested that within lower socioeconomic environments, an insecure attachment - often disorganised or dismissive, as opposed to ambivalent - may be present. This research was congruent with that of van Ijzendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg (2010). They found that individuals who have experienced lower socio-economic status more frequently exhibited dismissive states of mind in relation to attachment needs. According to Bowlby (1969), the dismissively attached individual values independence and self-sufficiency whilst struggling to develop close and intimate relationships. For these individuals, normalising situations is their foundational response to difficult situations. These individuals also struggle with demonstrating empathy and sympathy.

Simpson and Belsky (2008) presents an evolutionary perspective to explain these kinds of differing attachment styles. They explain Life History Theory (LHT) which postulated that the environment in which individuals were raised influences the strategies of survival that they develop. It can be understood that individuals who struggle through a shortage of resources, learn to invest in themselves in order to initiate their rapid physical development in order to procure resources. These individuals were shown to have developed a more dismissive-avoidant style of attachment versus an individual in a resource rich environment (Simpson & Belsky,

2008). Therefore, mothers who struggle with this type of attachment are more likely to struggle with their maternal identity and roles as mothers. As the sample for this research is South African women, context is important in understanding the development of their identities.

Motherhood Discourses

Historically, motherhood has been associated with femininity (Choi, Henshaw, Barker & Tree, 2005). The role of mothering is defined as "social practices of nurturing and caring for dependent children" (Arendell, 2000, p. 1192). Despite not overtly relegating mothering to women, Arendell (2000) believes that mothering was better suited to women due to feminine attributes and the congruency in meeting the needs of infants. However feminist author, Chodorow (1978) challenges the ideology of women as natural mothers arguing instead that gender in and of itself is socially constructed and furthermore, motherhood. Chodorow (1978) provides a differing account of how women take on the mothering role. She posits that mothering occurred through a process of identification. Through the identification girls have with their mothers, they come to learn the act of mothering through observing their own mothers mothering (Chodorow, 1978). Whereas sons identify more with their fathers and rarely observe the caring and nurturing ways of mothering. Thus, the cycle continues undisrupted and further perpetuated.

The cultural diversity present in a country such as South Africa bears a diversity among the social and cultural constructs of motherhood as well. As in Western cultures, the patriarchy participated in a large amount of the motherhood construction within Southern Africa (Walker, 1995). As previously mentioned women may learn the art of mothering through observation of her own mother, however mothers may be equally observing their daughters. In a study over three generations of mothers, the former generations of mothers had expectations around the meaning of motherhood, the role of motherhood and the "look" of motherhood (Moore, 2013). Women who were more traditionally inclined, often struggled with embracing motherhood in their own ways. This struggle often left them feeling discouraged, full of maternal guilt and possibly not good enough. Thus, cultural expectations of mothers such as staying at home, breastfeeding and solely caring for one's child without help often sets mothers

up for both disappointment and failure. It also further perpetuates the notion of the “ideal mother”.

Many psychoanalytic writers such as Freud, Klein, Bion and Bowlby wrote about the important role played by the mother in the psychological development of the child. Among them was Donald Winnicott (1956), a British Object Relations theorist who wrote about "Primary Maternal Preoccupation" (PMP). Winnicott (1956) describes PMP as the period from pregnancy to post birth where a mother is found to be utterly consumed by her newborn infant. This consumption is so significant that the new mother is attuned to her infant's every need and ready with a response. Winnicott's PMP draws on the foundation of the maternal instinct, an intuition about one's baby. Although feminist writers have been dismissive of the maternal instinct, claiming it a myth. One such writer was Elisabeth Badinter in her 1981 book, *The Myth of Motherhood: An Historical View of the Maternal Instinct*. In her book Badinter denies the existence of maternal instinct. Firstly, on the basis that the maternal instinct was conceived of by a patriarchal system excluding the subjectivities of women. Secondly, through Badinter's observations of mothers with their children she felt that mothers could be quite indifferent to their children. Thus, labelling the maternal instinct a myth perpetuated by patriarchy to confine women in their place (Badinter, 1981).

Whether one chooses to believe in the existence of the maternal instinct or not, either argument denies the subjectivity of mothers who both experience a maternal instinct and those who do not. Instead of polarising the personal experience of a mother's bond to her child, more recent theorists have explored the concept of maternal ambivalence. Parker (1995), who developed the term 'maternal ambivalence', found that mothers could be both highly attuned to their babies at certain points but also disengaged at others. This contradicts prominent discourses of motherhood – most notably the discourse of a "good and ideal mother".

The Ideal Mother Ideology

The good and ideal mother ideology has been perpetuated for many years, initially by a patriarchal society and furthered by other women (Cowdery & Knudson-Martin, 2005). The ideal mother is constructed as being engaged in ‘intensive mothering’ (Christopher, 2012; Damaske, 2013; Pedersen, 2012; Rizzo, Schiffrin & Liss, 2013).

Intensive mothering requires a full involvement from mothers in the everyday life of their children, monitoring every detail (Christopher, 2012; Damaske, 2013; Pedersen, 2012; Rizzo et al., 2013). However, in the current economic climate where more women are entering into the workforce, this form of mothering is considered unrealistic. Nonetheless, the standard of ideal mothering is upheld. One of the ways in which this standard is perpetuated is through social media. Mothers have been shown to have high social media presence and interaction (Djafavora & Trofimenko, 2017). Through social media, mothers are able to depict their lives, with the intent of creating a shared similarity of the mothering experience. However as noted by mothers, popular social media mothers were constructing a mothering ideal through perfectionistic parenting posts, rather than the often difficult reality of motherhood (Djafavora & Trofimenko, 2017). Thus, evidencing a further perpetuation of the ideal mother ideology and the Superwoman syndrome, which is explored later in this section.

However this motherhood ideal through 'intensive mothering' could be challenged. Winnicott (1953) developed the term "the good enough" mother. Winnicott believed initially a mother was devoted to her infant's every need and want. However over time, a mother would fail her infant in minute ways (i.e. letting her baby cry for a little longer for milk). Winnicott (1953) postulated that failure on the part of the mother was crucial for the infant's development of frustration. Initially, when all of the infant's needs are met by their mother, the infant dwells in an illusionary world where all is well. Winnicott (1953) believed that this stage of development was important. However, over time the perfection of an illusionary world is unrealistic. Thus, in mother failing infant in tolerable ways allows the infant to experience frustration and therefore, develop an external reality. In this external reality, the infant learns to cope with frustration. Winnicott (1953) believed that perfect parenting was impossible and a standard which could not be attained. Thus, evidencing not only the impossibility of an 'ideal mother' but further the disadvantage of such mothering.

Generally, women tend to grow in their new lives as mothers. Some of the traits which always existed in these women prior to motherhood, are intensified after becoming a mother and gaining a motherhood identity. Traits such as compassion, caring, nurturing, self-awareness, selflessness and patience are some of the enhanced traits that women report gaining after becoming mothers. At this point, the maternal

identity is considered as having reached saturation level, with women being fully entrenched into their new maternal identity (Laney et al., 2013). A particularly significant finding in this study is that these women found becoming a mother enhances their experience of their working identity. The next part of this review, examines to what extent women are able to navigate this new maternal identity with their working identity and how their newfound growth is able to help them or to hinder them.

Part IV: The Working Mother Identity

The majority of research focused on working mothers was conducted in the United States and in the United Kingdom (Arendell, 2000; Bailey, 2000; Laney et al., 2013). The core question asked by these researchers is whether any conflicts develop in regard to women having a maternal identity along with a working identity. It was found that women do in fact go through a transition and gain experience- a heightening of particular traits after giving birth (Bailey, 2000). Bailey (2000) found that the maternal identity and the working woman identity cannot merely be simplified into a conflict but are rather caught up in a complex relationship in which these two identities become intertwined. The sample of this study was geared at understanding how a growing population of career-driven women came to navigate their maternal self with their working self, without having to sacrifice within the latter. This study attempted to challenge the notion of the “mommy track” post childbirth as the only option for working mothers.

Mothers in the Workplace

Working mothers deal with dual struggles of working and motherhood. Having children can mean that their commitment to work is questioned, and working can mean that their commitment to their roles as mothers is questioned (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2004). In this regard, women who chose to work out of enjoyment for their profession are regarded more negatively than women who need to work out of financial necessity (Cuddy et al., 2004). In an attempt to understand the dynamics at the workplace Cuddy et al. (2004) attempt to understand the way in which working mothers are perceived in relation to non-mothers and fathers. The results from that study show that among working non-mothers and mothers, non-mothers are more likely to be hired, promoted or educated within the company (Cuddy et al., 2004).

This is due to the perception that working mothers are less committed to working than non-mothers and therefore companies are not going to invest into working mothers who will eventually choose their families over their careers (Cuddy et al., 2004). Working mothers are seen as gaining the trait of warmth after becoming mothers and losing the trait of competence (Cuddy et al., 2004). These women are further described as having lower traits in skillfulness and capability and higher traits of warmth. It is that warmth which overshadowed their competence (Cuddy et al., 2004). Fathers, in contrast, are seen as gaining the trait of warmth and remaining unchanged in terms of competence and therefore is still considered desirable within the workplace (Cuddy et al., 2004). These perceptions around working mothers indicate and highlight the discrimination working mothers are confronted by daily. This suggests a possible hardship for working mothers in navigating their identity of their maternal self with the identity of their working self. One can see that working mothers are more harshly judged and often, instead of opting for the “mommy track”, they are possibly forced into it due to the lack of investment in these women by some organisations. Notably, this experience is not generalisable to all women. Olsson and Walker (2003) attempted to understand how executive women in New Zealand come to succeed in these roles. They found that corporate masculinity is the norm at many companies, especially at higher up levels. Yet despite masculinity being the norm, these women are able to navigate their femininity into these roles and claim success (Olsson & Walker, 2003). These women describe some of the traits which they feel they bring to the role of executive namely, both people and communication skills; creativity and risk taking; passion; ability to motivate others; vision and intuition (Olsson & Walker, 2003). Thus, it was through the incorporation of their femininity into their work selves that these women found balance.

Work-Life Balance

As previously mentioned, prior to the second wave of feminism, women were excluded from the labour force and relegated to the more private sphere of life. However, overtime as women's voices were heard, women began infiltrating the male dominated world of work. Despite women wanting to be employed, their home obligations seem to have been slower to change. It appeared women were three times more involved in the household than men and both genders gravitated towards duties which fit the more traditional gender roles (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). Men provided the

upkeep of the house whilst women provided the cooking, cleaning, shopping etc (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). These duties were deemed more feminine whilst fixing things around the house, more masculine. These cultural prescriptions around expectations of the mother role and gendered divisions of labour appeared to augment to the pressure experienced by these women. Thus, women are often still prescribed as the ones to take the bulk of the responsibility for care in the private sphere as well (Thornham, 2004). A recent quantitative study conducted by Young and Schieman (2018) aimed to understand the strategies used by mothers and fathers in order to negotiate work-life balance. Their research uncovered the contrasting manners in which mothers and fathers negotiated this through ascribed gender roles. Mothers were observed to scale back at work due to her commitments in the home whilst fathers did not. It was understood that a mother's role is more consistent with being the primary caregiver whilst fathers were understood to be the primary breadwinner (Young & Schieman, 2018). Hence, for many individuals in the workforce, establishing a successful career translates to "work is primary" (Shapiro, Ingols & Blake-Beard, 2008). Unfortunately regarding mothers, they are observed as having their family life as the primary concern, consequently calling their commitment into question (Shapiro et al., 2008). Evidencing the pressure on mothers to perform both in the private and public sphere is intensified.

This pressure is not helped but rather perpetuated by the Superwoman syndrome. This idea of the Superwoman syndrome involves the notion that the 'ideal woman' could have it all - she dominates the workplace and the home whilst being successful and brilliant at both (Nicolson, 2002). This added pressure of the Superwoman syndrome urges women to work harder at both their careers and their mothering. It encourages women to seek an ideal. However this ideal is found to be unrealistic and unattainable, which often intensifies the maternal guilt.

Maternal Guilt

Achieving work-life balance has been understood as challenging for most mothers and has rather been termed 'work-life conflict' instead (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). This indicates the difficulty in reconciling these two strong identities within women. Maternal guilt is not a novel concept among working mothers. This guilt was also found to be particular to mothers as comparison between working mothers and

fathers, uncovered that mothers felt more work-family guilt as their role was more central to the family (Borelli, Nelson, River, Birken & Moss-Racusin, 2017). As this sample consisted of career-driven mothers who find an element of enjoyment in their work, their guilt is possibly intensified. Gender prescriptions of what it means to be a good mother (i.e. 'intensive mothering') are challenged by working mothers who have a public life outside of the home. Thus, societal pressure could increase the guilt felt by career-driven mothers. In order to ease the guilt and navigate these coexisting identities, mothers often develop strategies of coping.

Strategies of Coping

The holding environment in which the maternal constellation exists needs to be positive for a new mother (Stern and Menzel, 1996). One of the ways working mothers tend to cope with their co-existing working and maternal identities is through the support they receive. A large contributing factor to this system of support is outsourcing of childcare. Career-driven mothers' are understood to invest in their careers, thus leaving very little time to be involved in the household. Therefore, nannies and extended families become the core of outsourcing. Outsourcing motherhood has brought about a great deal of guilt for mothers. The need for a nanny exposes the mother's unavailability and absence in her child's daily life, thus further perpetuating the maternal guilt felt by mothers (Scheftel, 2012). However there seems to be no escape for this need with working mothers. Macdonald (1998) found the intense relationship between the mother and nanny worked, if the nanny could become a 'shadow mother'. The 'shadow mother' is a surrogate for the biological mother when she cannot be present. This 'shadow mother' caters to the child's everyday needs but is obligated to be invisible upon the biological mother's return. This was found to be attained in a variety of ways, such as a detached attachment between nanny and infant, engineering quality time for mother and infant, and the particular approach the nanny takes with the mother (Macdonald, 1998). All of these strategies ensure that the biological mother remains centralised for the infant and is irreplaceable by the nanny. In this way, working mothers are still able to perform at optimal levels at work, whilst resting assured that their maternal duties are being attended to as well.

The guilt which working mothers feel often pressures them to alter their work life in order to be more present for their children. (Aarntzen, Derks, van Steenberg, Ryan & Van der Lippe, 2019) This highlights Garey's (1999) concept of "weaving". She puts forth the idea of women weaving two aspects of her life into one in order to function at their best: these two aspects being maternal identity and working identity. In her work, Garey (1999) found that women discuss being mothers all the time and one cannot simply stop being a mother when participating at work. Mothers think about their children, worry about their children and if there is an emergency with their child, mothers need to attend to it despite being at work (Garey, 1999). Hence, women are more likely to weave their maternal identity into their work identity.

Another aspect of support that is crucial for working mothers is feedback. Within the 'motherhood constellation', developing a maternal matrix of experienced mothers is important to provide a positive holding environment (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998). This is to ensure women receive support from other mothers through feedback around what they are doing well, as well as helpful constructive criticism around where they may improve (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998). This kind of support was found to enable mothers to feel understood and supported during a transition which was often unpredictable and challenging (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998).

Conclusion

Despite limited research being done on maternal identity and women's working identity from firsthand accounts of working mothers, the existing literature is insightful. Identity construction has been the center of interest for many years, with other psychologists aside from Erik Erikson, putting forth their theories on identity development. Erikson's suggestion that identity construction is influenced by societal norms such as culture and relationships appears supported, however, Erikson failed to account adequately for the different trajectory of women's identity construction. Instead, women's developmental trajectories have historically been seen as deviant to the trajectory of their male counterparts. More recent theorists, like Butler (2004, 2006) have also foregrounded the role of societal norms, but have also illustrated how even as norms shift, the performance of gender in particular ways appears to be perpetuated and maintained. This study hopes to add to the growing body of

knowledge around identity construction in women, and in particular the navigation of multiple identities and how these are influenced by societal norms, demands and wants.

The working identity of women is fairly recent but overtime has become more significant. Women in the labour market appeared to defy all gender logic and discourse. Women were not welcomed but were rather met with judgement and disapproval (Heilman, 2012). Women were encouraged to 'opt-out' of working as they were not seen as a good fit (Zimmerman & Clark, 2016). However, through the KCM it was understood that more women have begun 'opting-in' (Elley-Brown et al., 2018). This could be understood along the lines of working benefits. Women began to understand the powerlessness that gender ascribed to them and came to understand the power of the breadwinner (Tichenor, 2005). Leading women to understand that in order to challenge the status quo, and to develop independence and autonomy as well as power, they would have to opt-in to the labour market. Women who work appear to hold more decision-making power in the household than women who do not (Kumar & Maral, 2015). Thus, the independence afforded by a career seems to have become crucial to their identities.

The development of a maternal identity appears to be a challenging process of transition from one's previous self to a new self. It consists of fracturing of identities, losing and regaining oneself and lastly redefining oneself through this new addition (Laney et al., 2015). This process is often challenging for mothers, some struggle with the loss of their former selves. Mothers also seemed to face a great deal of judgement which seems to emerge from discourses about the 'ideal mother' and intensive mothering. (Christopher, 2012; Damaske, 2013; Pedersen, 2012; Rizzo et al., 2013). However, motherhood is both transmitted and transitional (Glassman & Eisikovits, 2006; Moore, 2013). Whilst mothers carry elements of their own mothers and experiences of mothering, younger generations of mothers are challenging the 'myths of motherhood' in their own ways.

An important critique worth highlighting is the predominant literature around motherhood and the dominant ideology that motherhood can be prescribed (i.e. motherhood has a singular definition and a predetermined way of being). This manner

of thinking about and understanding motherhood fails at capturing the experiences of all mothers, especially those who fall away from the dominant trajectory of what it means to be a mother (i.e. non-biological mothers, mothers who have not physically birthed a child). If one is to understand motherhood through this trajectory, one risks repeating the history of mothers not being seen in their totality.

Thus far in the literature, the combining of maternal and working identities has been conflictual for some, but complementing for others. In order to navigate these two difficult identities, help and support appears to be needed (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998). This support often arises from outsourcing child care and other aspects of motherhood. This is often never easy for mothers who have a complex and often complicated relationship with the nanny (Macdonald, 1999; Scheftal, 2012). However in order for working mothers to weave their two identities together for success, external support and feedback is often needed (Garey, 1999).

Chapter Three: Methodology

Research questions

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

- What are these working mothers' perspectives of their motherhood identities in light of their existing identities as 'working women'?
- What has a "working mother identity" has come to mean to these women?
- How have they navigated their maternal selves alongside their work selves, through their experiences of being a working mother?

Research Design

Due to the aim of this research being understanding women's experiences of their identities as mothers as well as career women, the approach used for this study was qualitative. Qualitative inquiry allows for the study of social phenomena, in naturalistic settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). This inquiry was also more interested in the exploration of experiences, meanings and understanding how things may come to exist the way they are. Hence, qualitative inquiry was well fitted to this research as the main aim was to understand the experiences of working mothers and how they have come to navigate and make sense of their dual identities as mothers and as working women, in the context of the workplace, the home and within various socio-cultural histories. Along with this being a qualitative study, this study fell within the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm has certain assumptions about the world. These assumptions fall under ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (Scotland, 2012). The ontological assumption under the interpretivist paradigm is relativism. Researchers under this paradigm believe that multiple realities may exist because reality is subjective and unique to each individual (Scotland, 2012). It is also believed that reality is individually constructed through the interaction of various facets of the world (Scotland, 2012). The epistemological assumption is subjectivism, where this type of research is interested in real world phenomena which occurs in natural everyday life. It is believed that all knowledge that we come to acquire as human beings, is culturally influenced and historically situated (Scotland, 2012). Lastly, the methodological assumption within this paradigm is that understanding of social phenomena can only be gained from the perspective of the

individual (Scotland, 2012). It is due to these assumptions made under the interpretivist paradigm, that it was most fitting for this research. These dual identities have been constructed by these women and the ways in which they have come to make meaning of the world around them. Their understandings of ‘motherhood’ and ‘working women’ are culturally influenced and historically situated with the oppression of women and their exclusion from the public sphere. Thus, for the expressed research aims, the interpretivist paradigm was most fitting.

Theoretical framework

The lens through which this research is being conducted and understood, is that of phenomenology. This section will discuss how this approach will be used in this research.

Origin of Phenomenology

In the 19th century, the positivist paradigm of research dominated. The positivist paradigm assumes that the world and all its complex phenomena can be understood in objective ways (Reiners, 2012). It was assumed, by many researchers at the time, that human existence and human reality were ordered, rational and logical, meaning it could in fact be measured (Reiners, 2012). However, these assumptions began to be questioned and the possibility of a more naturalistic paradigm was considered (Reiners, 2012). Thus, phenomenology emerged.

Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher and mathematician, is known as the founder of descriptive phenomenology (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). The core idea of phenomenology is gathering the lived experiences of individuals. In the case of descriptive phenomenology, the data gathered may shed light on a phenomena shared universally by individuals (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). A central idea of descriptive phenomenology for Husserl was reaching the pure consciousness of individuals in order to understand specific phenomena. A considered hindrance to this pure consciousness was personal bias from the researcher (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). The other core assumptions under Husserl’s descriptive phenomenology were transcendental subjectivity; eidetic essences and the live-world plane of interaction (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Transcendental subjectivity is the notion of going beyond one’s preconceived notions and being open to and unassuming of the participants’

reality (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Eidetic essences are the idea that there are in existence, universal truths that apply to all of us as human beings. The live-world plane of interaction emphasises the importance of researcher and participant interaction, if the researcher is to locate the pure consciousness of the participant.

A student of Husserl, Heidegger, understood Husserl's philosophical stance, but wished to expand on it (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). That expansion led Heidegger to become the founder of interpretive (hermeneutic) phenomenology. Heidegger believed that individuals were able to make meaning of their lives and the core manner in which they came to make those meanings, lay in their specific contexts (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). This was a significant difference between descriptive and interpretive phenomenology. For Heidegger, you cannot possibly understand how individuals come to make meaning of their lives in isolation from their contexts, namely their historical and sociocultural contexts (Campbell, 2001). He termed this idea of being influenced by your context '*dasein*', which translates to "the human way of being in the world" (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007, p. 174).

Interpretive Phenomenology

The emphasis on the lived experiences of individuals is an important tenet within phenomenology (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). As this research has the same goal of understanding the meaning-making and navigation of both the maternal identity as well as the working identity, it would be best suited for an interpretive phenomenological lens. Interpretive phenomenology allows for a more rich and in-depth look at the navigation of these identities in the context of the workplace, the home and within the various socio-cultural histories of the participants. At the heart of this research is the aim to capture the lived experiences of these two identities and how these women come to make meaning of these concurrent identities in the workplace. Despite this research targeting career-driven mothers, one cannot accept that there is a universal truth for all career-driven mothers. Each mother may understand and make meaning of her intersectional identities in various ways depending on the working context in which she finds herself. That is why interpretive phenomenology is more appropriate for this research instead of descriptive phenomenology.

Participants

The sample consisted of six working mothers who were accessed through the process of snowball sampling from individuals with whom the researcher is acquainted. Once ethics clearance was obtained from the Non-Medical Ethics Committee at the University of Witwatersrand, the recruitment process began. The criteria for these participants were as follows: working mothers between the ages of 30 to 45 years old, who currently had a partner contributing to the household, and had at least one child between the ages of 2 and 11 years old. This criteria was specifically chosen as according to Wilde, Batchelder and Ellwood (2010), college educated women with high skilled jobs are more likely to wait to have children as they would rather invest in their career first. Whereas women in low skilled jobs are more likely to have children younger. Women in the high skills jobs were the target for this research as their jobs are possibly more demanding. Therefore, the age criteria chosen for this research was 30-45 years old as this seems to be the childbearing age range for high skilled women (Wilde et al., 2010). These women need to have children between the ages of 2 and 11 years old. A minimum of 2 years would have allowed time for the mother to have been back at work and had some experience juggling her two roles as career woman and mother. It was also suggested that most women have possibly established a maternal identity by the time their child is aged 2. The maximum of age 11 is to create some homogeneity in the group, as children in this age range are still highly dependent on their mother in various ways, as opposed to a mother of teenagers who may require a different kind of parenting. Hence, this age range required mothers to be very involved with their children, which heightened her maternal identity. These women had to self-identify as career-driven or highly invested in their careers. This would ensure an element of high demand in both their home lives as well as their work lives, suggesting very defined maternal and work identities. However, it should be noted that as this research aimed to interview self-identified “career-driven women” as opposed to “working mothers”, this may have introduced a particular bias within the sample as only those women who identified more with the career parts of themselves chose to participate.

The sample for this research was quite diverse. As South Africa consists of a racially diverse population, most racial groups were represented within the research. The six participants are described in detail as follows:

Lesedi is a black female in her mid-thirties with two children, a son and a daughter, aged six and four. Lesedi works in a corporate environment. Her working identity was found to be her primary identity and this proved important for Lesedi as she comes from a background of historical deprivation. Sofia is an immigrant to South Africa and works as an academic. She is a white woman in her mid to late thirties, with two daughters, aged four and six. Sofia was found to be passionate about her work and rather insightful about life. She held an ambivalence, a sense of being torn between motherhood and working. Sofia's primary identity was also her working identity, which developed in her formative years as a child. Vidya, an Indian woman working in investment banking, is a passionate and outspoken woman, also in her mid-thirties. She has one daughter who is two and a half years of age. Vidya was experienced as extremely passionate about her career and motivated for career-growth. As with the other women, Vidya's primary identity was also her working identity. As Vidya works in a very male-dominated role in a banking environment, she seemed to contend with more discriminatory gender discourses in the workplace. Despite this, Vidya was found to be passionately challenging of these discourses in order to break the transmission of gender stereotypes for her daughter.

Michelle is an Asian woman, in her late thirties, currently working as a corporate lawyer. She has one daughter, aged four and was pregnant with her second child at the time. In the interview, Michelle was passionate about her work and found it crucial in enhancing her personality. She appeared as a woman who merely 'got on' with the task at hand, never finding solace in complaining, finding it pointless. Michelle's identity appeared to be defined by her titles and achievements at work, thus making her working identity her primary identity. Shanè is a white Afrikaans woman in her mid-thirties and has two sons, aged six and eight. Shanè is in the medical field working predominantly with children and has three independent practices. Both Shanè's sons have difficulties, with her youngest being diagnosed with Aspergers and her oldest a neurological deficit. Shanè was the only woman in the sample whose primary identity was her maternal identity. Since childhood, Shanè longed to be a mother, dreaming of a whole rugby team of children. Shanè's maternal identity is highly intensified as she described herself as a protector and fighter for her children. This is understandable considering the difficulties both her children have. Shanè

found herself being subjected to gender discourses within the household, which she strongly challenged. Despite enjoying her work, Shanè longed to be a mother first and foremost and would happily give up work to pursue that path. The last mother was Aisha, an Indian woman working in human resources. Aisha is in her late thirties and has two daughters, aged seven and 18 months. Unlike the other mothers, Aisha overtly favoured her working identity over her maternal identity. Her narratives suggested that she believes self-investment is crucial. Aisha felt she lacked natural maternal instinct and therefore applies work strategies within the household. Aisha found herself often bound by cultural and gender discourses both in the home and at work. However, Aisha challenged these discourses in the way she lived her life (i.e. being ambitious and career-driven). Similarly to Lesedi, Aisha had a background of historical deprivation and was motivated by female intergenerational powerlessness to break the transmission of that powerlessness. Aisha was highly independent and struggled with the dependence of her children. Despite appearing confident in her passion for work over mothering, Aisha appeared anxious about any judgement.

As the interview process consisted of face-to-face interviews, anonymity could not be guaranteed to these women. However, confidentiality was ensured to the best of the researcher's ability when composing this report. In all cases, the women were informed about the parameters of their participation in this research and informed consent was obtained. All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. All identifying data was altered or removed from the transcripts before these were submitted to the researcher's supervisor. A pseudonym was given to each woman throughout the data collection process as well as throughout the composing of this report, in order to protect these women's identities.

Interview Procedure

Developing the Interview Schedule

As this research was exploring two very distinct identities in working mothers, the research needed to capture the experiences of both these identities separately but also how they come together. In creating research questions, the researcher had to understand the core of the research. Above all, this research was endeavouring to understand the lived experiences of working mothers and their feelings, thoughts and perceptions of each identity as separate entities but also within their interaction with

each other. Thus, foundational questions for the interview needed to be considered as nothing could be taken for granted. Some of the foundational questions which emerged were:

1. What were your feelings around becoming a mother?
2. What does motherhood mean to you?
3. What does "working identity" mean to you?
4. What are some of the challenges of being a working woman?
5. How do you cope with being a mother and a working woman?

Once the foundational questions were listed, literature around working mothers enabled further questions to emerge and areas to be explored (Appendix C). The pre-existing literature was helpful in guiding the development of the questions as it enabled the narrowing of data in order to make the captured data more meaningful (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). As the approach of this research was interpretive phenomenology, it was important to capture the experiences of these mothers in as much detail as possible (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007).

This use of semi-structured interview allowed for flexibility within the research, easier creation of rapport and the ability to conduct this research in an exploratory manner (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). Semi-structured interviews also incorporate open-ended questions. Open-ended questions allow the participant to engage with the subject in their own, personal manner and with as much detail as they wish to share (Turner, 2010). These kinds of questions also provide an opportunity for the researcher to probe, should the participant share something of interest. Probing of the participant occurred through prompt responses. According to Parker (2005), using prompt responses allows for the conversation to remain continuous and does not interrupt the participant with further questions. Instead, through prompt responses, the interviewer encourages the participant to expand on their current thought (Parker, 2005). Despite the similarities among mothers and the process of mothering, this sample of women shared various aspects of their life which were unique to them. These aspects were influenced by culture, gender, historical context and race. Hence, prompting the participants for more detail when they raised a unique aspect in the data, was beneficial to enriching the data. One example of the spontaneous questioning was the mothers' sharing of their identities. When these women

expressed slightly more investment in their careers over motherhood, they were asked if their careers could be considered primary and most of them answered yes. This allowed the researcher to state that for most of these women, their primary identity was their work identity.

Interviews

The selection process consisted of screening of potential participants through email and phone calls where their ages were asked. Most of these women felt uncomfortable providing their actual ages and thus a range was used (i.e. mid-late 30's). Once it was ensured these women fit the criteria, they were invited to participate in the interview process. As these working mother's had demanding jobs as well as home lives, it was difficult to schedule time for interviews. Many mothers were contacted for the research and appeared excited to participate, however due to time constraints between busy work and home lives, many mothers were unable to participate. Hence, the process of recruiting mothers was slow and completed over the course of seven weeks. Being mindful of the mother's time, the interviews were no longer than an hour. Most of the mothers were able to answer all the questions under the hour, whilst only one mother went over the allocated one hour slot. Some of the mothers were more comfortable with the interview than others, and some appeared to have developed more insight into the difficulties of being a working mother than others. Mothers who seemed not to have reflected on their dual roles prior, appeared more anxious during the interview, perhaps as this provided them with a space to reflect, which was both positive and negative. This reflection felt challenging for some mothers as they appeared to struggle with the difficult emotions evoked around the topic of being a working mother. Thus, there was some difficult material that emerged, where high levels of affect were present. In these instances the interviewer remained empathic, limited probing, and asked if the participant felt comfortable sharing further. Most of the mothers felt somewhat despondent after the interviews, suggesting a large amount of self-reflection had occurred. One mother felt very anxious after the interview and was concerned about how she would be portrayed in this research. Her concerns were founded around possible judgement in preferring her working identity to her maternal identity. In order to ease her anxiety, the researcher assured her that every working mothers' experience is unique and different thus

yielded varying results. Six women were interviewed for this research study, all of whom provided rich accounts of their experiences as working women. The small sample of six was due to the similarities between the women in the emerging data. Thus, the interviews were producing similar results suggesting some saturation in the data.

Data Analysis

An interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used in analysing the data. The steps used, as outlined by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014), are as follows:

Creating themes. The first step in IPA is to familiarise oneself with the data. Once the data was transcribed, the researcher read through each transcript twice to get a feel for the participant and the possible emerging data. Following this, the transcripts were re-read, this time annotations were made and interesting parts of the narratives were highlighted. At this point, the annotations were re-read in order to extract a possible meaning behind the quote and further a possible theme.

Connecting themes. The next step in the data analysis process is to start connecting themes together from throughout the interview data. Once possible themes had emerged, the researcher reverted to re-reading the transcripts in order to find similarities across the transcripts. Themes from the subsequent transcript helped the researcher look for possible themes in the other transcripts. Some themes appeared to be main themes whilst some only sub-themes. Once, main and sub- themes were developed, they were colour-coded. This was to ensure the correct quotes would be situated under the correct theme. It is crucial that themes capture the core of what the individual actually said and the researcher has to be consistent in going back and re-reading the transcript (Smith and Osborn, 2015). Thus, once the themes were established, the researcher re-read the quotes along with the themes to ensure a correct representation of the participants' narratives.

Writing up. The final step in the IPA process is writing up of the data. The researcher converted the themes found across all transcripts into a concise and

coherent narrative in an attempt to answer the research questions. Here, the themes were coherently ordered, elaborated upon and explored more in-depth, in order to provide readers with a better understanding of what emerged from the data. This was the process of interpretation of the data. Direct quotes from the participants were used to enhance the argument put forth, in the form of evidence.

Self Reflexivity

The Non-Mother Subjectivity of the Researcher

The process of conducting research is an intrinsically complex one. In previous years, it was thought that a researcher merely conducts the research and any influence from the researcher is null and void (Pezalla, Pettigrew & Miller-Day, 2012). However, it is now acknowledged that researchers are not an empty vacuum devoid of feelings, thoughts and emotions but are rather innately built up with their own set of thoughts, feelings and values formed throughout their lives. Therefore in research, self-awareness of the researcher is an important factor to consider. The researcher is an instrument within the research process (Pezalla et al., 2012). The idea of researcher-as-instrument signifies that the researcher cannot be separate from the research process but to an extent, will influence the outcome in little ways (Pezalla et al., 2012). The influence is more likely to take place during the data gathering phase, where qualitative researchers come into contact with their participants. Their thoughts, feelings and values are ever present. Therefore, self-reflexivity is a crucial aspect of the research process, as it makes the researcher aware of any possible biases, blind spots or triggers which may impede the data. This awareness is important during interviews as the researcher aims at building rapport with the participants in order to gain a rich understanding of the phenomena (Pezalla et al., 2012). Hence, the researcher has to convey a safe space for the participant to reveal their story and hindrance to this that could possibly be coming from the researcher needs to be acknowledged and managed through self-awareness.

The interview process was an emotionally challenging experience for the researcher. Unlike the sample of working mothers, the researcher is not a working mother. The researcher was well aware of her position in this research, as were the participants. None of the participants were found to ask the researcher if she was a mother, rather it

was assumed she was not. There were two interesting dynamics which occurred simultaneously due to the researcher not being a working mother. One, she was not 'one of us' and therefore would be more likely to judge, having not lived the life of a working mother and two, because she is not 'one of us' we are allowed to share things with her because she would not judge us. Therefore, it was understood that these working mothers felt both judged and not judged simultaneously due to the researcher's positionality.

For the researcher, some of the interviews were harder than others. There were often strong countertransference feelings, both positive and negative, in the researcher, towards these mothers. This was influenced by the content which these working mothers brought, which often provided a sense of hopelessness and despondency. This was particularly challenging for the researcher as the reality of being a working mother seemed daunting and filled with loss. The role of supervision was pertinent in making the researcher aware of her positioning within this research. Supervision also provided a holding and containing environment for all the researcher's countertransference feelings evoked by the working mothers.

Due to the researcher's lack of experience as a mother, it became tempting to judge the mothers' narratives. This often occurred when mothers would deviate from the conventional attributes of motherhood. However, through this process and getting to know these mothers, it became evident that motherhood is intersubjective and mothers all around the world are merely trying their best. This challenged both the conventional ideals held by the researcher as well as the social structure which upholds these ideals. In experiencing a small element of these women's emotional challenges, the researcher was allowed a better understanding of the complexities of motherhood.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

The positivist paradigm has at its core, the ability to measure constructs under investigation. Within this framework concepts such as validity and reliability are established to ensure the trustworthiness of any research produced. The interpretive paradigm has its own terminology in relation to the trustworthiness of qualitative findings, namely; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability

(Shenton, 2004). The researcher will now look at each one in turn, with its applicability to this research project.

Credibility

The credibility of a study is linked to the concern of “truth value” and is the naturalistic inquiry’s method of assessing the congruence in findings with reality. Hence, credibility is the naturalistic equivalent to the internal validity in a rationalistic inquiry (Shenton, 2004). In this research, there were numerous ways of ensuring the credibility of the study. Firstly, the researcher adopted research methods that are well established. This research was conducted in accordance with the phenomenological approach with steps clearly outlined. There are vast amounts of research on phenomenological approaches and the researcher used those as a guideline for conducting this research. There were also tactics in place to ensure honesty. The participants were reassured that should they wish to stop partaking, they were allowed to withdraw from the study at any point. This ensured that only individuals really interested in participating remained. The participants also had the option of choosing the location in which to be interviewed. This ensured that participants were comfortable during the interview process and may be more open to being honest. Throughout the process, the researcher attended debriefing sessions with her supervisor in order to ensure a more collaborative look at the research process. As the research process began to uncover certain themes, perspectives and observations, the supervisory debriefing sessions helped the researcher keep an open mind and possibly consider alternative ways of approaching the data. This aspect was important to ensure that all possible avenues are being explored and nothing is being missed out. The researcher also employed reflective commentary during the process. The researcher was very aware of the process and how it works practically. A diary was kept with initial thoughts, perceptions and ideas around the interview and research process and the researcher continuously reflected back at the process and the emerging data. This process helped frame the emerging data and was reflected upon in understanding and interpretation of the results. Another way credibility was ensured was to provide a thick description of the phenomena of interest in this project. The literature review aimed to saturate the reader into the world of the working mother, the development of her identities in these dual roles and the context in which these identities are navigated. This provided the reader with a better understanding of

the current state of knowledge in the field and how to place what emerges in the findings. Lastly, the researcher compared findings in this study to previously done research. The reader is then able to assess to what extent the findings are a true description of reality. The findings were found to be similar to international literature at times but unique in other instances. This was due to the nuances within the research because of the South African context and the diversity that exists within this sphere. Therefore, the researcher was careful in comparing the findings.

Transferability

Transferability is related to the concern of applicability. It asks the question of whether findings can be applied to other contexts (Guba, 1981). Transferability is the naturalistic inquiry equivalent of external validity within the rationalist inquiry (Guba, 1981). This research was very context specific, with the context being South Africa. The diversity within South Africa in terms of culture had an impact on the findings. Therefore, if the research was replicated within a different population, it is likely that the findings would differ in some respects. The best this research aimed to do was make inferences within the South African context and not assume that findings will be applicable in other parts of the world. The research process for this study was provided in a very detailed manner, which will enable any other researcher to carry out the research in another or same context.

Dependability

The concern of consistency is related to dependability of the research. This asks the question regarding the replication of the research with the same participants in the same context and whether that research will yield the same results (Guba, 1981). In order to ensure the dependability of the research as well as rigour in the research, the researcher provided a detailed account of the methods used in the gathering of the data. This began with the qualitative research design and an interpretivist paradigm. The researcher also provided as an appendix, the interview schedule with each question asked during the interview process as well as the researcher's reflexive assessment of the report. Providing the detailed steps of this research process will allow other researchers to replicate such a study within the same parameters of this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability is related to the concern of neutrality. Neutrality of the research, asks the question regarding whether the emerging themes and patterns found in the data are as a result of the participants' experiences, perceptions and feelings or whether they are as a result of the researcher's own biases, motivations, interests and perspectives (Guba, 1981). As this research engaged with the experiences of working mothers, the researcher was currently not a working mother and therefore maintains a certain distance from these experiences, having not experienced them herself. However, as a feminist and being very 'pro working women', the researcher had her own preconceived ideas and biases of this research area. Therefore, in order to maintain confirmability throughout this process, the researcher kept a diary of any thoughts she had regarding the data. She also attended supervisory debriefing sessions in order to allow for acknowledgement of her influences on what emerged from the data. Lastly, the researcher was reflexive at all points throughout this process, continually referring back and engaging with the data in a reflexive manner.

Ethical Considerations

As this research was done on human participants, there was an ethical element to be considered. This research dealt with the identities of women as mothers and career women. Each story was different and came with varying degrees of emotions. These women were informed about the process, and their informed consent to be interviewed and audio recorded was sought. They were made aware that they were able to stop at any point, if uncomfortable. During the analysis phase, the data was stored on a password protected computer. The audio recordings were solely heard by the researcher and the anonymised transcripts were seen by the researcher and her supervisor. All names from the data were changed and pseudonyms were given in order to protect the women's privacy and ensure confidentiality. After the research has been published, the audio recordings will be deleted and the anonymised transcripts shall be archived by the researcher and her supervisor, for the purpose of future research, with the participants' permission. If the women requested a summary of the findings, a brief summary detailing the outcome of the research shall be emailed to them. As this is a minimal to low risk sample, it was thought unlikely that these women would need counselling after the interview. However, if the participant felt distress after the interview, the interviewer brought her attention to the section at

the end of the consent form with relevant information on counselling services. Participants were encouraged to seek therapy if they, at any point in the future, felt distressed and needed help. This form consisted of the Emthonjeni Clinic's number and address as well as Lifeline, a national counselling line. The participants kept their information forms and so have the relevant information to seek the help if they may need.

Chapter Four: Results

4.1. Introduction

One of the most common factors for all the women who were interviewed for this study was the unconditional love that they felt for their children. Sofia described this love as:

[It]...is the one opportunity in life that you get to understand what unconditional love is. Like completely unconditional. It's like being in love...like there are some moments of perfection like just being with them and I don't know, it's such an intimate and powerful relationship that...it is, it's better than being in love....it's just so pure (Sofia).

Holding this love in mind, this chapter explores the participants' joys and struggles in their negotiation of their career and motherhood identities. The results presented are a culmination of all the data captured during the interview process. Supervision notes, as well as my own notes made during the interview process were used to aid the consolidation of themes. Of the six women interviewed, five of the women presented their working identity as their first or primary identity, with their roles as mothers as additional to this. However, one mother, Shanè, primarily identified as a mother and perceived her working identity as secondary. Since both Shane's children have special needs (one is diagnosed with Aspergers and the other, with a Neurological Disorder), Shanè's maternal identity may have necessarily been heightened and enhanced.

In speaking to these mothers, the significance of them working was important across the group. For Sofia, Michelle, Vidya and Aisha their reasons for working were interlinked with their need to have an avenue to be their own person. A place where they could go everyday to develop and cultivate a part of themselves that was solely them, devoid of any other titles and roles. For the women overall, it was difficult to ignore the current economic climate and the need for them to be an equal financial contributor within their families. Despite this being a common denominator across the same of women, the amount of emphasis placed on this reason for working, varied from woman to woman. For Aisha, Shanè and Lesedi, this financial factor was more emphasised regarding reasons for working. Whilst for Sofia, Vidya and Michelle, it

was considered an important benefit but secondary to the pleasure they found in working.

The sample showed racial diversity and the responses given by these mothers reflected their unique personal histories and contexts. Among the responses, social discourses deriving from cultural backgrounds and the influence of these discourses on gender roles varied between the women. These mothers came from various socio-economic backgrounds which influenced their experiences of mothering and working. Hence, the results aim to capture not merely the similarities, of which there were many, but also the unique experiences of these mothers.

This research study set out to explore three broad areas, namely maternal identity, working identity, and the manner in which these two identities are navigated and combined by these working mothers. As the interview process began, it became evident that for these mothers distinctions between identities were complex. When questioned about maternal identity, anecdotes of work identity arose and vice versa. Thus, in presenting the themes I have attempted to capture this complexity and their identities are discussed in an intertwined manner. This is to ensure representation of the results in the most authentic manner possible.

Seven themes emerged during the analysis of the interviews. These were “From independence to dependence”, ”Strength as growth”, “Responsibility and anxiety”, “Judgement, pressure and guilt”, “Coping”, “Gender and cultural discourses” and “Motherhood as evolving and intersubjective”.

4.2. The Journey from Independence to Dependence

It became evident from the interviews that these women enjoyed a sense of independence prior to becoming mothers. Once motherhood commenced, they needed to discover a way in which to negotiate their acquired independence with an infant whose existence is contingent on complete dependence. Some mothers embraced the dependence whilst others found this more difficult, resisting their child's dependence and, in some cases, responding with defensive dismissive states of mind.

4.2.1. "I'm many things to many people but I need to be me, to me": Separateness and Individuation

For most of these mothers, their working identity provided them with a sense of self, separate from others. An identity that they had established on their own, grounded in their own talents and skills. Sofia who is passionate about her career stated:

My ENTIRE sense of, like a huge amount of my identity was built around my academic and professional self. Like everything in my life was related to that and I took an incredible, great pride in my development because I graduated incredibly young, I got because of that, because of my performance, great opportunities to achieve things that people my age don't normally achieve. And that gave me a huge sense, of of...pride. Pride is the perfect word because that thing you know is also the problem with pride (Sofia).

For Vidya, working was the greatest culmination and use of her innate talents. As she believed, "I think it's an expression of a creative self. That for me, all of us have certain talents and I feel that I'm quite lucky to...this is my talent. What I do, expresses my talent". She further added, "So for me it's a sense of value, it's a sense of pride, it's a sense of I contributed to this greater society you know?". For Michelle, her independence was crucial in relation to her personality as she believed that it enhanced her in a way. She said:

I think it's important for anyone to have work or a career, it's like having a goal to work on so that you have something to look forward to and feel you serve a purpose in life but also for my own sanity. Some of us can't have nothing to do you know? My own view is that working women are, are...always happier people, they are usually more confident and interesting (Michelle).

Despite Shanè's yearning for motherhood first and a working second, she too found joy and pride in her work. As she admitted proudly:

I can go out and I can say I own three practices and it's going well and we really, making a difference in the people's lives that we are treating. And that part of work and work identity is fantastic. And to say that I made something of my life and I'm running successful businesses. That's awesome, that is so much fun to be able to say." She reiterated, "Well, I'm very proud of myself that I've managed to do this and I've made a good name for myself. And I'm so excited that I'm able to provide jobs for three people (Shane).

Sofia mentioned retaining personal spaces which her children do not have access to, spaces comprised of work and her position in the working world. She stated, "I would like to tell you that my role as a mom is the most important one but if I have to be 100% honest, I can tell you that, I feel anxious when I don't work. It gets to me. I love coming to my office, I find a lot of meaning in my job". She further emphasized the space which working took up in her life. Sofia stated:

I carry my job with me everywhere I go like I think about my work a lot, I think about my patients, I'm thinking about, meetings that I have to plan, things I have to prepare for meetings so my job is constantly present and that takes precedence when you're with your kids, you're not as available as a mom without a career would be (Sofia).

Sofia further mentioned how at times, she makes the decision to partake in something which brings her joy outside of her children and that parts of her remain separate despite having children. Sofia admitted:

I would sometimes after I finish work, go and have a coffee with them [her friends] because that's also important for me and I would say "I would never choose one hour with this friend over my kid" and I'm like wow, I am kind of choosing to spend one hour with this friend instead of one more hour with my kids. So I am making those choices and I can't honestly say that yeah my kids come first because they don't always take precedence in terms of those things. I mean they are in my mind but there are spaces they don't share or have access to (Sofia).

Despite these women's positioning of work as allowing them a separate 'self', for many work also provided opportunities for connections outside of the family. When asked about the benefits of working, Michelle stated:

Emotionally it's great, I'm able to dress up, make friends at work, see people, interact with others. I feel like I am someone constantly learning at work and have topics to talk about so when I go home I have something to talk about. It makes me more of an interesting person I think." For Michelle, being able to be her own person and interact with others in the workplace, enhanced her personality (Michelle).

For Vidya, it was a highlight of her career and something she would fondly look back on. She mentioned:

It's also being able to live a life where you build many relationships with many diverse sets of people. It gives me the chance to do that. At the end of this very long career I'll look back and be able to say "Yeah I met that guy and that was his story" and I met this woman and that was her story. It's amazing how this person ended up over there (Vidya).

Vidya felt the relationships she developed as a working woman, was what enhanced her. Despite Shanè wanting to be a mother first and an employee second, she too was grateful for the relationships cultivated in this space and conceived of it as a benefit of working. She stated, "Yeah and you build relationships when you're working. You get to know people that you wouldn't necessarily know if you weren't working".

Michelle felt similarly regarding space for her adult needs for contribution and connection, as she stated:

It [working identity] means growing and developing to be someone who is independent, also having a sense of fulfilment, having personal space like a place to go during the day and to interact with others, to feel a sense of worth and to have a dream I think, yeah (Michelle).

For Michelle, it felt important for her to make her need for independence known, even to her children as she said, "I think having a full time job lets my children know the importance of going to work, and that I have other responsibilities as well...as opposed to just being a mom doing things at home like a stay at home mom".

For the majority of these mothers, an advantage in working was that it provides them with financial independence, alleviating the stress of feeling like a burden on others. As Michelle mentioned, "Financially it's rewarding, I can keep up with the comfortable life I have, not have to ask for money and feel I am able to buy things for my family, not have to make anyone like maybe my husband or my family worry or create a burden for anyone". Shanè's narrative contained more ambivalence as she perceived having to work as prohibiting her role as mother. However, after some consideration the biggest benefit of working for her was being able to contribute to her family financially, as she stated:

So I will forever work in order to sustain an income. And sometimes that makes me happy and that makes me proud. And I can stand back and look at the 8 years I've spent in my own business and go yeah, you haven't done too badly, this is okay" (Shane).

Whilst the other mothers enjoyed the financial independence and deemed it a benefit, for Aisha it felt greatly significant. In describing benefits of working, she stated, "Wow, everything! It's about doing what you want, when you want from a financial sense". For Aisha, her financial independence connected with her working identity, strongly. Her working identity was crucial in separating Aisha from her identity in relation to others. As she strongly stated, "Like I said my independence hey, everything hinges on that. I really want to be me first before I'm everyone's mother, wife, sister, daughter". She went on to state, "My financial independence, I'm not a multi-millionaire but whatever I do have, it is absolutely critical for my identity and my self-preservation and for my independence. I will never compromise on it or give it up for anything or anybody". It could be observed that Aisha was terrified of losing her working identity and in that losing herself. As she shared:

In order to keep everyone together. So the moment I start losing self, everyone is going to suffer but the more grounded I am in self, I think the better I am going to be for everyone. So I will never, it's extremely important, it's extremely critical, for as long as I can work, I will do it. Even beyond retirement, I will probably need to find something else to do but I will never give up the working ability (Aisha).

Thus, in her attempt to defend against the threat of dependence and loss of self, Aisha seemed to hold tightly to her dominant working identity. She also appeared to use compartmentalisation to divide her identities. As she mentioned, "Cause I'm basically a mom from 5PM on a Friday afternoon when my nanny leaves till Sunday night when I put them to bed". Lesedi shared similarities with Aisha regarding her independence, as she described her working identity as having "that financial freedom, that identity outside of being so and so's wife. So that was very important". She further shared that her work identity dominated. This was evidenced when she stated, "So...I think my work identity has kinda like taken over, my maternal identity". Therefore for the majority of these women, their working self gave them a sense of self, independent of any external factors. For Aisha and Lesedi, this seemed of the utmost importance. However in becoming a mother, the sense of independence needed to be negotiated with a new found dependence from the baby.

4.2.2. "I'm making an impact to the world": The Contributing Self

A large element for these women in reinforcing their independence, was their ability to contribute. This contribution was found to be either to their household or the greater world. For Vidya, her happiness came from her ability to see the bigger picture and to align her working identity accordingly. She stated passionately, "If I can do my piece and play my part in this country and the difficult times that we're sitting with, then I'm making an impact to the world". For both Shanè and Michelle, their ability to contribute was found toward the household and the family, for putting them first. When asked about the benefits of being a working woman, Shanè stated, "So it's awesome because you're contributing to your household", whilst Michelle mentioned, "It's for the family".

However, for Aisha and Lesedi, their ability to contribute was attributed to their dire need for financial independence as well as power within relationships. When asked about the benefits of working, Lesedi responded with "That [Being able to financially provide] was a form of me asserting my independence. For me, that was important". For Aisha, it was important that she was able to wield a degree of power in her family. Aisha believed this was channeled through her financial independence. Aisha suggested:

You become an easy target for a lot of things and for me the way I keep the parity in my household in terms of power because that's what it comes to is to be able to be a contributor to the children and the household in every sense (Aisha).

She went on to state, "Everyone needs to be able to take care of themselves. I think in the real world in which we are operating, there are no passengers, you have to be a driver. It's harsh but it's the reality". Aisha recalled her hunger for financial independence transpiring from her childhood, when she observed the power disparity between her parents. She recalled:

Well I absolutely hated the fact, like even for a simple thing like if she [Aisha's mother] had to order in, she would have to first get clearance from my dad before she could do that because he controlled the funds. And that's the level of control, really I've seen it from a young age and I absolutely, I just detested it. The power could not lie solely with one individual. And I see how that's made her quite subservient because she knows that she doesn't bring in an income and so she always sort of caves into the pressures of any person who does pull those purse strings. And I absolutely never wanted that. I mean, even if I did not work, I'm sure I would be a thief because I would still make sure I was taking care of myself on my own. But there's no way I would turn to anybody for that support (Aisha).

Now as Aisha believes she has achieved financial independence through her work self, she feels the need to pay it forward. Thus, utilizing those resources to help

contribute to her family. Hence, whilst aiding her family, she demonstrated and exerted both her independence and power. Therefore, resisting the intergenerational transmission of subservience and dependence. As Aisha mentioned:

And to help my mom and my parents because my dad has always had issues with his health and he can't have a steady job. So to make sure that they are fine, that's a great feeling. Sort of paying it back because the wheel does turn. That's very important and key to me but also if any other family members need me in any sense. In one way, in some resources do it. I mean I may not be there physically but because I'm working, I'm able to support in another way (Aisha).

Overall in developing and growing these careers, these women have created a sense of themselves that is independent, able to control-to some extent, the power relationally but also as contributing factors to their homes and the world.

4.2.3. *"Becoming a mom, I think is one of the most selfless things anyone can do."*: Loss of Independence and Space for the Separate Self

Through their working identities, these women developed a sense of themselves based on the foundation of their skills, talent and personality. However through the birth of a baby, their lives were significantly changed. For these women the introduction of their new title, "Mom" became all consuming, challenging any prior sense of self and identity. As Lesedi stated, "I'm trying to separate Lesedi, the individual from Lesedi, the mom". Sofia echoed those sentiments, as she said:

Yeah it becomes a huge part of your identity and the fight is trying to not make it the only part of your identity being a mom. For me it's been a challenge like that's not all that I am. Because it's so all consuming that sometimes you forget that, other spaces that you need to, other roles that you need to play, yeah (Sofia).

For both Michelle and Vidya, this dependence of an infant meant that the infants' needs were prioritised over their own. As Michelle stated, "So you get up so early to prepare everything for the kids that you rush to do your own things". Whilst Vidya

said, "And yes, there's a lot of times when my nails aren't done and my hair isn't combed and I'm that kind of person and I've had to concede on that as well".

For Shanè, her sense of becoming a mother developed while she was pregnant as she happily reminisced, "And then you start protecting like even in the womb, you start protecting your tummy and you start eating differently and those kinds of things happen before your baby is born. At least it did for me". Shanè appeared to enjoy her transformation into a mother and seemed to embrace her new role in relation to her children, and the development of her maternal identity with more ease than the other mothers.

The loss of self involved in the transition to motherhood seemed particularly difficult for Sofia, who delighted in her career immensely. When asked about how motherhood changed her life, she stated:

Wow. Uh...in, in it was like a nuclear bomb in my life. Okay...so becoming a mom is not only a physical act of just having children but also transforming your whole life into...being a mom. It changes absolutely everything, it changes everything. My life, like everything like I cannot make...a single decision that doesn't incorporate my kids into it and that is a huge change because now...I was incredibly independent and now it's almost like you can't just make decisions by like thinking "okay let me just do this" it's impossible. It just transforms you in a very dramatic and deep way. So yeah everything, everything. I can't identify a space where I can tell you this didn't change. Like from my body to mind to my life to my decisions to what I keep deciding on what I want to do, to how I think life should be. Everything so yeah (Sofia).

She proceeded to give me an example of a work event she was invited to, something which genuinely brought her pleasure prior to her children. She recalled:

I'm going to give you an example. I go to once a month, a meeting...I love those meetings, I love them because they are incredibly

stimulating, professionally for me because it's smart people...when I got invited to these meetings, I thought it was great because I was finally rescuing some of my professional stance, I had before. And I loved it and I thought this is my element and I loved it...those meetings are at night, they're like till 8PM at night. When I have those meetings, my kids resent those meetings like nothing else in the world. I cannot get the joy that I used to get out of it because I feel like I'm betraying my kids for this (Sofia).

She further stated, "I was having kind of like a carefree life and I don't have that anymore and now I grieve that loss of being more carefree". For Sofia, the introduction of her maternal identity began diminishing her work identity, something which meant a great deal to her. She sounded resigned around this:

So basically I felt that the moment you make a decision that you're going to be a mom, you sacrifice the possibility at becoming the best at whatever you're doing. And that's a tough one because when you spend your entire life studying and dedicated to something and you achieve a point where you say that I'd rather do this, basically sacrifice everything that you have done to say okay this means that you're putting a ceiling on top of your professional development (Sofia).

Sofia suggested that she was attempting to find acceptance with the loss of her old self as she stated, "And then I just have to remind myself that that's not who I am anymore and because I have two kids and I try all the time to keep that balance as much as I can". She went on to state, "And the same with work, like there is no way that I would achieve, I don't know the top of my career anytime in the next 25 years because you have to put the extra amount of everything that you don't have anymore because you are now giving it to someone else". Thus with her struggle at maintaining her new maternal identity whilst mourning the loss of her old self, Sofia stated, "I cannot aspire for excellent when I have to keep two full time jobs at the same time. I'm like, hoping to be mediocre at everything". Despite Sofia's compromise to be mediocre at everything in order to sustain all her roles, she appeared ambivalent about conceding defeat with regards to her career. Sofia still yearned to be accomplished

within her career but cannot find the means to hold both her identities in a meaningful way.

Aisha also appeared to struggle with the loss of her independent non-mother self, but for reasons contrasting to Sofia. It became evident that Aisha feared the loss of her independence and hard-won 'separateness'. Therefore she appeared to resist, to a certain degree, any dependence that her maternal identity ascribed to her. She described her difficulties with identity and in this, her difficulty with dependence. As she stated:

I think identity is always something I've struggled with because I came from such a traditional background, I was never Aisha. I was always someone's daughter, someone's sister. I got married and became someone's wife. I had kids and now I'm someone's mom. So when I get introduced, those are all the descriptions I use except for what my name really is. So that used to really upset me (Aisha).

Thus, in constructing this strong working identity, Aisha was able to create her own independence and sense of identity. In discussing her fears, she bravely admitted to me, "So it's my greatest fear that I will still be taking care of kids when they are in their 30's and to make sure that does not happen". Therefore, Aisha felt it was paramount to foster a sense of independence in her children so as to avoid the loss of her independence and thus, her sense of identity.

4.2.4. "It filled out my identity, in a way that I don't think anything else could have": The Redefined Self

According to these women, becoming a mother changed their lives in an incomparable manner. As previously seen, Sofia described it as a "nuclear bomb." However, after mourning the loss of the old self to greater and lesser degrees, it came to be seen that a new self emerged through the development of a maternal identity. Most of these mothers found that their maternal identities brought new attributes which they had not previously attained.

For Michelle, having a child gave her a sense of having achieved goals and of having had an opportunity to grow. She described her maternal identity as "I think it's just, it's just for self-fulfilment. I think self-realisation as well. And self-development". Vidya found that having a child made her more confident in herself because she became the foundation for her own child's development and sense of self. She stated:

But also, you have to have a better definition of who you are because if you don't, you've got somebody who's watching you and is trying to learn from you and eventually create the foundations for their own identity right? So you've got to be very certain of yourself to the greatest extent that you can be because we all are continuously growing (Vidya).

She went on to describe difficulty remembering the details of her life prior to her child being born, which may indicate the extent to which she has settled into her new maternal identity and life. She stated:

Uhm but also it fills your life. I kind of...I actually thought this past weekend "what the heck was I doing on my weekends before my daughter came along?" Even now, all I do with my weekends apart from cooking and grocery shopping and kind of the chores, all I do is hang out with her in our garden or go to Tasha's. It's not like I'm doing SO much on the weekends. But like...I have company you know? (Vidya)

For Shanè, having two children with development difficulties appeared to have foregrounded her maternal identity more strongly than the other mothers. She explained having gained a number of skills since becoming a mother:

I think I'm a lot more patient than I used to be. And I think uh...You have more empathy for the other people around you who also have children. And especially, if you have kids with some sort of difficulty

that's not just, on par with normally developing kids and just cruising through life (Shanè).

She further stated, "So I think...the benefits of being a mom is all of the other things that sort of fall into place that you become more gentle, that you become less critical, that you become less judgemental, that you become more empathetic". Hence, her redefined self was coloured by the lenses of her children's difficulties and thus further enhanced the attributes she has developed since becoming a mother.

Aisha, similarly to Shanè agreed that she had developed attributes such as empathy and patience. She discussed how through the lived experience of a mother, she had developed attributes in her that were softer and kinder to other mothers. Thus, there was an unspoken understanding between mothers of what the mothering experience was. As Vidya mentioned, "It's the ability to see life through many different perspectives". Despite having gained maternal attributes, for Aisha it was still imperative that her old self remained, allowing only increments of change to occur. Aisha recalled:

So I used to be very, very brutal in a work sense 'cause I used to work in finance before I came into the people function (Human Resources) and I had very limited empathy. I may have suggested I could empathise with people who were going through issues with their kids, if they had sick kids or their kids were giving them trouble or they had struggles with homework. But it was never genuine because I never experienced it and ever since I became a mom and living those, those, those experiences, I'm so much more genuine when I empathise with people. I've also become more patient. So my patience was zero so more patient is probably 0.1 now (Aisha).

However, Aisha's ambivalence toward her new redefined self could also be observed as she stated:

Well sometimes I think motherhood has weakened me in a corporate sense because...really I am more empathetic, I am more in touch with my feeling side, I laugh more but that's a good thing. I do find humor,

you know I'm laughing more. I have lots of funny stories to share with my colleagues about my kids. Good and bad like all of the temper tantrums but also the sweet things, when there's an eclipse that they do for me (Aisha).

Hence, for the majority of these women, their new redefined selves were serving them in their lives. However this was not true for all of these mothers, as some women found their new redefined selves threatening in parts.

4.2.5. "I don't mollycoddle them in any way": Discomfort with Dependence

From this group of mothers, it could be understood both Lesedi and Aisha struggled with the notion of dependence. For Lesedi, her apprehension of dependence manifested in fear of the idea of being financially dependent on a man, something she had experienced with her own mother. This too was similar to Aisha and her childhood. Lesedi stated, "And just seeing her [her mother] struggle and you know her having to ask for money from a MAN, you know for me that was like "No, I don't want to do this, I don't want to do this" I wanted to stand on my own feet". Whilst Aisha's difficulties were found to be financial independence in addition to a resistance against her children's dependence on her. As Aisha mentioned, "I do try to drive their independence because the more independent they are, the less hassle it is on me". Aisha further described their neediness towards her and how difficult she found it to summon all her energy. She stated:

But it has really been super taxing. I mean I think I will enjoy and appreciate them more once they don't need me so much from a physical sense. When they are operating more or less on their own. I know it comes with a whole bunch of other problems like teenagehood and what have you, but I think for ME it's very taxing from an energy point of view, to show up as an exciting, energetic mom when I've had a very long, tedious day in the office. And traffic and thinking about supper on top of that and thinking whether they've eaten, whether they're nourished and what more they would need (Aisha).

Hence in an attempt to maintain her own sense of self, out of fear of losing her independence, Aisha has prioritised her working identity. As she stated anxiously, "So...I think I'm one of the few people who admit that she prefers to be at work than at home with the kids. And maybe that will change in time like I said, once they get less needy from my point of view". She proceeded to mention, "So I may not be spending the time I should be with them but I'm not neglecting them for my personal benefit. I am...there is a bigger plan and I mean there's lots I want for them to have and I feel like I need to do that by being fully employed".

The discomfort with dependence that emerged as part of the experience of motherhood for some of the participants appeared to be influenced by a number of factors. The first factor was a belief that motherhood is a transient or temporary identity. The participants' experiences with their own mothers also seemed to play a role, as did histories of financial hardship and deprivation.

4.2.5.1. "They're only here for so long": Motherhood's expiration date.

Both Lesedi and Aisha were of the unique opinion that motherhood is temporary. Thus, both mothers believed in fostering their own growth through their working identities as a means to maintain a separate self, in order to prevent loss when their maternal identity no longer exists. Lesedi mentioned, "I'm trying not to lose myself in being a mom because I know they're only here for so long and then they go and have their own life. So separating the two is a bit difficult for me at the moment". Whilst Aisha shared the same sentiments, "But I'm also aware that at some point they're both going to leave and be their own people and it will be sooner rather than later. And I don't want to be crippled once they leave in the sense that I've lost who I am. So for me, working helps me keep some of me, for me if that makes sense". Hence, through encouraging their children's independence, both Lesedi and Aisha have made attempts to preserve their individuated sense of self. When asked whether Lesedi enjoyed working, she said:

I think I enjoy doing it as well because it gives me a sense of identity because my thinking is these guys are only going to be here for 18 years or so and then they're going to have their lives and then what's going to happen to me? And then I'm also planning for the future. When I retire,

do I want to be independent or do I want to be dependent on them? That also affects my relationship with them so I'm planning for things and looking into the future and yeah (Lesedi).

Through linking Lesedi's own distaste towards her mother's dependence, to fears that her children may perceive her with the same distaste should she grow dependent on them, her focus on independence becomes understandable.

Having felt as though the interviewer was possibly judging her passion for work as superior to her children, Aisha shared fears of her children leaving, also in relation to her own mother. She shared:

No, I think I just want to reiterate I love my kids but I also love to be me and I know that one day they're going to leave and I need to continue being a whole person without them. So work is one aspect of that. My marriage is another and my studies is another. But I'm also trying to insulate myself from becoming crippled with grief when they leave because that's what happened to my mom when my siblings and I all left around the same time. It took my mom to a near depressive state. So as much as I need to invest in them, I feel, I also need to invest in myself (Aisha).

Thus, in an attempt to stop the intergenerational transmission of dependence, Aisha states, "It really is not something I encourage in my kids, even if they do have the means to do so. I really want them to be active contributing members to the economy".

Hence, being influenced by their own mothers relationships with dependence, both Lesedi and Aisha attempt to stop the intergenerational transmission of that dependence. Their sense of self derived from their working identity has come to signal independence for them. Thus, in having a complex relationship with dependence, these two women appear to defensively use their working identity to defend against feelings of loss associated with the maternal identity.

4.2.5.2. "I was never one of those people who said 'I've always wanted kids'": Maternal instinct and previous experiences of having been mothered.

Some of the mothers experienced an easier emergence of maternal instinct than others. Both Sofia and Vidya spoke about the emergence of maternal instinct as something natural. Vidya spoke about her lack of belief that she could be a mother naturally and thought it would be something she would need to put a great deal of effort into. However, she mentioned:

I very quickly realised the instinct, the maternal instinct come out, I very quickly realised that it was something that I wanted in my life. But it was also just that it was a very natural thing...surprisingly...I had always thought of myself as someone who's not maternal, as someone who this would NOT work for, but I've surprised myself by how naturally it all just comes together (Vidya).

Both Sofia and Vidya women discussed how maternal their own mothers were and their experiences of their mothers' identities as a highly nurturing figures appeared to have eased their transitions into their maternal roles. As Sofia recalled, "Like my mom, my mom is such an amazing mom as a mom. You can see it in everyone around her, she mothers A LOT".

However, Aisha found the maternal instinct and role to be quite unnatural for her. She recalled her mother helping her when her first child was born:

So while my mom was there for the first two weeks or so, I really was in the backseat. I was just participating from a viewership perspective. Um, as soon as my mom left, the...the reality and responsibility really dawned on me. And that's when I really became hands on. And you know everyone says it comes naturally but it didn't come until I was literally on my own and I didn't have the safety net. Then I just got into it hey (Aisha).

From Aisha's description, her own mother provided instrumental support for two weeks and then she felt catapulted into motherhood, in a sink or swim manner where

she was forced to navigate her way through. As she went on to mention, "Mothering is very different. So for me, it's not something that comes naturally, I have to work at it. I was never one of those people who said 'I've always wanted kids and I just want to be a mom'. I never wanted that, but you know life happens and here we are". Her previous descriptions of detesting her mother's dependence on her father and her mother's emotional 'collapse' when Aisha and her siblings left home, suggested a more difficult, ambivalent relationship with her mother, which may have contributed to her struggle around her own maternal role.

4.2.5.3. *"I've always known what it is to struggle, literally hand-to-mouth": Lower socio-economic status and historical deprivation.*

From the interviews, the two women who struggled with dependence the most were Lesedi and Aisha. It could be understood that these two women were desperate to hold onto their work identity as that afforded them financial independence. Their struggle is better understood in the context of their financial struggles growing up. Lesedi discussed her mother not working and thus having to ask a man for financial help. She felt working was important for her in order to resist the life her mother lived. She recalled, "It's [work and being financially independent] something I've always wanted to do. It was so important for me to do it because growing up, my mom wasn't one". Aisha also recalled financial hardship when she was a child, "So growing up, things were very tough, like my dad hardly worked and he had a lot of health issues and what have you. So I've always known what it is to struggle, literally hand-to-mouth and I knew for a fact that I never wanted that for myself".

Thus in having difficult childhoods, these women appeared to have become quite dismissive of attributes considered 'soft'. They seemed to have developed a tough outer self that is determined to work in order to avoid reliving the trauma of a financially strenuous childhood. For Aisha, it was imperative to stop the intergenerational transmission of unemployment. As she stated:

I really want them to know they've got to work for it so I do say no to a lot of things, even though I can achieve it and afford it. I just lie to them that there's no money so they keep going to bed and praying '...and please don't forget to make us rich'. But for me, it is for their own

benefit. From my upbringing to my husband, who's come from a very privileged background and I can see how that can sometimes handicap an individual regardless of all the resources you have at your disposal (Aisha).

Aisha's fear of financial hardship seemed to fuel her determination to work excessively hard in order to remove the perception that her maternal identity superseded her working identity. She stated:

I would still commit to work first before I do anything else. So as a working mom, they [colleagues/bosses] perceive you as going to be...less...invested in the company or in your time because you need to go take care of your home. But in my context, what they've experienced is that I am consistent. I haven't changed anything by having the two kids. I still give as much as I have given before and I will continue to do so (Aisha).

For Aisha, maintaining her financial independence was paramount, having lived through the experience of financial deprivation. However, Aisha felt some apprehension in her parenting approach, as she anxiously shared, "But I just hope one day when my kids look back, they appreciate why it was done. And if they don't, it's okay. I'll know and I'll pat myself on the back, this is not for sissies. This is damn hard work". While a glimmer of anxiety was apparent, once again, Aisha quickly dismissed her fears and any need for approval from her children.

4.3. Strength and Growth

After becoming mothers, many of these women mentioned a sense of strength and growth that emerged through the development of their maternal identities. For some this was a result of the integration of more maternal, nurturing attributes into their identities. Some of the mothers embraced these softer ways of being whilst others found it threatening to their working identities.

4.3.1. "I feel stronger than before": Strength as Growth

For most of these women, in becoming a mother they embraced a softer side to themselves that they felt had challenged them and encouraged growth. They experienced their newly gained attributes as making them stronger and thus felt that motherhood had assisted in their development into adulthood. As Vidya stated, "I really meant it when I said I feel like I have a full life now. In ways that I didn't know that I didn't have before. I feel like it's challenged me, it's grown me". For Michelle, becoming a mother and adapting to the struggles could be understood as a type of initiation into motherhood as she mentioned, "And it's part of growth and I think most women have to go through this phase to realise who they are and what it takes to be a mother". For both Sofia and Michelle, motherhood felt like an experience in which you were merely thrown into the deep end, having no choice but to survive. It was in that survival that growth occurred. Michelle stated, "I think well before that I was scared but after becoming a mother you then feel that you just have to cope with it, there's just no easier way. I think how I feel is that".

For Shanè, her growth came from the experience of having children with physical and emotional difficulties. Her associations with motherhood and maternal identity were first and foremost, a protector of her children. As she strongly stated, "It's just, you are, you are the person that just needs to be able to protect these kids. Not just physically but emotionally and socially and all of the ways that kids can be protected in, that's what you need to do". She went on to emphasize her role as she said:

So I've always thought that I'm their, their fighter. I'm their person that they need to know will fight for them. And that is my biggest role, to make sure their path is as smooth as possible. Other than that I mean absolutely just loving them. Unconditional love for both of the boys and being there for them and trying to teach them right from wrong. Helping them to become good people. I think our biggest goal for our boys (Shanè).

As Shanè was raised with certain ideologies around motherhood, she struggled when those ideologies needed to be challenged. Shanè mentioned being raised by a nurse who believed "breast is best" and when that ideology was challenged by someone close to her, Shanè had to adjust. As she recalled, "And eventually, my best friend had

a baby and she couldn't breastfeed and I had to understand that it's okay to then go...bottle...feeding...the route. In the end your child needs to be fed so I think as a person it makes you more gentle to the other people in your life". She proceeded to talk about the other ways in which she has grown and how it has come to influence her work productively:

And as I said, the empathy that you get from being a mommy and going through things. Like I said my children are just weird so I've been going through stuff with them. Has just made me pick up on little things when I'm working with children. I'm like hmm this rings a bell, it seems like this or it seems like that (Shanè).

Hence in becoming mothers, these women considered themselves to have grown in strength due to the challenging nature of motherhood. Some had found that they could cope with more than previously imagined, others had discovered more protective and empathic parts of themselves.

4.3.2. *"It's made me better"*: Maternal 'Softness' - Friend or Foe in the Workplace

With the incorporation of a maternal identity into self, along with newly acquired attributes, the women found themselves birthing a new self in the workplace. For Sofia, the workplace always symbolised growth. Thus she stated, "I didn't have that concept of career as a thing, more about learning a lot about something and make a living out of it. So I think that draws me to basically everything, I'm keen about learning and I made a career out of it, so yeah". Hence, with this open approach to the incorporation of new skills her newly acquired maternal attributes enhanced her ability to expand in her career. As she testified:

I feel like it's made me a better [professional] to be honest. I feel like, I feel my [clients] see it. I have more patience now that I have kids. I don't know how I saw kids before and parents [in a professional capacity] before I had kids because there is that level of righteousness that you carry with you when you don't have kids. And I feel that helped a lot (Sofia).

Shanè felt similarly as she found a deeper, more genuine understanding of parents with whom she works and how difficult motherhood could be. Thus, in working with children and being a mother, she became more grateful and genuine at work with other parents. She mentioned:

So I started thanking my parents, every single one that walks out here, I'll be like 'Thank you so much for bringing him, thank you so much for bringing her' because it's effortful. Uhm so I definitely think my identity of being a mommy has definitely improved. My working relationship with everybody, the kids and their parents and everyone around me (Shanè).

For Vidya, it was meaningful to incorporate her sense of maternal self into her work self at the office. Her maternal and work self became someone for whom efficiency was key but also someone who was no longer so perfectionistic. As she commented, "Firstly it's emotionally matured me. So I'm a lot more certain of myself than I was before my daughter came along". She goes on to add:

One, your propensity for nonsense becomes so much less. You just can't take it anymore because you don't have the time to waste anymore. Efficiency is a big deal in your life right now. And this sounds like in direct conflict of what I've just said though, you learn to take things a lot more in your stride as well. You let the small things go (Vidya).

For Vidya, authenticity and genuineness in the workplace also became more important after becoming a mother. She mentioned:

I'm very big on values base. And I've read a lot on, very early on in my career about how women tend to have a different personality at home and a different one at work. I've done a lot to bring the two closer together and in my mind, the way to do that was to make sure that your personal values align with how you behave at work. In terms of what

my working identity has become for me, is still based on my personal values. So things like respect, things like genuineness (Vidya).

She recalled a moment in which she was thanked by a junior colleague for her genuineness. Vidya recalled:

I had one of the grads in the team come to me. She's coming towards the end of her time at our team and she said to me, "I've learnt how to be genuine from you." I was so chuffed. I was like please don't cry Vidya, you're going to embarrass this poor girl and she's going to be like "Oh that's the chick who cried. But I still, I'm blown away by that because that's such a big value for me and if I could, as a woman bring it into the workplace and show that as a woman, you can be genuine and it's strongly why I believe I have the long standing relationship with clients that I do. If they know they can trust me because I'm real about it and I'll stick to my values then I have a very defined working identity and it is one of my greatest strengths (Vidya).

This for Vidya, was evidence of her newly acquired softer side being incorporated into her work self with ease. However, in possessing a new maternal self, her ability to be as proactive and determined was called into question. Thus, Vidya found herself challenging those assumptions made by her colleagues. She passionately stated:

So on the one hand, when I came back from maternity leave, I had to demand more work. I had to demand ...I planned to slot right in where I left off and that's chauvinistic in itself because a lot of, and it tends to be men, tend to go, 'She's stepping back, shame she's a mother now'. NO. Stuff off. I will sort out my stories and I plan to go as hard as I went before (Vidya).

Vidya felt that while some women respond to questioning of their work ethic with aggression, others concede to the pressure to give up their ambition. She felt that the challenge was to find "...some sort of a middle ground, being true to themselves.

Still being a woman, still being a mother, that's part of their identity and calling out nonsense behaviour".

Thus, Vidya found ways to integrate her maternal self into her work self in ways that felt beneficial. Aisha also felt that motherhood had given her attributes that helped her to connect more with other people. Having moved from Finance into Human Resources, she stated, "I think now that I work in the people function, it's definitely brought out that quality to connect with people". However, in her narrative it appeared to make more sense to incorporate her working self into her maternal self. As she stated:

And you know, the same ideology I apply at work is the same one I apply with them. I'm very hard on them because I'm very hard on the people in the work environment who don't deliver. I do give them credit when it's due but I don't lay it on too thick because I don't want them to think this is how it's always going to be. You've got to work for it. I do say no to a lot of things (Aisha).

Again, Aisha's belief about the world as a 'tough place' for which she needs to prepare her children, can be seen.

As mentioned previously, Aisha had found that motherhood had made her a little more patient and 'human' in the office, however, she worried that her maternal self may make her too 'soft'. She also appeared to worry about having her sense of individuality and independence consumed by motherhood.

4.3.3. "Let go of these things, don't be an anxious stress ball": New Perspectives

As these women became mothers, they gained various new attributes through their maternal identity. Their focus became more defined and new perspectives were gained. Vidya described this process as emotional and spiritual growth:

For me, it grew me from an emotional and spiritual point of view because you start tapping into this idea that there are some things in this world that are much bigger than you are. And you start seeing, I mean I said to you my daughter was an oopsie and you kind of realise the

universe throws at you, things you don't know you're ready for. But you are and you actually need it in your life at that point (Vidya).

She found herself less uptight about the little things and was better able to release it. She recalled:

Before I had my daughter, in my mind, like, I would look around at people who let their kids walk around barefoot in public places like, "Oh my god! What kind of parents are you?" NOW my child is the one who has no shoes, she's running around in her vest, the snotty nose and she looks like she's having fun, ah well. I think you focus on the things that are more important, basically (Vidya).

In addition, she found herself impacted at work by this new perspective on life:

So I do think from that emotional and spiritual growth that I spoke about earlier, from having my daughter, has made me better at work. In the sense that, you start seeing things with a lot more emotional maturity and you also start becoming aware of the human side of things a bit more. At the same time you are instantly able to decipher nonsense from the important stuff. So you're able to prioritise more, it's difficult no doubt (Vidya).

Michelle agreed with this as she felt that in becoming a mother she found new ways of looking at things, "Your perspective about things also changes and you learn to focus on what's more important at the time". As Shanè worked with children, she grew in awareness of how impactful and important her role was with these children. Having her own children, gave her a sense of responsibility in treating others' children. She mentioned:

So when I would pray about my children and them at school...I would say, I would remember that I'm also working with children and the way I'm working with them is going to directly influence the way people are working with my kids. And if I can put in so much energy in

working with these little people and really loving them and trying to really make a difference. Then I'm HOPING that that's going to be happening to my children at school (Shanè).

She hoped by her giving others' children the utmost care and love, that would come around to her children.

Aisha talked about the early anxieties of having a baby and the constant worry over her safety. She believed she ultimately felt she was ready to let go and trust in others as she could not carry all of the anxiety and worry herself. Thus, she felt that her rigidity lessened and she became more flexible:

And I've also let go, with my eldest I could never let her go anywhere if I wasn't going with. Even until she was fully able to go on her own with her dad. I was so anal about something happening to her. When the second one came along and I could see his [her husband] ability because he had 5 years to be observed by me and trained up. So I've learned to let go, I've learned to trust in others. The world is not only my burden to carry and you know, even though somebody might not do things the way I want it done because I'm quite rigid, perfectionist. But I'm working on that. It doesn't mean if they do it in a different approach, it won't achieve the same result. The happiness of the household is tantamount so I've learned to mute my criticism, my razor-sharp tongue when things are not being done the way I want them to be done (Aisha).

Vidya became very aware of the presence of her daughter and thus, her morals and values became more significant. She recalled a thought she had:

But I can't stab somebody in the back to get a promotion because my daughter is watching. So again values became so important, how you conduct yourself becomes so important. I wouldn't want her to join banking in 20 years time and have someone say "Yeah your mother screwed me over, I remember her (Vidya).

However, Vidya accepted she makes mistakes and that there will not be perfection, consistently. She has found herself at peace with her new self as she stated:

So I don't always have it together and sometimes I'm that looney chick running around, doing crazy things and dropping stuff. It happens but I think you need to accept that about yourself. That you won't always have it together and you have to let that go. This idea of perfection, highly overrated (Vidya).

Despite Aisha being quite tough on her children, they appear to have softened her to a certain extent. Aisha worked hard at maintaining a 'prim and proper', strong working woman identity, but being with her children seemed to have allowed for more moments of simple childish joy:

And also...learning how to be a kid again, learning how to have fun because seeing the world through their eyes is really quite remarkable. I mean they do ask a lot of questions but it's the simple things. Like when you watch a silly program with them and they just laugh with reckless abandon. You know those really energetic, vibrant laugh and you think ah, this is what it's meant to be about. It's not about all the other admin that I try to keep in place. It's about those quieter moments, those normal moments, those uninfluenced moments (Aisha).

4.4. Responsibility and Anxiety

4.4.1. "It was...a daunting feeling, I'm actually an adult responsible for two people.": Anxiety about the Unknown

When asked how these women felt when they found out they were pregnant, they all echoed the same sentiments. Sofia stated, "Fear. Fear it's a major one" whilst Lesedi mentioned, "I was excited, one. I was scared because I didn't know what it meant for the sacrifices I would have to make. All those things". She further added, "It was...a daunting feeling. I, I felt like it was such a huge challenge and responsibility that was placed on me that when I thought about it I was nervous, I guess yeah". Aisha was similar in her feelings as she said, "Okay so very, very overwhelmed. And I was terrified because they were very tiny and...and...extremely needy". Hence, all of these

women shared some variety of anxiety over the unknown and the responsibility of having a dependent little baby. There were also financial worries associated with becoming a parent, especially when the child was not planned. Shanè recalled her concern, "...we didn't know how we were going to cope financially...with another one on the way so quickly because the plan was to wait five years".

After her children were born, Sofia found that she became more anxious. She discussed the process of having her children in more depth:

So it's a process of like for me, it was a process of me incorporating in my head that I'm actually an adult responsible for two people. When I was pregnant I used to have nightmares that I will forget my kid at home because you know like you don't know you have a kid. It was so hectic, it really was a psychological birth of a mom like you need to...have your children in your mind 24 hours and that needs to make space, like you know you make space in your life...it was like a long process (Sofia).

She proceeded to state:

So for me the main challenge is, it's now, experiencing anxiety constantly. Like I was never an anxious person but now I feel like, like somehow your kids become your most sensitive point and it's also, you can experience levels of like pain that you've never thought it would be possible to feel. So from how they become your weakest point and that for me has become a challenge because its been touching a place in me that it just makes me crazy in many ways. I had to restructure myself constantly because I thought I was this resilient and coping person and since I had kids, I, I'm just like I can't cope. Like I can't cope if one of them is sick, it just like, I feel like I'm dying and I feel like I can't tolerate the anxiety and I just want them to be better. It's horrible, so I feel like in that sense, that would be for me my biggest challenge that they become for me my sensitive point that it's like a potential source of

gigantic pain all the time. Like there in front of you all the time. Always. It's been difficult in my life. That's my main challenge (Sofia).

She remarked about loving her children unconditionally but consequently the anxiety that the unconditional love brings:

But at the same time you have, you know, that comes with the price of loving unconditionally that is SO difficult and painful because I, I don't know how to put it like it's...it's like there's so much fear and so much love at the same time. Like uh those two would be the main feelings for me. I'm in constant fear that something may happen to them and or they won't be happy or they won't be okay or you know? Or they won't be safe like all of these, like it gives me panic attacks literally (Sofia).

For Sofia, her profession heightened her sense of anxiety, which was found to be more intense than the other mothers. Sofia showed insight about this as she suggested:

I think I could be so much better at my job if I didn't have kids and I think I could be such a better mom if I didn't have the job that I have. I am...I don't know if it's also because of my profession but I'm also so in touch with the world's pain, all the time and how shit life can be. That makes me an anxious mother in a lot of situations that you probably wouldn't feel anxious about (Sofia).

For Vidya, her anxiety over becoming a mother arose out of her fear that careers and motherhood were incompatible. Vidya stated, "I actually, the first thing I did was cry and say my career is going to go to shit. It really was a concern for me, that was the first thing I really worried about cause in my head, the two didn't necessarily go together". She felt everything she had worked so hard for- her work identity, would crumble under the pressure of a new maternal identity.

Aisha's determination at work appeared linked to an anxious feeling of obligation to provide well for her children. However, she attempted to lessen her anxiety about their financial future, as she recalled, "So I heard something very interesting the last

few days, "Inheritance is a privilege, not a right" and that actually has released me of some of my...you know...purse strings ways because I'm so conscious of the kids and spending because I'm worried about their future".

4.4.2. "The world is a big bad place": A Whole New World

In a world that thus far felt very scary, bringing a child into it heightened some of these mother's experiences. Michelle remarked, "I feel that it's made me realise that I see a lot of things that people don't see. Like you see things in a very different perspective". Sofia having worked as a psychologist, was already aware of the pain and suffering in the world, thus this was influential in her decision to have children. She stated:

So...I wasn't sure that I wanted to have babies because as a psychologist I was extremely aware and I was working as a clinical psychologist for children for many years so I was extremely aware of...how...difficult...and I don't know if difficult makes justice...of how difficult it would be (Sofia).

After having children, she commented on her stance currently through the transition of becoming a parent, stating, "Everything, everything like how you see the news, how you see the world, how you think about money how you think about life and love, what's important, everything".

Vidya discovered that times have changed and the world which existed fifty years ago, does not exist in the same way today. Thus, maternal influences from her mother could not be used on her daughter today. She had to raise her child for a world which existed now. As she stated:

And there was this meme that I had read a couple months ago that said "you can't bring up your children the way you were brought up because the world in which you were brought up, no longer exists." That really hit home for me. And what I'm saying is that you're not going to bring up your kids, exactly how you were brought up or how your mom brought you up in particular (Vidya).

For Aisha, the world seemed very scary yet surprisingly, she was able to find a rare piece of lightheartedness to life as well. As she remarked:

I'm very combative, the world is a big bad place and you've got to protect yourself and you've got to survive. It's all about survival. But motherhood as also made me realise, in those moments of survival, in between you can also have a little bit of fun. So whatever has been dialed up, it was necessary to be dialed up. Whatever was dialed down was necessary that I dial down. So it's kind of brought me to a very odd equilibrium (Aisha).

4.4.3. Responsibility

4.4.3.1. *"It's actually a privilege but with such a great sense of responsibility": Needy baby, greedy baby.*

For some of these mothers, they emphasised the overwhelming sense of responsibility they felt for this infant. For Lesedi, the responsibility echoed an unspoken anxiety. As she stated, "For so many reasons. I think, for me it's given me a sense of responsibility. It's given me a sense of responsibility". She then repeated her sentiments once again when she said, "It's actually a privilege but with such a great sense of responsibility". For Lesedi, the sense of responsibility and anxiety emerged from the dependence of her children on her, materially. Lesedi believed her role as mother incorporated the ability to provide materially. As she stated, "And then financially, they're very expensive. They're very expensive to maintain, expensive to keep entertained, to clothe, to feed cause you, you know they grow so fast that you're constantly shopping for clothes, shopping for this and that". Michelle had a similar experience to that of Lesedi as she mentioned taking on a more adult role and the responsibilities which emerge with that, including prioritising your children's needs above your own. As she remarked:

When you're a mother you have to look after every little issue and make sure that you have a better and healthier lifestyle. You now have more responsibility of taking your kids to crèche, fetching them so you can only work so many hours a day at the workplace...So it's 9AM to 4PM

unlike before 8AM to 7PM because you could just finish all your work. And like you can no longer miss traffic because our crèche only opens at 7AM. It's hard to commit to meetings that starts early. When you go home you can only work once everyone is asleep, so you are constantly busy and catching up and also have a lack of sleep. It's also hard to commit to deadlines, especially when your kids get sick (Michelle).

For Aisha, similarly to Lesedi, she felt her role was to provide for her children materially. This could be understood in relation to both Aisha and Lesedi having stay-at-home mothers, who were financially dependent on men. Both Aisha and Lesedi disapproved strongly of that dynamic. Thus, Aisha understood her sense of responsibility as being a practical provider for her children, in the sense of tangible goods. For her, the material provision outweighed the emotional provision, in terms of needs being met. As she stated:

I think what I've decided is to just do the best that I can in my context and for me, that means being able to provide for them whatever it is they require from a security, financial, physiological, whatever sense you want to think about. And then you know, unfortunately the quality time is what comes last on the list because by the time I get through everything else, it is not actually prioritised (Aisha).

However in her ability to provide for her children, Aisha withheld materially from her children as well. This was in an attempt to foster their sense of independence and deepen their understanding of the value in things. She stated, "Even though I can afford it because their upbringing is very different to mine. For them to live in a nice house and have nice things, I don't want them to take it for granted".

4.4.3.2. *"You making decisions on behalf of another little person that can't": A voice for the voiceless.*

As previously mentioned, both of Shanè's sons have disabilities. With that, her sense of responsibility is also heightened. For Shanè, the decisions she makes regarding her children are far more nuanced than that of able children. As she commented to me anxiously about motherhood:

So motherhood is for me, yeah cool first and foremost you need a child but then after that everything else impacting that child is what motherhood is about. You making decisions on behalf of another little person that can't. And you need to hope that it's the right decision... Everything is a challenge when you are a mom. From choosing the right food that you're feeding your child to choosing which schools they go to, to choosing the right pencil because you're not sure about your child's grip. Everything is stressful and the thing is...like we said you're making these decisions on behalf of your kids. They don't really have much of a say and that's stressful. You're literally taking responsibility for someone else's life. When they're small it's just to keep them physically safe like to not die by sticking your finger in a plug. Or by choking on a Smartie or yeah, getting worms because you're eating the cats poop. Like those things are all stressful and then they grow up and you think ugh now they're independent, they can dress themselves. They can eat by themselves, they can pour their own juice. They can wash, they can swim but then there's other stuff that comes along. Like which school is going to be the best school, which friendships should we foster. Silly things, like how many friends must we invite to a party. Is my child going to be fine with inviting only five friends and the other 20 friends that he has in school does not get an invitation. Like just that social aspect. But yeah, then you trust (Shanè).

4.4.3.3. *"She's quite an old soul, very intuitive and I prefer someone who's more rigid and rough":* Morals and values versus hard life' tools.

Much of the maternal anxiety expressed by the participants related to concerns about whether they were raising their children well. Many had given thought to the kinds of attributes that they felt were important to develop in their children. For Vidya and Shanè, morals and values were of the utmost importance. As Shanè stated, "It's more 'is my boy a nice child? is he a nice child, does he have friends? Does he say his please and thank you's?' Those kinds of things for me are the most important things and that is what I need to instill in my boys. No one else will do that for us". For Vidya, it was important to instill in her child a sense of core values that would allow

her daughter to have confidence in herself despite challenges that she anticipated would occur. As Vidya stated:

It's also a challenge, which I think I have a handle on it and it's helped me to grow, it's a challenge to decide on something regarding how you want to bring up your child and stick with it and have conviction about it. But it's important for me to bring her up, eventually a woman who is VERY sure of herself. NOTHING can change that, not her friends, not social media, not her boyfriend, not her husband or her girlfriend or her wife. Regardless of whatever influences she has in her life, it mustn't shake her core values and that's the most important thing for me. And one of the core values is strength in yourself and trust in yourself. The ability to stand on your own in certain circumstances, without obviously losing the ability to socialise and understanding the need for a network of friends and family (Vidya).

However, for Aisha it felt much more vital to equip her children with tools to foster their independence in a hard world. As she stated:

So for me, motherhood means making sure they stay alive until they can take care of their own bills. And their responsibility lies with them in making sure they are going to be fine. So I really see myself trying to equip them with the tools and it's harsh because I do come down quite hard on them because Johannesburg is so hard and I feel like they're going to be eaten up by this big, bad world. So...I do try as best I can to instill whatever tools they'll need. The grit, not resilience, it's grit that they would need and life skills. So education is tantamount and independence especially in a financial sense, I keep driving that into them and you know everything else, the compassion, the good heartedness, don't feature high up on my list. Like I said I need them to have the true tools of the way that we live in and they can fill in the gaps with all the mushy stuff, if I may call it that. But the hard skills, the tough skills, I really feel I am truly responsible to get that right with them (Aisha).

Thus Aisha's belief was that her toughness on her children prepared them for what she believed would be their experience of the world. She has taken an approach used on her work colleagues, in raising her children. She sternly stated:

I am quite hard on them as I am on my colleagues here when they don't perform. So I'm not different, I'm quite consistent. The way you experience me in one environment is how you'll experience me in the other. Which is quite sad because it's not fun but it is what it is. And I have to be my authentic self and I'm not that jump up and down, let's play in the mud type of person. I'm quite prim and proper (Aisha).

She mentioned her eldest daughter's temperament and approach to life, which she stated was different to her own, and the difficulty she experienced trying to accommodate this. Aisha remarked, "She's quite an old soul, very intuitive and I prefer someone who's more rigid and rough and takes the world by the horns and she's not that so I also had to adapt myself to her. So it's a two way thing. So as much as you have to change for them, they have to change for you". Ultimately, Aisha wanted to raise her children to be their own independent beings as she stated, "I just want responsible tax paying citizens and they can be and do whatever they need to do, as long as they know the consequences thereof and they're able to absorb it" (Aisha).

4.4.4 "My work identity enables me to do my motherhood better": The Meeting of Maternal and Working Identity

As much as these women struggled to manage their work identities with their maternal identities, they all acknowledged the reality of having to work. None of the other mothers struggled with the emotions around a work-mother balance more than Shanè, who longed to be a mother for as long as she could remember. However, the financial responsibility of having children and maintaining a family, motivated her to progress. As she told me, "So when you grow up and the reality strikes and you're now like ACTUALLY, we need two incomes to sustain a household, in the day and age that we're living in, then you need to sort of put your motherhood on hold a little bit and start working". For Lesedi, the battle between time with her children and working to provide proved difficult. As she stated:

My, my work identity will give me the resources that I need that will give them the experiences that will make them think "oh I'm such an amazing mom" you know? But it will also take away my time from them and cause me to miss some of their important milestones. So and also the fact that I have these responsibilities at home, this motherhood at home, drives me to be a better employee, a better worker, a better career person because I kinda like having a sense of purpose (Lesedi).

Although this does not alleviate anxiety, as Lesedi shared with me her concern over her children's emotional well being. She worriedly stated:

Like sometimes you want to be the first person they see when they come home 'cause I realise when I'm around, as soon as they get home, they downloading all these things, ABCD and then when they see me later, it's kind of like after-the-fact. There's a vacuum there, they haven't had that space to you know? To download, to vent. So I worry you know? Like what's happening to those emotions? How are they feeling? What are they wishing? (Lesedi).

For Sofia, her love and passion for her career no longer took precedence. Sofia diluted her need to achieve and rationalised her need to work as merely a responsibility in order to provide for her children. As she told me:

I tell my husband it's basically the death of my career that I say no to these things because I'm going to stop getting these invitations, I'm going to stop putting it in my CV, I'll stop getting all the connections that I was supposed to get here so basically I'm assuming that I'm waving goodbye to my career. But I remember it's just about the money like I am doing that, I try not to take too many patients because then I'm taking away my kids time and I try to remember that I can't do much research so I'm better saying no to stuff that is not going to have a direct impact on my income (Sofia).

Sofia further added, "So what I try to do...I remember that I'm doing this because I need the money and I need to keep my job". Shanè feeling more comfortable with her primary identity as a mother, agreed with Sofia but possibly resented having to choose her working identity over her maternal identity as she stated, "All of the extramurals, it costs money. The food they get packed in for lunch it costs money, the house that they're living in, it costs money, to provide for them is money. So I understand that I need to be working in order to do all of these things".

Lesedi was further influenced by her upbringing and the deprivation she experienced. As she stated, "I think me uh being out there, doing it enables me to do my motherhood better because then I have, I get the resources to give my kids the kind of things they want or things I wish I had when I was growing up. Give them a certain kind of lifestyle". Thus, in having favoured her working identity, she was taking on the responsibility of providing for her children in the way she wished her mother would have provided for her. She summed up the sentiments felt by a large portion of the mothers regarding their stronger working identities due to their feelings of responsibility. Lesedi stated:

You ALWAYS time and time again have to choose your work identity over your motherhood because also if you decide not to go to work and you become a full time mom, I think you also have to adjust your lifestyle. Maybe take them to cheaper schools or there's also some sacrifices that come, compromises, some compromises that then come also in the picture (Lesedi).

4.4.5. "It's an environment I can control and I know what can happen": Predictability versus Unpredictability

There was a common understanding among some of the women that the work environment was controllable and predictable, whereas they found motherhood to be quite the opposite. Thus, the uncontrollable nature of motherhood provoked much anxiety. Michelle described motherhood as unpredictable, "Try to get through everything because everyday is like a different lifestyle. Everyday is a different planning. Because you're constantly planning, you're pressurised every day".

Aisha's working identity was particularly strong and a large part of that was due to the control she could exert at work. As she apprehensively admitted, "I prefer it you know...you know...speak the truth and shame the devil. I prefer it to doing mothering, I prefer it to mothering because it's an environment I can control and I know what can happen". However, regarding her children, she found herself grappling with the aspects she found uncontrollable. She stated, "But when they're up and about, I think the greatest challenge is free will and as much as you want them to be empowered, you want them to be empowered within the limits you can control if that makes sense". Therefore, in Aisha's attempt to restore predictability and control at home, she incorporated her working identity into her maternal identity, "Well I approach motherhood the way I approach work because I had many more experiences of working than I do of motherhood. And that is to...be in control. You really are the master of your own destiny. Any decision you take, good or bad, you have to bear the consequences thereof". Lesedi, another mother with a strong working identity, struggled with the developmental changes in her children and her lack of mastery over this development. As she recalled, "Okay 2 years old, these are the tantrums, the next stage going to Grade One, this is what's expected so I'm also learning and they're learning. It can be frustrating".

4.4.6. "I partially define myself by my achievements at work": Validation and Achievement as Cornerstones of a Working Identity

Despite the majority of these women having strong working identities, it appeared that both Michelle and Vidya had come to define themselves by their achievements at work. For Michelle, she described her working identity as, "Let me think, uh, I think it means we are identified by our work and title, for example as an attorney we help solve problems for our clients. Our title defines our achievements so as a senior associate you now have more knowledge and experience". Vidya also admitted a sense of validation from her achievements, "I guess in a funny way...I partially define myself by my achievements at work. It's an opportunity for me...to reach out...to certain people and to achieve certain things". For Vidya, she prided herself on being able to incorporate elements of her maternal self into her work self and felt validated and proud when she was acknowledged for it, as she recalled:

I had one of the grads in the team come to me. She's coming towards the end of her time at our team and she said to me, 'I've learnt how to be genuine from you'. I was so chuffed. I was like please don't cry Vidya, you're going to embarrass this poor girl and she's going to be like 'Oh that's the chick who cried'. Uhm it's also for me, it's about how you behave and about showing others who will come after you that this is the way you conduct yourself when you're doing these big deals so it's not just about the big banner "I did this deal" it's about I did this deal, this way (Vidya).

Thus, it could be understood that Vidya's incorporation of her maternal self into her work self was vital for her. However, not everyone received affirmation for the incorporation of their maternal selves into the workplace.

4.5. Judgement, Guilt and Pressure

4.5.1. *"These people are not serious"*: Motherhood as an Excuse - The Perpetuation of Judgement

The judgement that these women reported facing in the workplace regarding their motherhood was a common thread among almost all of them. For mothers who worked in a more corporate environment, motherhood was seen as an excuse to not produce results. Aisha recalled becoming a mother and the response she received:

You know unfortunately when people know that you're married or have kids, they see you as a liability. So for me, when I had my first kid and I know I was working for a manager, she kept wanting to know whether I was planning another child because maternity leave is a cost. And getting in a contracter is a cost (Aisha).

Lesedi shared similar sentiments as she stated:

Okay I think in the workplace, people sometimes think mothers are not very serious 'cause like 'Oh your child is sick again', 'Oh you want

time off' People are not very sympathetic. They think you're just out there to get days off, to go to your kids function. You know they think you have it easy, 'cause ugh 'you can easily go get time off', 'oh you're so lucky' or you can say your child has a play and you get to knock off early. People think we take...too many liberties as it were, in the workplace. So there's sometimes that sense of 'these people are not serious'. That's a perception by colleagues 'cause you take all these liberties (Lesedi).

Aisha went on to state that there is an unspoken perception that mothers are less committed to their work, now that they occupy other roles in their lives. It seemed as if Aisha possibly agreed with this understanding as well. As she stated:

So there is a bit of a double standard and people do consider it, I mean they won't say it out loud but you know, if you're someone who just got married and wants to start a family, they do think about it and how they can backfill it. Your attitude changes to your work because it's not the end all and be all because you can't give as much as you did in the past (Aisha).

For Sofia, her work in academia allows for a more flexible schedule and thus, she described mothers feeling more comfortable to prioritise their children. However, she then described feeling judgement from the other end of the continuum - if your children are not prioritised, you are judged as a bad mother. This could be understood in Sofia's description of her working environment:

Somehow...the moms kind of like get a slack in that sense that basically...you can openly say I'm not going to that meeting because I'm taking my kids to swimming and that's somehow acceptable for people right? So that's one hand, but at the same time, that kind of people are the one's that judge you the most when you don't make those kinds of decisions (Sofia).

Sofia proceeded to comment on the benefit of this for mothers, but it is then furthermore accompanied by the loss of credibility as a working woman. She stated, "So there's a lot of power into it and at the same time there's a lot of judgement into it like you know, people stop taking you seriously professionally because again you have your cap, you won't be able to develop further". Thus for many women due to the pressure, they wish to not develop further and concede to life as a stay-at-home mother. As Michelle discovered, "However, I found that it is common in this legal career that most women leave the workplace after having a kid, because you know, the work is demanding and work hours are long".

Thus, these women report feeling judgement and pressure from both sides – pressure to prioritise work and pressure to prioritise their children. The decision made either way then results in risk of being judged.

4.5.1.1. "What kind of mom would do that to her kids?": Judgement from other mothers.

Across the group, all the mothers put forward the theme of judgement from other mothers. For Sofia, working in a mother friendly environment where it is encouraged to prioritise your kids, you rapidly become a target for judgement when you choose otherwise. As Sofia shared with me:

I love my kids and I love being with them and I wish I would've had a year of sabbatical, maternity leave and all of that just to spend time with them but when I'm here...so I like my work and I like seeing my patients and I like, I love it. I hate a lot of things about it and those things do get in the way but I can see it because I don't pack my stuff and leave at 3PM and that makes me feel like I'm probably not that kind of mom because most of the moms here pack their stuff here at 2PM to go spend time with their kids. And I have received those kind of messages from other moms (Sofia).

She further told me:

But I do feel like a lot of my colleagues that are mom's kind of frown upon [me] because I don't have that level of dedication to my kids logistics in like...and that comes across in like those microaggressions like...I don't know those minor comments in in in stuff like uh..."no, no I'm not going to go to that because who schedules something at 1PM, that's my time to fetch my kids" and I'm like (baffled look)" (Sofia).

For Lesedi, her sense of maternal identity was derived externally, from the perceptions of others regarding her mothering. She described her maternal identity as, "... things like how the mom's perceive me, how society perceives me as a mom, how I feel about being a mom and how my kids look up to me as a mom". Thus, for Lesedi, the judgement she experienced disrupted her sense of worth as a mother, leading her to struggle more strongly with the constant criticism. This further led to her experience of these judgements as personal attacks. In discussing her struggles of motherhood, she mentioned:

Okay, obviously number one, the unsaid one is, you know this silent competition between moms. My child is the smartest, my child, oh she did this, she's got this award you know? You constantly, and then they're like "Oh your child is not yet potty trained at this age?" you know you just feel like a failure and so you're always on a pedestal, trying to appear like these moms that have it all together you know? Because everyone looks at your kids and the way they behave is sort of like a reflection of your motherhood and a reflection of your parenting skills. So it puts a lot of pressure on you. Just to make sure they're all put together, that they say the right words and yeah. It's a lot of pressure (Lesedi).

She further reiterated to me, the level of judgement she faced:

There is A LOT of judgment. Said, implied or subtle, it is there. Though the other mom's always...police others. You know you see this at a lot of functions "oh look at my whatever, oh spoke his first words at

two, oh he's so smart. Oh yours is not speaking as yet?" No there's a lot of judgment. A lot of policing amongst moms. Whether in your face or subtle. It is there (Lesedi).

Vidya found it difficult to constantly defend her parenting to others, in order to dilute the judgment she felt. She stated, "And that's the way I'm going to bring her up and I've had to explain it to a lot of people and defend that point of view a lot of the time. And defend myself against these instagram mom's who have these perfectly balanced meals put in front of their child". She goes onto say, "I think there is [judgement] but it's quite subtle". Whereas for Vidya the judgement had been subtle, Sofia experienced it quite distinctly. She recalled two experiences, one being personal to her and the other she observed:

So my supervisor she's got kids...When I was in that moment of should I go here or shouldn't I? Her response was "well I never travel when my son was little" which is like oh fuck (puts hand on forehead and shakes head). So it's kind of like what kind of mom are you that you're just going to go there like a professional woman, forgetting you have kids. So that is ALL the time, all the time, all the time (Sofia).

The second instance was observed by Sofia amongst her colleagues:

The head of department just had a baby right? The baby is 1 and she's running for head of department and she won. All I could hear around was "what kind of mom would do that to her kids?" you know like knowing how much time she's going to be spending at work instead of spending time with her baby in the house. And I'm like that's so chauvinistic, anti-feminist but you know that's kind of like, and people say it like it's nothing. "No it's going to be so bad for the baby" and this and that and okay, it's that kind of thing (Sofia).

Shanè also discussed judgement but not from her own personal experience. Instead she seemed to carry a subtle judgement of mothers who chose a life without children. As she mentioned to me, "I think the biggest stigma these days are for the 40 year

olds that don't have kids yet. That don't want to settle down. I think people look at them and go "Hmm okay, no that's your choice but it's an interesting choice". Thus it seemed women were faced with a lose-lose situation. They are bound to be judged for having children and their choices as mothers or for their choice in not having children.

4.5.1.2. "Oh, she's in her baby making years...her reproductive years":

Judgement from employers and colleagues.

Michelle and Aisha pinpointed judgement in their workplaces. Michelle experienced judgement from her fellow male colleagues, but more understanding from her female colleagues, as she stated, "I think definitely, most of the women I come across understands what I go through and always encourage me to keep it up and do better. Some of the men at the workplace, I think and my personal opinion, do judge working moms or try to put us down so they can walk over us". Aisha on the other hand, experienced judgement and apprehension from her employers, including female managers. She recalled:

Oh, she's in her baby making years...her reproductive years". One manager actually said it you know. When I wanted another role and she said that I'm still in my reproductive years and until I get that sorted out, she didn't think I could take on more. So there is a level of discrimination that comes with it (Aisha).

Thus in both these women's situations, there was an understanding from the work environment around a need for split priorities, but this felt discriminatory at points. Having had her children and now prioritising work, Aisha commented, "Where I was a liability and now I'm an asset if that makes sense".

4.5.2. Mothers Challenging the Judgements

Despite the judgements being both experienced and perpetuated by mothers, the narratives also showed that some of these mothers were challenging these judgemental states of mind in various ways.

4.5.2.1. "I think when you become a mom, your judgement sort of decreases a little bit": In being less judgemental.

One of the ways in which Sofia and Shanè were challenging the judgements was by being less judgemental themselves as mothers, of other mothers. Shanè believed it was an attribute which emerged with motherhood and registering how difficult the task was. As she told me:

I think when you become a mom, your judgement sort of decreases a little bit. I think new mom's, she wants to do everything perfect. You know she has to be on the right supplements and all the right food and nothing that comes out of a freezer and everything needs to be perfect. I think they still struggle a bit with judgement. And when you see your own faults and the choices that you've made, you did all of this stuff right but your child still sleeps in your bed. Or still refuses to eat vegetables, even though he didn't have sugar for three years. So I don't think the judgement, from new mom's maybe, from mom's-to-be maybe but I think after you've been in this for a little while, you go "you know what, you just do you, what's best for your family (Shanè).

This realisation came after Shanè experienced the effort in meeting all your children's needs and realising mothers are merely trying to do their best. She recalled:

And you become less judgemental about parents. I had to bring my own child in for treatment for a year. That's a lot of effort. Driving to fetch him somewhere and then being on time and being here and then sitting for 45 minutes to wait for this freaking person to finish and then driving back in traffic with this child. It's effort to get your child there. So I'm just so much more thankful for people who are compliant with the process and they come and they're here on time (Shanè).

Sofia shared Shanè's sentiments about the difficulty in being a mother and how this can allow for less judgement of other mothers, because everyone stumbles. Sofia shared with me:

But it is a lot like...it's weird because there is a lot of judgement in general around moms. It's sad because we're all in the same boat and all that, and I have to make huge efforts to not be judgemental. It's a constant struggle and at the same time not let anyone else's judgement get to me. It's something that we do in passing all the time without even...we have like a flag that we know best and we try to sell that flag to everyone and...yeah it does come across as very judgemental and harsh to a lot of moms (Sofia).

4.5.2.2. "It means I have to work twice as hard": In working harder to prove yourself. As previously discussed, motherhood was felt to be perceived as an excuse not to perform in the workplace by various individuals. Lesedi, Vidya and Aisha who work in corporate environments, distinctly felt that their status as mothers meant that their dedication to their work as well as their level of competence is called into question more distinctly. These mothers attempted to challenge the judgement on their dedication and competence by working harder.

This could be seen in Aisha's response to her work identity, she confidently stated:

So my working identity is, you know my work ethic can't be questioned. I've really, really displayed that in the best possible way. So even though I do have two kids and I am studying this year, when people see me they see the employee first, the person who goes over and beyond before they see everything else that I bring to the table but it has taken a great deal of sacrifice (Aisha).

When asked about how she copes with both her maternal identity and her work identity, she stated:

So because I don't let motherhood be used as an excuse and I say this quite controversially, for anything I need to deliver or anything I need to be for the work environment. I am viewed as being quite reliable and the one who gets things done. So they'll come to me first before they approach anyone else. The other moms are not approached because they

do pick up their bags and leave and people know the boundaries with them (Aisha).

Lesedi shared a similar viewpoint when she described what it meant to be a working mother, as she anxiously shared with me:

I think it means I have to work twice as hard because even if I have to take time off, even if I have to ask if I can go to a play, I know that everything is, I have all my deliverables up to date, I can, I have no excuse, I can be missing for a couple of hours but I'm productive and effective at the same time. Then it won't be an excuse for me, that I'm slacking because I had to go to a child's play and all, it means I have to work double to prove myself, I have to work twice as hard so that even if I'm not there or even if I have to do a school round or come there or my child is sick, at least you're not thought of as slouching or taking liberties yeah (Lesedi).

Vidya, similar to Aisha, felt confident in her approach to challenging the judgement through working harder. As she described challenges in the workplace:

Yes it means that we do things a little bit differently. We slot things around a little bit but to hell with you. I'm working as hard if not harder than before. But you need to be recognised for still bringing as much as you do to the table. And then on the other side people almost expecting you to be switching off. It's that whole "lean in" movement right? (Vidya).

She proceeded to confidently reinforce to me that she is an asset in the working environment and she will not let that go unseen. As she boldly stated:

I'm a very hard worker and I deliver results. When I say to my manager, I need two hours, I'm not going to put in the leave, I need two hours, he goes 'yeah of course no problem. Don't come back if you don't need to', because he knows what I bring to that table and because I know I bring

to the table. And if YOU know what you bring to the table, then everybody is more scared that you'll leave to go to another bank than anything else (Vidya).

Thus in order for these mothers to prove their value in the workplace, they found themselves working twice as hard. However, the time spent on work and not with their children began to create room for another judgement, this time internal - the feeling of guilt.

4.5.3. *"I feel like I miss a lot of my kids' life and I do count the hours": Guilt about Missing Out*

The biggest battle that all the mothers were fighting was time. Despite the experiences of these mothers being so unique, the guilt which these mothers felt due to the lack of time they are able to spend with their children due to work commitments was a hardship faced by all.

Sofia found a great deal of pleasure in her job. Her primary identity was a working woman from a very young age. Thus, having to create a space for your child mentally, was still something Sofia found difficult and caused her a great deal of guilt. As she shared with me:

And the second is a mental space because I am always thinking about my kids all the time but there are moments which, it's my kids and something else. Like in my PhD, I became completely absorbed by it and I felt really bad because I wasn't kind of like thinking about them in the sense of "oh I'm going to take my kids here" all the time you're thinking about your kids, thinking about their life, education, their school, their friends, everything, how they're doing. And I get points where I get so absorbed at work that I don't hold them the same way and that's awful. That makes me feel awful, awful because it's like I fall into that drive of wanting to do amazing things and it's like no that is not important for me, this is what I want to do but it's, it's that mental space is like a huge challenge to share (Sofia).

When speaking to Sofia, her passion for her work was evident. Having developed a thriving career abroad and then relocating to South Africa, being unknown in her field, in a new country was a challenge for her. Thus, she was quite excited to be invited to academic meetings here in South Africa. But since having children, this has changed. She described to me:

Now when I leave they just cry for an hour and the next day they are just incredibly grumpy because they're upset that I was so late that night. They feel like...like I, I failed them and I feel like I've failed them. So now I go to these meetings and all the time I'm thinking "oh god this is going one minute late" and I cannot get the joy that I used to get out of it because I feel like I'm betraying my kids for this. And every time I'm like "is this worth it? Like should I really be here?" And it takes a huge effort to think "yes you should be here" because this is your job, this is your profession and you can't let it go. But it's awful and I hate it. I feel guilty all the time and then I need to make all these efforts to kind of like repair the damage because you know it feels like an injury to my kids (Sofia).

The guilt was worsened for Sofia by her children, who let her know without hesitation their need for her to be more present. As she recalled:

But my kids have gotten to the point where they cry and I've had to explain to them a thousand times why I have to work. Like a thousand. Why I have to work, what I do as my job, and then if it wasn't for my job then we wouldn't have anything to eat, we pay for the house, we can't do this, we can't do that. And then they just cry, "I wish we didn't have to eat, so you don't have to go to your job. We prefer you to stay at home, we won't have lunch today" and I'm like it just doesn't work that way, you know? So it's so hard. So that is horrible but that's what it's like to be a working mom. That drama 24 hours a day, I'm with them and I'm feeling guilty about work because I'm playing Barbies and I don't like playing Barbies but I'm playing Barbies and then I'm here and I'm feeling like crap because I'm staying late because I want to finish

something and I know my kids are waiting for me at the door so I'm feeling awful the entire time that I'm here (Sofia).

While for both Lesedi and Shanè, their guilt arose from missing out on special occasions and events. As Lesedi stated, "Missing out on important occasions. Like you can't attend, I can't go for some of their swimming events because I'm in a meeting. I can't be there, sometimes I miss the school drop off but I try and compensate here and there but it's just missing those little moments". Whilst Shanè echoed those sentiments, "And now that it's difficult for me to be as flexible and for me to be there at every cricket match and every tennis tournament and every swimming trial...That's difficult". Hence, for both of these mothers others have had to step in and fill that role. Yet for both Lesedi and Shanè, that intensified the guilt. As Shanè admitted, "So that is difficult, that is really hard. There is a lot of guilt definitely. And even if I can't be there and someone else goes, there's still like "I should have been there, I should have been there, that's MY child". Lesedi explained her use of external support for her children, but that this often leaves her saddened and concerned that she does not know what is happening in her children's minds and lives. As she admitted to me:

It is mom guilt. The feeling of guilt that you're not there when they come from school. You're not there during the day, you're leaving them with a helper so it's some stranger. Sometimes when you see them closer to the helper than they are to you and they don't kinda like come to you for things, they go to the helper. Or maybe you hear the helper talking about "oh do you know they can do ABC" "Do you know they can sing this song?" "Oh do you think they can do this" and you think "oh wow I should be the one who knows that" or "oh wow, why didn't I see that?" sorta like this person see those things before I did. And you hear some reports through the teacher "oh your child is struggling emotionally ABCD" and you think why didn't they bring it up? Is it because I'm not there? Maybe if I was there, maybe if I was more present I would've picked it up so those kinds of things make you feel guilty. And of course the judgment of other moms as well. All those things add to you know, you feeling guilty (Lesedi).

For Aisha, as well as Lesedi, the guilt felt difficult to digest. Thus, they both rationalised the guilt as part of a bigger picture, dismissing the guilt in an "the end justifies the means" approach. Aisha's first mention of guilt was over her preference for working, as she admitted, "When it comes to maternal identity, I used to feel very guilty at first. Not because I wasn't spending as much time with my kids, especially the eldest. It was because I really enjoyed working". She further shared with me:

Well I guess, it's the time hey. Time is something no one can buy for you. Once it's gone you can't get it back. I used to beat myself up a lot like I said at the start, like I'm missing out on sports day and this show and tell or whatever it may be. But I've made a conscious decision that when I'm at work then I'm 100% at work. And then when I'm with them and I've committed to being with them then I'm 100% with them. So it's being mindful and present in those moments. But it took a long journey hey, it's a lot of guilt but as some point you just realise you're just doing the best you can (Aisha).

She further stated, "So many times it's sad for them but they've got a working mom who lives in Johannesburg, in the rat race. And the quality of mothering and the quality of time we spend together is not where it ought to be but it's the best I can do with what I have right now". While Lesedi rationalised it in a similar manner, as she said, "Yeah. But there's always the thing that you tell yourself and the back of your head. That I'm buying them this lifestyle, I'm buying them these experiences but that motherhood factor does suffer".

Vidya's job required a large amount of travelling. Her guilt arose in having to prioritise a work commitment over her daughter. As she recalled, "In March I went on an international roadshow and I was in London for a week. It was emotionally gruelling to leave her. She was fine. But emotionally I felt guilty, I felt like I was missing out on something". Vidya appeared to experience a great deal of guilt in relation to her work-parenting balance, and especially with regards to the amount of time that she spent away from her daughter. She explained how this guilt also permeated other areas of her life:

So it also means then that I feel guilty about the great deal of time I spend away from my daughter. I have a HUGE bond deal that's probably going to go through on Monday, I'm probably going to leave the office at 11 or 12 at night and I will have to come in on Tuesday morning and I'm going "but my kid never sees me" And then you feel guilty for not spending enough time with your husband and then I feel guilty for not checking in with my best friend because I'm running after so much stuff. And then I feel guilty for not drinking enough water and then I feel guilty for not going to the gym, even though I tried to be there at 5AM so I wake up at 4.30. So you can't fit enough stuff into your day. You also I suppose, you feel guilty about, you watch on instagram how all these mom's are living their best life and doing everything perfectly and you're thinking "oh shit I just gave my daughter an entire block of chocolate, I hope that's okay and she's not going to turn into a drug addict later on in her life" that kind of thing. So that's the biggest challenges, to remain grounded (Vidya).

4.5.4 Pressure to Perform: Pressure from Self

4.5.4.1. "I was getting on in age": Having babies later in life.

Given that all the participants had careers before becoming mothers, many of them were older before deciding to have children. Waning fertility was then experienced as a pressure to become a mother. While some of the participants experienced concern around being able to conceive, others worried about the effects of an infant on their careers. Others felt the pressure to have a second child quickly due to being older. Michelle, having constructed a career and finding herself in a comfortable place, faced the pressure of having children whilst simultaneously being concerned about the effect of a baby on her career:

I think with the first pregnancy, it depends on the age. I guess as a career-orientated woman I think falling pregnant in your 30's is quite pressurising and stressful because you're actually very concerned about how it's going to affect your career. How you're going to work and you know your whole change of lifestyle (Michelle).

Sofia, after conceding to the decision of having children, she faced the reality of whether she was able to conceive. She stated, "But yeah then...then I wasn't sure if I could have babies and you know those two things were kind of like together and then the first time we tried and fell pregnant, I felt like I won the lottery because it was so wonderful. It was so, so wonderful". Aisha experienced similar concerns around the decision to have a second child due to her age and the possibility of not conceiving. She stated:

I was under severe peer pressure. I mean pressure from everyone including myself because the gap is quite big and I was getting on in age. I almost felt I needed to do it because if I waited any longer from an age perspective, it would just be very difficult. So not by choice but more by coercion by everything and everyone. I hate to say it but that's how it felt (Aisha).

Thus, for Aisha, her second child felt like a decision made by others.

4.5.4.2. *"You're compensating, there's an overcompensation": To be better.*

The constant judgement that these working mothers experienced from themselves, other mothers and their colleagues, and the subsequent guilt, appeared to increase the pressure that these women put on themselves, both at home and within the workplace. Vidya described being a working mother as, "Uhm I think it calls for a lot of balance. I can say it's physically gruelling right? Because you, you're tired all the damn time. You feel like everybody is asking for a piece of you". She further mentioned the added pressure of trying to be a strong foundation for an impressionable child: "So I do then put a lot of pressure on myself because you are living under someone's watchful eyes but it's also held me to a standard". She appeared to feel simultaneously motivated but under pressure to cope well, due to an awareness of her daughter looking to imitate her mother. For Lesedi, her pressure on self arose from her need to provide for her children materially:

I think you have to choose and the working identity will win more than anything because look at the time we are living in, look at the schools

that they go to, look at the clothes you know? Just to say, to keep them alive, just to afford, for them to be able to have what they have, do what they do (Lesedi).

Thus, in working hard to provide a comfortable life for her children, Lesedi felt guilty regarding her unavailability to her children. Thus she appeared to overcompensate for her absence at times:

You also have to...make sure when it's mommy time, you go the extra mile. Kinda like you know, because you're feeling guilty that when they want things you get it for them than you normally would. Because you're compensating, there's an overcompensation then on that part because you're not present, I'm not there, therefore if I get them things, things will compensate for my presence (Lesedi).

Michelle and Aisha spoke about the added pressure to perform well in the work environment. Michelle placed pressure on herself to perform equally as well if not better than her colleagues without children. This is something Michelle found difficult, but with which she appeared to cope through dismissal or minimising of the feelings associated with this difficulty:

You have all these responsibilities yet your performance target at the workplace remains high, and it's hard to remain competitive like compared to colleagues with no family obligations... I need to work long hours or meet deadlines because of my role and my job. There is just no easier way of doing things, and complaining does not help in the situation (Michelle).

Aisha's pressure to perform was influenced by her own drive and need to succeed but also by her family's current financial situation:

I think my husband's job situation isn't all that great, and the current context of South Africa as a female I have a better chance than he does, in accelerating and growing. And if not for my benefit then for the

whole households benefit. So I will pursue that with single-minded determination (Aisha).

For these working mothers there was pressure from self to be better in areas which they felt highly judged or perceived as inadequate. However, it appeared they were being judged against a standard, which they feel is constructed by others and in their own minds, but which in reality does not exist.

4.5.5. "It's difficult, like being faced all the time with all of these perfect moms": The Ghost of the Ideal Mom - Pressure from Others

Throughout the narratives of these mothers there was an undercurrent of an elusive 'perfect mother' ideal. None of these mothers felt akin to this perfect mother, some of them had never even met the perfect mother. Yet there she was haunting these working mothers in most of the decisions they made. Some of these mothers described having come to realise the idea of perfect motherhood as an illusion. As Sofia mentioned, "It's just...its, it's difficult, like being faced all the time with all of like these perfect moms, you know. But the moment you kind of like touch on the subject all of that crumbles". Lesedi delved deeper into the lonely difficulties of motherhood, "Nobody sees your struggles. It's just supposed to every day wake up and look like you have everything under control but it's really a journey where, there's a lot of silent struggles. In motherhood everyone wants to give the impression that they have it all together but they, people, but there's a lot of silent battles". Despite acknowledging the illusion of perfection and the notion that motherhood is constructed as an ideal, Lesedi still attempted to strive for it, out of guilt and due to the judgement she felt.

Sofia had also concluded that the perfect and ideal mother was an illusion. However, unlike Lesedi, she did not attempt to attain it:

So...that's kind of like where I am at the moment just giving up...my professional aspirations and assuming I made a decision and I like the decision that I made and I don't regret it at all and I just need to be consistent with that, instead of pretending I can hold both in a fantasy

perfect world that I'm the perfect mom and the perfect [professional] (Sofia).

Sofia was able to hold the tension between “what kind of mom you want to be” versus “what kind of mom you are.” Through conversations with other working mothers Sofia reported having discovered that many of them feel that they are not coping and had used this to normalise her own experience.

Vidya had interrogated her beliefs around the origin of the ideal mother and believed that this ideal was transmitted through the manner in which women were raised. She also felt that the notion of the perfect mother was perpetuated through how gender specific roles were ascribed to women, and through the standards that were ascribed to those roles. She passionately stated:

We're also socially conditioned to be the perfect housekeeper and the perfect wife and now you know in 2019, most women work and so as a result, you must have a perfect job, drive a perfect car, live in a perfect house in Bryanston, send your kids to a perfect school. You have to do everything perfectly and you see this subtly in social circles, you see it on social media, you see it in the workplace. No one will come directly to you and say it but it's quite a subtle messaging that goes through (Vidya).

Similarly to Sofia, Vidya appeared to use her insights on the illusion of the ideal mother and sought to challenge it through acceptance of herself as she is, with no desire to pursue the idealistic image of a perfected motherhood.

4.6. Coping

Among all these women, a common factor in being a working mother was the strenuousness in balancing both of these identities simultaneously. Hence, in order for them to manage both these identities and the responsibilities which they entailed, they had found various ways to cope.

4.6.1. *"It's compromise, it's blood, sweat and tears": The Compromise-Reprioritise Juncture*

One of the many ways that these working mothers cope was through compromising and re-prioritising their work selves in order to incorporate the needs of the maternal self. For Sofia, the compromise was evidenced in her career, with the dampening of her former career aspirations. She recalled:

And now I just got this invitation and my first answer was like "No sorry I can't do this again" I won't, I won't even if it's just a full paid trip to France and it sounds amazing and great and I've never been there, I don't care I prefer being in my house...playing Barbies and hating the Barbies than being in France. It was such an easy decision for me because career takes a lot of space but like I love that time with them, I don't work on the weekends at all. Like that's 100% for my kids but in the week I work a lot (Sofia).

She proceeded to emphasise her compromise and re-prioritization as she stated, "So I think another thing that kind of like put that into perspective, is in just what I said about mediocrity. Your priorities get rearranged somehow. Work aspirations are not as important". She further rationalised her thinking by providing another lived experience:

And again being mediocre like I'm just going to do these things so I can keep my job and that's about it. Then the rest it's my kids basically so...that's kind of like how it is. So I always try, if they need me like if they have a meeting and they need me to be there then that's my priority and I try to put it in my diary. Only when it clashes with something I can't move like patients and lectures then I won't move it. But the rest I try to move everything else around or outsource support like please you do this, please you do that (Sofia).

Shanè and Lesedi also attempt to be as present with their children as possible during quality time. Shanè stated, "When I'm with my kids, they are my main priority. So...everything else sort of takes a backseat for a while. When you're spending time

with them. When we're reading books at night before they go to sleep, everything else takes a back seat". She further mentioned prioritizing of their kids:

We have managed to maneuver our household in such a way that we get to spend time with our kids and after work is very important to us. The hours we have after work is important to us as a family. And we are very stingy with our weekends because we want to spend it with our kids (Shanè).

Lesedi shared a similar narrative, "When I'm in that motherhood space, I try to be present like before you called, I made sure I'm the one who gets them their dinner. I try to be present when I'm at home, I just try to be present in that moment. I think, so I don't miss a minute cause I know that part is suffering".

Vidya had a very time intensive job which often required prioritisation over her child. However, Vidya felt this allowed her to be firm with colleagues about re-prioritizing her child when she feels the need to reconcile the time lost. As she boldly informed me:

I sometimes have to sit here till 12PM at night because theres a dollar-bond and we have to wait for New York to close. But then I do expect that if I sat here till 12PM at night, then the next day that if I want to pop home and have lunch with my daughter that I can. And that's something that I will demand from an employer (Vidya).

Shanè shared a similar experience when having to support her son at a cricket match. She recalled:

But I'm lucky in the sense that there has been a day, this year where my older one had to go play a cricket match and I was able to reschedule my clients and move them around. So that I can attend his cricket match. Uhm so in relation, definitely trying my best to be where I need to be. Most of the time (Shanè).

The compromise and re-prioritisation appeared to be a constant process that required flexibility and thoughtfulness from all the women.

4.6.2. Support

Another key element which contributed to coping with both their identities was the crucial role of support in their lives. This support appeared in numerous forms. Some were common among the mothers whilst others were unique to specific mothers.

4.6.2.1. "Help is very important": Outsourcing.

In managing the constant pull between identities and in order to perform at work, they often need help at home and therefore, outsource some of their motherhood duties to others. There were varying levels of comfort about this outsourcing within the participants.

A large portion of these mothers outsourced some of their duties to family members. Michelle admitted her struggles and how vital help is. She stated, "To be very honest, I don't always cope, and like every day is a challenge...so I ask my husband or parents for help on certain days you know?". Similarly, Shanè found support in her family who were always able to come together for her children. She told me:

Luckily because we have a very supportive family, if I can't make it then someone else tries. So the mom or my mother-in-law or my husband or grandad. Or the cousin that lives around the corner. We all sort of team up and we're like 'my son needs to do this match' or his godparents. They've also stepped up and gone to go fetch him, if we needed [them] too. So our support system helps (Shanè).

For Sofia, the idea of outsourcing was intensely difficult. She narrated a traumatic experience to me of when she first became a mother:

And she came, she has four kids and she came with two helpers, to the party. And I remember she sat with me and was like 'oh so now what are you going to do with your daughter when you start working?' She says 'you know just get a helper like my helper raises my kids and they

came out right.' And that was traumatic...like after the party I was crying with my husband, I REFUSE, to let a stranger raise my kids like I didn't have kids to outsource motherhood. I did this because I wanted to. And she's like a very successful lawyer but that's the kind of mom. The helpers were feeding the kids, were taking them to the bathroom and that marked me and I was like that's not the kind of mom I want to be. But somehow that's the kind of mom you end up being because I work full time. I mean I'm so grateful my kids, my mom helps me, my mother-in-law helps me and when I'm working late my husband takes over so I have a lot of support like I wouldn't be able to do it without the support. Which is somehow outsourcing motherhood and all of these things. What I'm trying to do is decide what I outsource (Sofia).

The idea of handing over the reigns to paid help to parent her children was hard for Sofia. Outsourcing to her family members appeared to feel more acceptable to her:

My husband is normally there for everything but if he's not there then I ask my in-laws and my parents and there's always someone. There's never that fear that my kids are going to be unsafe. I manage because I have a lot of help and I don't have people putting more crap on me unnecessary. Because I don't have the time to do this and they are taking that role from me. In that sense I have a lot of support hugely and I think I wouldn't cope if I didn't. I don't know how people can cope (Sofia).

Thus, Sofia came to observe outsourcing as a crucial element in maintaining both of her strong identities as a working mother.

For both Aisha and Lesedi, their only option was to outsource help to non-family members. For Lesedi, it was important that she outsourced the "right things" in order for her to be present mother. She anxiously shared with me:

One of the ways that I, I, I try balancing is to just get help. As much help as I possibly can, you know? So when I get home, so when I'm

home I'm not focused on you know like doing things around the house, the domestic chores. Somebody can do that and I can be with the kids or I can take them for ice cream or, or but uhhhh it's very tricky hey (Lesedi).

For Aisha, in maintaining her strong working identity, outsourcing had become the biggest aspect of her home structure. As she proudly admitted to me:

A very big gap between two kids 'cause it was exceptionally difficult with the first child because I didn't have much support here. I am from Kwa-Zulu Natal, all my family is there so I really struggled and A LOT of what I earned went into getting that operating model into place for my kid. So to get the nanny, to get the transport for the school. Any additional support that I may need. So now that my eldest has started grade 1, in addition to having a nanny and a helper to do the housework 'cause the nanny focuses on the baby, I've got someone who does the transport in place for my eldest and I've also got a tutor who helps with homework (Aisha).

In discussing the challenges of motherhood, Aisha further admitted, "And as much as I want to say I really want to prioritise my kids, the reality is that I really can't do that. I have outsourced literally every mothering duty that I have and it's only gotten worse with the second kid". It appeared that the level of dependence in Aisha's children felt utterly incompatible with her working identity. This could be understood when she stated, "I've outsourced because I've needed to create a support structure that helps me. And yes everything I have goes into that support structure, but it alleviates the stress of having to rush off and do what needs to be done".

4.6.2.2. *"Mommy you're doing such a good job": Feedback.*

The support that both Shanè and Lesedi found helpful was that of positive feedback. Shane stated:

That positive feedback of 'mommy you're doing such a good job' or 'mommy you are amazing', that helps to say okay I'm not a bad mom,

I'm actually an 'okay' mom. This is not terrible. And when you do end up taking your child somewhere and the people are just like 'Wow but your child is just so lovely, he's such a nice child' then I'm like 'Yes, star for me, I'm a good mommy' because where else is he getting the stuff from you know? So that helps (Shanè).

For Shanè, having children with developmental difficulties was an extra element of concern for her as a mother. Thus, the positive feedback appeared to ease her concern and anxiety over not being enough for her two sons due to work. As she further stated, "Just that constant motivational talk basically, really does help. And it plays a huge role". She further said, "Like people just give more of a perspective when you're in a roller coaster ride that's just going downhill. That helps".

Lesedi found validation in the manner in which she was perceived by her children, as she mentioned:

Uhm, physical well there's a lot of free hugs. You know these people just think the world of you. You know they always think you're great, even when you feel you're not so great, they really think you're so amazing, you're out of this world. And then emotionally, I don't know you just get this sense of wow, this sense of my heart living out of my body (Lesedi).

Shanè beamed as she added, "And they make you so proud and so just...you love them so much. All of those things are amazing. But also so that you have a space where you know that these little things love you to death and there's no judgement from their side, so it's an extremely safe spot to be in".

The taking in of positive judgement appeared to aid in the alleviation of the effects of negative judgements from themselves and others.

4.6.2.3. *"Let yourself off the hook sometimes": Self love.*

Vidya reported trying to practice self-love as a form of support for herself. In her acceptance that motherhood is challenging at times, Vidya seemed to allow herself

space to digest those feelings and tried to be kind to herself rather than overly punitive. In sharing her manner of coping, she divulged, "But it's also with the understanding that you have to make the time for yourself. It may not be that ideal where you have weekends to yourself to do what you need to do. But you have to go for a spa day and ask for help. Gym, you have to be fit you know? Eat decently". She believed that in prioritising herself as well as being kinder to herself, the quality of her mothering improved. She stated:

Let yourself off the hook sometimes. And for me, it's taught me a lot of self love. Otherwise you'd become a poor mother or a poor person. In whatever role you're going to be in so you have to be, your conviction must come from a place of love for yourself. And in relation to that point, you have to be sure. So when you decide on something, stand by yourself (Vidya).

4.6.2.4. *"You build a tribe": The 'mom tribe'.*

Another form of support was a connection to other mothers. For these women both their maternal and working identities provided them with opportunities of connection. Many of these women believed connection would not be possible if they did not have their work and mother identities. For Sofia and Vidya, their motherhood became a topic of connection with other mothers. As Vidya stated:

There's certain places where there's certain clients, there's certain colleagues, some chick I sit next to in a queue, somewhere and you can talk about your children. It's a common thread. And I also go, "I wonder what people without children talk about to other people" because it consumes your life (Vidya).

Whilst for Sofia, the connection she felt with other women through the journey of her pregnancy and in becoming a mother, provided her with comfort. She remembered a conversation with her doctor:

When I was pregnant in my first pregnancy, something weird happened to me...like my, my OB told me that, so I didn't know whether I could give birth naturally or by C-Section and you know, it was like a thing in my head. And he told me something that, a person recently, a woman gave birth on top of a tree in like the sticks somewhere, in like the middle of Africa, and on top of a tree so the lions and the animals wouldn't eat the child. And you know like at that point I thought that I, that is all I was...that is one thing that we are so equal, is motherhood. And that is so powerful. Like I felt that I was equal with the cows, with the giraffes, with that woman, with another mom on the street and I felt incredibly connected to...mothers in general. And I felt incredibly united with everyone, everyone that was a mom, that was around me. I felt like there was a really strong connection. And at the same time you see it, you see it that it's such an easy breach when you have kids. And a lot of ways in which you could connect yourself to other people, it's through motherhood like it's such a common thing. Do you have kids? Yes I have kids then let's talk about the kids and that's something that we have in common and we can understand each other on many levels in terms of what this means and all of that. So yeah I do think, at least for me it was something that connected me to every single female, in a very deep way (Sofia).

Vidya also spoke of the notion of a "Mom tribe." When asked about the benefits of being a mother, Vidya listed this as one of them, "The other thing is, you build a tribe, you build a parent tribe. I was going to say mom tribe but it's really a parent tribe". Vidya seemed to gain much comfort from a shared sense of motherhood as difficult, "I'm a firm believer that the more we talk about, as moms in our mom tribes, how we don't do things perfectly, the more we will fight against this social oppression on women to be perfect in all these things". She felt that there could be power in a unified resistance against the pressures on mothers: "We must just harness it to stand together a lot more and use our unified voice a lot more. And it's something I feel women generally, whether you're a mom or not, don't do it enough. And it's something I personally advocate for, a lot".

4.6.3. "It's a serious juggling act": Role Switching

The last way in which some of these working mothers seemed to cope was through role switching. Similar to re-prioritising, role switching saw these women opting for one identity over the other when in certain environments. Thus, leading to the suppression of the identity not currently needed. For Lesedi, role switching appeared to be an attempt to assuage her guilt. As she told me, "You find that maybe sometimes you have to come home, then you put your laptop away and when they're sleeping, that's when you start working again". Sofia finds role switching to be the best way in connecting and staying present with her children. As she informed me:

And I've made so many adjustments. Like I get home and I don't use my phone, I just put it away. I just use it after they go to sleep. Stuff like that. I don't work on weekends as much, I do sometimes have to work on weekends sometimes but I try to organise something fun for them like going to granny and granny will take them somewhere wonderful and then I feel less guilty about it. So those kinds of things. But it's always barely, like you're barely managing. There's so much pain and anguish always for me which is kind of like new (Sofia).

For Vidya, she did not want to succumb to role switching. This was possibly due to her strong working identity and experiencing the need to constantly be tuned into that identity. Thus she attempted to hold both her identities concurrently. However, it seemed there were times when the switch occurred. As she mentioned:

But know that when I write my to-do list in the morning, it also includes personal stuff. It is about finding the balance to incorporate both in a very dynamic way. It's not that when I go home and 6 or whatever, that I'm switching off everything and work mustn't phone me. I think it's unreasonable in this day and age but understand that if at 10AM, my daughter's nanny calls me to say she has a temperature of X, I'm leaving obviously within reason, I'm leaving to sort this out (Vidya).

4.7. Gender and Cultural Discourses

Throughout the interviews with these working mothers, the influence of certain discourses around gender and culture became apparent. These discourses seemed to affect these women in similar ways regarding parenting and gender roles within the family.

4.7.1. Perpetuation of Gender and Culture: Social Conditioning

4.7.1.1. "I think as females we are inherently, severely critical on ourselves for everything": Women as not good enough.

In talking to Shanè and Aisha, the idea emerged of women being very judgemental of themselves, which is inherently accompanied by a constant feeling of not being good enough in various areas and roles in their lives. Shanè stated:

I think we are, most of us, most people are critical of themselves. Like if you have very high expectations of yourself and you don't necessarily meet all these expectations. Then yeah, then it becomes difficult because you're criticizing yourself and you think you're not good enough and you're not doing a good enough job (Shanè).

Aisha discussed this same critique from a more gendered perspective, having been raised in a traditional Indian home. She confided in me:

I think as females we are inherently, severely critical on ourselves for everything. When it comes to work, we're not good enough. When it comes to being moms we're not good enough. When it comes to being daughter-in-laws we're not good enough. When it comes to being daughters, we're always falling short of the sons. So you grow up with an 'I'm not good enough mentality' and I've been very conscious with two girls, to make sure they're never ever exposed to that....And I'm actually glad it's girls. And not a girl and a boy because there would have been an immediate discrepancy in how they were treated in an Indian home, especially by my husband. So that they're two females, I want to empower them. I want them to be as rough and as rugged or as serene and delicate, whatever they want to be. So I don't want to make any pre judgements on them. And I want them to know that the world is

limitless for them because even if you can't attain it but the fact that somebody believes in you to that extent, it makes you limitless in anything you want to do (Aisha).

Thus in raising two daughters, with a husband who still carried a traditional orthodox view on gender, Aisha attempted to challenge these stereotyped gender roles through her own achievements as a working mother.

4.7.1.2. "I think we're socially conditioned to...be the...primary parent":

Mother as primary parent.

Among these mothers, it seemed their experiences also entailed a role as the primary parent. The primary parent was the parent that all the expectations and responsibilities fell upon regarding the children. Despite having supportive partners, all the participants felt that gender roles prescribed that it was them as mothers who took the role of primary parent. Sofia highlighted the influence of biology in her understanding of this process, as she recalled:

Like I had a present dad in my family so he was very maternal in many ways and I know my husband is very maternal, he does a lot of maternal things that you typically consider maternal like caring and maternal and all of that BUT I do know now from my experience with my husband that it wasn't the same... like he didn't, like that maternal thing that you know, some people, like for me the second I was pregnant I was like that's my baby and whatever. When I gave birth, I was like utterly in love with my baby, all the, I don't know, it was like I couldn't believe that this child was so perfect and so wonderful and I couldn't sleep just looking at it and that didn't happen for my husband. It took him like a year for him to like to have that connection to our kids. Like a whole year. Like he was amazing, he was present but he wasn't in love. He wasn't like over the moon. He was very task oriented, he was more caring about me than about the baby. And he said I can see, I love the baby but it wasn't that infatuation that I was feeling so. For that close experience it has to be different in the way, I don't know..., "There are differences I think and I do think the mom takes

like a...probably like a specific role that might be...more intense I think (Sofia).

This initial high intensity parent role appeared to set up a pattern that was maintained as their children grew older. The mothers shared their experiences of higher expectations and pressure exerted on them, as opposed to their husbands, in relation to their children. Shanè stated:

And they used to do their Christmas concerts on a weekday, in the morning. It was impossible for daddy to go, so I just had to make a plan. Nevermind the fact that I also have a job, I also have commitments, I also have stuff. I can't go. So I'm telling you I can't go therefore, make a plan (Shanè).

Lesedi felt the same way as she described the expectations on her at her children's birthday. She recalled:

I think there's a lot more pressure on mom's than dad's because if, I'll give you an example. If you're hosting your child's birthday, everybody compliments the mom on good hosting skills, your decor. Nobody asks the dad "oh so who did the decor?" Everybody asks the mom. It's a reflection of "oh she's so organized" but nobody will go to the dad and say "oh wow you put together a great party" you know? The pressure is more on the mom than it is on the dad. Because whether you like it or not, even if you have a helper, you are the primary caregiver so everything is just a reflection of, a reflection on you (Lesedi).

When asked about whether fathers faced the same pressure as mothers, Lesedi replied:

No, dads don't. They don't, they really don't. I think it's just moms. Because I also realised when they, they, most of my friends, I'll give you an example. When there's...a function at school right? During the week. Working hours, you'll see a lot of working moms and just a few

working dads. So the dads voluntarily will ask their partners to attend 'cause they have meetings or what and they can't attend but as a mom, you have to make the sacrifice. So I'll see a lot of moms, working moms, time and time again and just a few dads or grandparents if the parents can't make it. But yeah it's mostly moms, working moms even stay at home moms, they'll be there. And dads, one of them will be there. So you're still expected to make those sacrifices (Lesedi).

Shanè felt the same way as she stated, "It's sort of expected that the mom's need to be there for these things but it's not expected for the dads. And it's not that important to the dads". Vidya also expressed her thoughts that women as the primary parent is expected socially and thus more pressure was placed on mothers due to higher expectations:

So firstly I think a lot of it comes from other women because for whatever reason, I think we're socially conditioned to...be the...primary parent. I'm talking like about day-to-day stuff...and it is my opinion. Men don't have that same kind of pressure on them, where they feel they must do everything perfectly. No one's going to any guy and going "are you the perfect father? Do you feed your child organic avocado twice a week?" That guy doesn't give a toss right? He's not under those pressures but women tend to be (Vidya).

For Aisha, culture appeared to play a more significant role than with other mothers:

Initially because my husband is quite orthodox, he didn't want to help initially and I had to have a hissy fit and an almost meltdown but all by design one evening, for him to realise that he actually needs to be involved. And he realised how much he loves it and enjoys it so it does take a team (Aisha).

In being raised in a more traditional Indian family, Aisha's husband believed the rearing of children is the sole responsibility of the mother. As much as Aisha won the

battle to get her husband more involved, there are still times when the orthodoxy of culture and religion affect their roles of parenting. As Aisha further explained to me:

The burden of the organising falls on the mom, whether she is doing it herself or organising for the infrastructure to be put into place. When it comes to interviewing nannies or getting help or getting a tutor, they are very secondary to the process. YOU drive it and you make sure because you will feel the pinch more than they do if things don't work out. So if the nanny doesn't pitch for whatever reason, he automatically assumes it's going to be me who's going to stay at home or what have you...So I don't think he feels the pressures (Aisha).

It appeared that these participants felt that the success or failure of parenting fell upon their mothers shoulders. They believed that through social conditioning they had come to be understood as the primary parent.

4.7.1.3. "A lot of our men, come from the idea that the woman needs to sort out the household": Gender roles in the family.

Beyond women being the primary parent, assigned gender roles in the household were also believed to be a result of social conditioning. As Shanè shared:

Because a lot of our men, come from the idea that...um the woman needs to sort out the household. Well because they're providing. That's more or less what their parents did. So to find that sort of balance in your relationship with a spouse, even if there are no kids, I think is difficult. Because I'm working just as many hours as he's working but I need to come home and I need to do the cooking and I need to do the cleaning. I need to make sure there's food in the house and I need to make sure this and that and the other thing. It makes life hard and I think that results into quite a number of fights with spouses in general. It definitely did in my household until he could understand it's now a joint responsibility. A shared responsibility and we both need to do this equally. So that is definitely a challenge of being a working woman (Shanè).

Vidya commented about the dynamics in her family and they resembled that of Shanè's:

My husband is amazing, very supportive but this is why I say it's social conditioning. He said to me, "we need to buy tomatoes" and I went 'Really? Is it? Okay, go buy tomatoes' I'm not the keeper of the groceries just because I'm the wife or I'm the mother or I'm the female you know? And it's for all of us to fight against that. I have seen it, I live it, I watch all my female mother friends living it as well. It's there, there are some things that are simply on a 'woman's' to-do' list that is not expected necessarily or naturally or instinctively for a guy to do. Something simple as a grocery list (Vidya).

Therefore, it was observed that these stereotyped gender roles exist within the families, but both Shanè and Vidya were challenging of these roles. In Sofia's household, it appeared her children gravitated towards specific genders for specific needs, thus dictating the gendered roles in their family. As Sofia described to me:

But my kids do not play by those rules. They want ME to do things, it's not, it's not my husband. So a lot of the things it's not he doesn't want to, he really tries to kind of like jump in there as much as he can but they just reject him. 'This is something I want my mom to do'. So in that sense, there is a difference and I feel it. I think also because I have two girls, there's also a lot of girl things that we do that my husband doesn't have space for it. They normally put that boundary very clear. Like the bathroom is a lot of work. You have to interrupt what you're doing and take them, wash your hands a thousand times and then you're finished and now it's the other one who wants to go. So they want me to take them, so I assume that's fine and I just do it. And that can't be equal, it's just not. Like the same with the doctors appointments, I'm the one who likes to go to those things and they prefer if I take them (Sofia).

When the topic of her husband entered into the discussion regarding his paternal role, Aisha was asked whether the pressure was the same on her husband in terms of being a father, to which Aisha commented, "I'm going to be quite harsh here and say absolutely not. My husband's life has not changed at all". She went on to elaborate about their roles within the family and where it originated from:

Definitely it stems from culture. And I think the generations to come will learn from the current generation because...his views will definitely change. The way he sees me and the way he sees the change with the kids being involved. He realises what I bring to the table and what it takes. And I think going forward, the generations to come will appreciate it more. But the generations that have been...unfortunately, that's just the way it was. And that mentality still sits but it's changed in leaps and bounds. It's definitely changed in leaps and bounds. And forcefully so, it's not something that's been organic. It's been forced because of the lifestyles we live (Aisha).

Despite the changes that she acknowledged were happening in gender roles, Aisha further emphasized the intensity of how different gender roles for men and women were, as she stated, "You cannot even compare on any, even on his worst day as a working dad cannot compare to an inch to a worst day as a working mom".

4.7.1.4. *"Men who have working wives, tend to be far more conscious of this boys club": In the workplace.*

Working in very male-dominated corporate environments, Vidya and Aisha had come to understand the gendered nature of the workplace. Aisha spoke about the discrepancies around new mothers versus new fathers in the workplace. She discovered women lacking confidence in conviction whilst men thrived. As she recalled:

But oddly enough there's a colleague, it's a guy who's just had his first kid. And he is very adamant and stringent about his times. He says no to meetings that are after his hours or whatever because he needs to be with his kid. I think it's interesting 'cause not one of the female

colleagues who has gone on maternity leave and come back, has enforced it the way this male colleague is doing it. So I think he's decided and I think also as a male, you don't feel that much guilt. You can slide the paper across the table and say this is what I want you to pay me (Aisha).

Thus, it appeared men had more confidence in their worth in the workplace whilst women feared being negatively judged or seen as less competent due to being a mother. Aisha felt that working mothers are less able to negotiate with confidence in their convictions regarding their wants. Vidya commented on the gendered culture in corporate organisations more passionately. She recalled a piece of advice she had received from a mentor upon embarking on her corporate career:

This guy is probably the most sarcastic, cynical person I know, but such a well balanced individual, and a lot of the time I find that, men who have working wives, tend to be far more conscious of this boys club. I was like 23 years old and he told me, "DO NOT EVER, offer to take notes in a meeting" and I went why? I'm the junior on the desk and he went "You won't be asked to do it because you're the junior on the desk, you'll be asked to do it because you're the woman in the room and I know this because my wife had been in this situation many times" and it was one of the best pieces of advice I'd ever gotten because that happens. Men will turn to the woman at the desk and expect her to do secretarial type work and a lot of women fall into that roll and get rewarded for it. A lot of the time you're expected to...if a woman is aggressive then she is bitchy. I've been in numerous meetings where a woman will say something and a man will say the same thing straight after and guys will go 'yeah guy you're right, you're right, that's the best idea I ever heard of'. I've also been in various scenarios where a woman won't be considered for promotion because she was on maternity leave in that year. I've been in situations like I said to you where, a lot of men will put in, and it's always the man, put in a meeting at 5PM because his wife stays at home and so he really doesn't have to rush home. Whereas I don't have a wife at home to look after my child. I've also been in

situations where heads of teams have sent out emails saying ‘gents’ meanwhile half his team are women. My own boss has done that (Vidya).

Hence, for those in predominantly male-oriented work environments, it was often difficult to break into that world. Some of the women felt pressured to conform to male expectations, but still found a double standard as to how women were perceived in the workplace and furthermore, judged on that behaviour. Men being aggressive in the workplace was understood as passionate or determined whilst women were judged as "bitchy." Vidya felt that these double standards result in many women opting for a life of being a mother instead, feeling it may be her only option. As Vidya told me:

It's that a lot of people exit the highway, a lot of mothers exit the highway 'cause they think they need to step back. They feel they need to step away from the boardroom table. And the reason why women feel that way, it's again, it's social conditioning. You feel like that's the only way and a lot of men then start supporting that kind of outcome because they also feel like it's the only way. It's not the only way (Vidya).

For Vidya, it became important to speak about these issues in order to dismantle them. As she shared with me passionately, "Speaking out to other women about it and being frank about our discussions about it because there's power in numbers. If there can be boy bands then there can be girl bands". Vidya's tone when discussing these issues felt hopeful yet idealistic, perhaps reflective of an element of wishfulness.

4.7.2. *"My only point of reference would be my mom"*: Intergenerational Influences

Most of these women spoke of having been influenced by their mothers in their constructions of motherhood. Some had appeared to try to construct their motherhood purposely in different ways. For others, the fact that they had made different choices to their mothers sometimes caused them doubt and guilt. In these instances, personal experiences of culturally-informed gender roles appeared harder to challenge.

Aisha was influenced by her mother's role as a stay-at-home mother. She disliked the lack of independence and the powerlessness it created for her mother and thus, she aspired to be a working woman. In speaking about her differences in mothering, Aisha stated:

Yes, so for me, motherhood for me, my only point of reference would be my mom who was a stay-at-home mom, who didn't have any other responsibility than rearing the kids and taking care of the household. Which in itself is quite challenging. But I...so what I experienced and what I'm doing, it contrasts so much with what she went through and what she did (Aisha).

She further stated, "It's significantly different, significantly. Absolutely because she was so hands on, she was so super involved with everything. I've outsourced everything. I've outsourced the cooking, I've outsourced the cleaning, I've outsourced the homework, I've outsourced the transport". Thus, in not being as present as her mother was, it added an element of guilt to Aisha's narrative. However, she remained motivated to be independent and prohibit the transmission of intergenerational dependence. As she stated:

So my mom who never even finished, she just finished primary school and then her dad passed away and she was married off not too long thereafter...I can see like she has so much potential like she keeps talking about how she wanted to be a nurse and she wanted to work in the theatre and you know she's very mushy, mushy with people and she's very good with that and she never got to even go to high school. And I think that also in a way, I mean I took student loans and what have you, but she was adamant and supportive that you do this and you do it, you do it. So I think with my daughters she does the same like "look at mom, mom works...mom can do this and mom can buy a car and don't you want to do that?" It's sort of growing out girls for them to know they're equal if not better than anyone else. Whether it's the same gender or different genders. That you're the best in the race that you're running and the race is only with yourself (Aisha).

In contrast, Sofia seemed to experience more guilt due to her mother's commitment to being a mother over her commitment to a career. As she recalled:

But she [Sofia's mother] would never care about her career like she had an office job and she would just do her job and that was it. It wasn't like, she never had a promotion, she had the same job her entire life whatever and I think that allowed her to be more of a present mom and allowed her to not be worried about things because the same job will be there next Monday and I don't have that (Sofia).

Hence, in being somewhat career-driven and enjoying her job, Sofia felt guilty about not having the dedication her mother had to mothering. Shanè shared similar feelings of guilt as she reminisced:

When I was growing up my mom used to work night shift, um so she would be working while we were asleep so that she could be there when we needed her when we were done at school. And that was fantastic to have that when we were growing up. I don't think I necessarily appreciated that when I was small (Shanè).

Thus, in not being able to reschedule her life that way now, Shanè also felt that she compared unfavourably to her mother's dedication to being a mother. This was a life Shanè desperately longed for.

4.7.3. "I want my daughter to follow in my footsteps": Mothers as Role Models to Daughters

Among the women interviewed, all the women but Shanè were mothers to daughters. Due to this one of the biggest motivations for these working mothers was their daughters' watchful gaze. As Michelle mentioned, "From a personal perspective, for me, it helps me to act as a role model for my children and encourage and inspire other women to believe that it is possible to be a full time working mom. Even though it can be difficult". Vidya seconded that idea as she confirmed, "At the same time because I have a daughter, it's made me more ambitious. It's made me kind of want to

go ‘I need to show her that you can do this and you can do this damn well’. She further stated that motherhood has enhanced her career, "I feel like because of my career, I now have something to showcase to my daughter and because of my daughter, I have a reason to work harder for my career". For Shanè being the mother of two boys, she believed her sons would assimilate more to her husband but did share a fantasy of having a daughter, as she stated, “I don’t have a girl but if I had a girl I’d like to believe she’d look up to me and go like ‘Yeah mommy you’re not doing a bad job, like we are taken care of nicely and you have a flourishing business’”.

Aisha and Lesedi were strong believers in setting an example for their children but they were more motivated to encourage and foster independence in order to prohibit any intergenerational transmission of dependence from their own mothers. As Lesedi shared:

It is setting [an example], because I want her to be financially independent. I want her to be self sufficient. I don't want that power taken away from her by reason of the fact that she's not economically independent. And also just for her to have her own purpose, her own identity and to live um...independent of, attached to someone by virtue of what they have (Lesedi).

Aisha's motivation was similar to Lesedi's except, in Aisha’s case she appeared to be challenging traditional gender roles ascribed by an orthodox husband, "But I also want to model that for them, they need to be go getters, they need to make it happen on their own. They have a very traditional, orthodox father who sells a very different story so every quiet moment I get with them, I'm trying to heavily influence them". Aisha reported hoping to influence her daughters enough for them to be independent women, with an eagerness and determination to create their own strong working identities. As she stated:

They did not grow up in an environment I did. So they will also be working women themselves, I have no doubt about that. And I will probably be the point of reference. They won't be as hard as I am but I

do believe they won't feel as guilty as I have, having the point of reference I did which was my mom who stayed at home. So for me, I might be the norm and I don't see it changing going forward. Women will always be doing something or the other. Whether it's self-employment or corporate employment or any other kind. I don't see the world changing so much that females will stay at home. It's few and far between (Aisha).

4.8. Motherhood as Evolving and Intersubjective

4.8.1. "Moms are just doing the best they can": Trying their Best

Throughout these interviews, all six mothers expressed difficulty in navigating their way through motherhood. They described it as a constant evolution due to the constant development of their children. As Sofia described her thinking around her maternal identity, "Definitely developing everyday. It's continuing struggle for every single day and every single decision I make in relation to my life and my kids. It's like a work in progress so yeah". However underneath all the judgement, pressure, anxiety and responsibility, these mothers were all trying their best. As Shanè stated, "Then I think when those things start hitting then you go hmmm, other moms are just doing the best they can and that's also okay". Sofia also spoke about acknowledging the genuine trying that goes into motherhood:

I'm going to try to do the best that I can...And that makes me be kinder to myself and other people so it helps. It helps to be kind and you can only do your best, basically. So I think that would be one of the things. That's doing this and seeing others doing it and struggling and knowing we're all in the same boat. If I can help you, I will do it (Sofia).

Despite being haunted by the ghost of the ideal mother, motherhood was different for every woman and thus, every mother's "doing her best" was subjective.

4.8.2. "We forget that there's different kinds of best": The Subjectivity of 'Best'

One of the biggest areas of judgement for mothers, is the way in which they choose to mother. The idea that mothers can sometimes believe that they know what is best for all children, while she may just know what is best for her own, was useful when it came to managing the opinions of other mothers. The idea of "best" was subjective and influenced by a variety of factors, all of which were unique to each mother. As Sofia stated, "It's [maternal identity] figuring out what kind of mom you want to be, what kind of mom you can be, because depending on how you are and all of those things". Aisha shared similar views as she mentioned, "And it's really constant trial and error and I, I think there's no...there's no...specific way for me to be as a mom. I must just be who I am and do the best I can with what I have". Vidya challenged the notion of the ideal mother when she made a decision that felt right for her and her child. Vidya admitted to me, "You know what? I'd rather give my daughter a block of chocolate than cause her the anxiety, of having a performance over it. It's ONE block of chocolate you know? Am I going to start giving her Red Bull? No. But I'd rather concede on that and that's my personal value as a mother". Sofia suggested, "Yeah...I think so. I think so...I think we're all just trying to do so much of our best that we forget that there's different kinds of best, yes".

Shanè and Sofia's narratives contained the understanding that a common aspect uniting all mothers was the difficulty of motherhood, but also that all mothers were trying to do their own version of what is best. As Shanè stated:

Because I don't think moms in general try and make bad decisions for their kids. The choices that they make generally are what they believe are the best for their child at the time. And I think once you've gone through that a couple of times and you've needed to make different choices, that's not necessarily go with the flow, then you start realising everyone is just trying to do their best for their child at the time (Shanè).

Sofia recalled a story about another mother not giving her child medication when the child was sick:

But it's that thing like I'm sure she's really trying to do the best for her kid, honestly. There's not a small part in her mind that thinks oh it's

great when my kids have a seizure and I'd love my kids to develop epilepsy. So it's really hard to hold that... moms would jump at it because it's such a trigger. It's such a hook, it's too much to not jump at it and I feel that's basically what happens in between moms, it's like you think you're doing the best, the other mom thinks it's not the best actually because she knows better and we fall into these traps all the time. So you just have to be around moms who are aware that it's really hard, we're all struggling and we're all trying our best and that's it. And just look for support (Sofia).

These narratives highlighted the importance of trying to understand other mothers' intentions. For many of the mothers, working motherhood appeared to have helped them empathise more with other mothers and be kinder to themselves.

4.9. In Summary

Through the interviews with these six women, the complexities in their identities were highlighted. While they all appeared to have distinct working and motherhood identities, their thoughts, feelings and experiences of both these identities could not be understood as distinct, but rather inextricably intertwined. The analysis of these interviews demonstrated the similarities between these working mothers but also emphasized the uniqueness.

These women had all developed a working identity prior to becoming mothers. Through this working identity, they were able to construct a sense of independence. Working provided them with a self whose identity was not primarily relational. This self was established through the hard work and dedication that these women invested in their careers. Furthermore, their working identity provided them with financial independence. For some of the women, this was of vital importance. Thus, in having children these women had to navigate their previously acquired independence with the dependence of a newly acquired baby. A portion of these mothers came into this new dependence with ease whilst others struggled. Through the process of incorporating this new infant into their lives, many of these mothers reported losing a sense of their previous selves. However, through their newly developing maternal identity, a new redefined self came into being.

These mothers found that through motherhood, there were areas of strength and growth. One of these areas consisted of recently developed 'softness'. This was attributed to the experience of unconditional love between mother and baby. Many experienced a heightened sense of vulnerability. Some mothers embraced these softer attributes whilst others experienced these traits as threatening to the self. However, all these mothers understood both their maternal identities as well as their working identities as points of connection with others.

Through newly gained attributes from their maternal identities, these mothers underwent shifts in their experiences of self as well as the world. When speaking to these mothers, they described having developed greater empathy, patience, kindness and self-acceptance. These attributes provided these women with different experiences both in life and at work. Through the experience of being a mother, these women found themselves being more understanding and kinder to other mothers. However in becoming a mother, there was additionally a shift in how these women perceived the world. After having a child, some of the mothers felt the weight of the world and how dangerous it could be. They developed a constant worry and anxiety over their children's safety and well being.

Their maternal identities appeared to fill these women with a sense of responsibility and anxiety. There was an overwhelming anxiety of being responsible for a child who was utterly dependent. This sense of responsibility made some of these women feel more connected to adulthood. In understanding the differences between motherhood and working, motherhood appeared to be more anxiety provoking. This was due to the unpredictable nature of motherhood, whilst within the working environment these women felt more in control. Their work environment was an area in which they had studied and trained in for many years. Thus, there was also a large emotional investment in their careers. It could be observed that a large component of their working identity was found in the validation and achievement within their careers. The decision to have children was experienced by some as a threat to their careers, as there was a possibility of being perceived as not dedicated or competent enough. This perception threatened their identity and sense of achievement and validation.

After having children, these women felt a sudden wave of judgement, guilt and pressure. The judgement arose from other mothers in relation to mothering and from employers around the development of another identity outside of work. Within the workplace specifically, motherhood was understood to be an excuse to not perform. Through all the judgement these mothers experienced, some of them were consciously attempting to challenge the judgements. This occurred through their resistance to judge other mothers. One of the most difficult aspects of working motherhood reported by these women was the guilt they felt regarding loss of time with their children. In having a strong working identity, these mothers would often have to choose work over their children. This led to missing out on important milestones for their children. This was also a great source of guilt for these mothers. Therefore, in attempting to assuage the guilt, these mothers increased the pressure on themselves to perform. They needed to perform in the home and they needed to perform at work. At home, it was important to demonstrate their prioritising of their maternal identity over their work identity and when at work it was the other way round. Thus, these mothers were under a copious amount of pressure to satisfy both their identities, to the best of their abilities. In attempting to manage these two identities, these women were found to be role switching. Thus, prioritising their role as a mother when they were present with their children and prioritising their working identity when at work.

In grappling with the management of these identities, these mothers spoke of the need for help and support. In an attempt to be present at work as well as with their children, some of these women would often compromise and re-prioritize. This would include rescheduling or making space for occasions which were deemed important. If there was no way for these mothers to compromise and re-prioritise, they would lean on external help. This occurred through the outsourcing of various mothering duties in order to be more productive at work. For some mothers, the outsourcing would be to family members whilst for others, it would be hired help. Some mothers would outsource elements that they deemed 'right' or acceptable to outsource, whilst other mothers outsourced almost every element of mothering. These mothers also experienced positive feedback from their children and from others as a form of support. Many also gained a sense of support from the "mom tribe."

Throughout the conversation with these working mothers, time and time again social discourses around gender and culture emerged. These discourses demonstrated the manner in which women were constructed as the primary parent, as the keeper of the household within the family and as secondary to male colleagues in the workplace. These women believed these stereotypes have been ascribed to women throughout history and have encouraged men to be socially conditioned into perpetuating these assigned gender roles. This was felt across cultures, but more acutely in some. Thus, these women attempted to challenge these norms through being working women who are career-driven and creating an example as role models for their own daughters in order to stop the transmission of these stereotypes and limitations of gender.

Motherhood was understood to be overwhelming at times and the constant judgement and pressure these mothers felt appeared difficult to navigate. Thus, it emerged as important to understand motherhood as intersubjective and continuously developing. The illusion of a perfect mother was found by these women to be indeed false. A narrative of 'mothers trying their best', with their children's best interests in mind, emerged. "Best" was also understood as unique to each mother.

Chapter five: Discussion

The overall aim of this study was to understand the maternal identities of women in relation to their previously established identities as career women, from first hand experiences of working mothers. Previous literature has failed to capture the lived experiences of working mothers and rather consists predominantly of quantitative studies of trends relating to mothers in the workplace (Albrecht et al., 2000; Del Boca et al., 2005; Losoncz & Bortolotto, 2009; Marshall & Tracy, 2009; Morgenroth & Heilman, 2017; Okimoto & Heilman, 2012; Patel et al., 2006). The aims for this research were set to be achieved through in-depth interviews with six partnered, working mothers who self-identified as career driven. These interviews were centered around maternal identities, working identities and the manner in which these two identities co-exist. Through the interview process, certain themes arose. Some of these themes were common amongst these working mothers whilst others were quite unique.

The following section is consolidated from the results which emerged from the interviews, in order to answer the three specific research questions posed in this study. These were to understand what the term "working identity" has come to mean to these women, these women's perspectives of 'maternal identity' in light of a pre-existing 'working identity', and lastly, how these working mothers have come to navigate their 'maternal self' alongside their 'working self'.

Construction of the 'Working Identity'

The following section explores the development of the 'working identity' within these women and the significance it encompasses for them. Thus far, there has been minimal research conducted on this area through firsthand accounts from working women. This section explores the independence, power and autonomy the working identity ascribed to these women, in a male-dominated environment filled with gender bias and discrimination. It also explores the pride and validation these women felt through their work achievements and how significant it was to have a self-made career. A sense of self independent of others.

The majority of these women identified their working identity as their current primary identity. It was acknowledged as their first constructed identity since entering into adulthood, and thus felt ingrained in these women. This is contrary to the manner in which women have previously been constructed in the literature. Previously, the primary identity of women was understood to be constructed around the home and motherhood (Dillaway & Paré, 2008). However, through the feminist movement and the challenging of women's home identities, women have become able to cultivate a working identity (Dillaway & Paré). The participants in this study identified a number of benefits to having a working identity. One aspect which brought comfort to these women was the ability to summon control and develop mastery over their environment. This suggested a level of comfort in obtaining a central locus of control through the predictability of their work. This ability enhanced the possibility of mastering an area of interest and passion for these women. A significant aspect of the identities of the women in this study seemed grounded in the validation and achievements received within the working environment. For some of these women, their working identity also allowed for points of connection between others. Similarly to other studies, the ability to meet other career-driven people and connect on points of interest was an element of working which evoked much joy (Duncan, Edwards, Reynolds & Alldred, 2003; Fagan, 2001; Hand & Hughes, 2004; Lupton & Schmeid, 2002). For Michelle particularly, she understood the meeting of minds as enhancing her personality.

In spite of the other advantages, the biggest advantage for all of these mothers was the independence their working identity afforded them. Lesedi and Aisha valued this aspect of having a career the most. For these two women, it felt important to challenge the gendered status quo within their respective cultures whilst also interrupting the intergenerational transmission of powerlessness to their female children. Lesedi and Aisha were immensely influenced by their own mothers not having worked, which subsequently led to a dependency on men. Aisha and Lesedi clung tightly to their self-constructed independence and the power it afforded them. Within families where both spouses worked, both parties held equal power in the decision-making (Kumar & Maral, 2015). However, in families where the husband was found to be the sole provider, only he held the power of decision-making. It can therefore be concluded that the financial contribution towards the household is what

equips individuals with power (Kumar & Maral, 2015). This evidence supported the phenomenon of powerlessness in financially dependent women which Lesedi and Aisha challenged. In the case of Aisha, having observed the powerlessness of her financially dependent mother in relation to her father, she rejected that possibility for her life.

There was a deep sense of pride in these mothers in their ability to establish their working identities. For these women, their careers were not relational but individuated. This suggests shifts occurring in how women are constructing their identities. Other research around the construction of women's identities has argued that women are more relational beings (Gilligan, 1982, Portman et al., 2011). Women are conceived of as sacrificing a sense of individuation for a 'voice of caring' in meeting the needs of others over their own (Gilligan, 1982, Portman et al., 2011). However, this sample of women thrived on the independence their working self provided and showed much pride in their ability to construct this career on their own. This was seen most prominently in Aisha, who overtly disliked her identity construction as being relational; as only being someone's daughter, wife or mother. Hence for these women, the journey in developing their careers took great investment in themselves in order to establish a self-made career. For all of these women, their careers were understood as providing an opportunity to impact the world.

The challenging of the transmission of previously determined social norms around motherhood was also evident in the hopes that these women held regarding the offering of alternative role models to their daughters. Most of the mothers who were interviewed had daughters. Many of these women attributed a part of their motivation for working to their daughters. All of these women spoke about the importance of showcasing to their daughters the ability of women to enter the labour force. Their hope was to encourage their daughters to be career-driven as well. As a result, it could be argued that the working identity partly signified the challenging of ascribed gender stereotypes and prohibiting the transmission of these to the future female generations.

Over the years, the maternal role has changed and evolved (Moore, 2013). Women three generations prior were solely confined to the home, manifesting no possibility of independence or freedom. Through generational progression, women began being

afforded the opportunity of independence and power through work (Moore, 2013). As a result, women seized that opportunity and began entering into the labour markets, signifying what it means to be a woman has shifted. In understanding their own roles as mothers, it could be argued that over time, women have come to be influenced by both their maternal experiences of being mothered as well as their experiences of shifts in the current political climate for women (Moore, 2013), making motherhood both transmitted and transformative. In more recent generations, daughters could be understood to be more influenced to work if they had the maternal experience of a working mother (Greene, Han and Marlow, 2011)

Mothers' Experiences of Maternal Identities

The subsequent section explores the development of the 'maternal identity'. An often overwhelming identity, brimming with transition, loss and the regaining of a new self. This section allows for understanding of the psychological birth of a new mother. In the following section, the nuances of motherhood are grappled with, understanding motherhood as socially constructed but simultaneously innate. The complexities of the motherhood experience was echoed by all.

Maternal Instinct and Transmission of the Motherhood Role

The majority of the mothers in this study found the transition into motherhood and the change it invited, quite drastic. All the mothers in this study were in their mid to late-thirties. Having pursued a career during their formative adult years, these women felt pressure to reproduce due to the biological consequence of age and infertility. The trajectory for most career-driven women begins with the establishment of their career, thus, postponing the prospective child to a later stage (Wilde, Batchelor and Ellwood, 2010). Unfortunately women lack an infinite number of reproductive years, consequently intensifying the pressure for these women to bear children (Iacovou & Tavares, 2011).

Upon becoming mothers and establishing maternal identities, a few of these mothers discussed the notion of the 'maternal instinct'. While some mothers were more trusting of their maternal instinct, finding its appearance natural, other mothers struggled with the innateness of such an instinct. It was observed within this group of women, those who were more comfortable with the maternal role through

intergenerational influences from their own mothers possibly found the maternal instinct more accessible. These intergenerational influences also perpetuated the notion of mothers as the primary caregiver. The assumption of the woman as the primary caregiver dates back to a pre-feminist society. Through the process of pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding, it became a natural step for a woman to assume the role of being the primary caregiver (Arendell, 2000). Arendell (2000) argued that the maternal self was found to be more invested in the child than the paternal self. However, feminist scholars have since challenged the notion of "mother as primary caregiver" due to her biological ties to the infant. Feminist writers such as Chodorow (1978) understood the assigned role of mothers as primary caregivers to be socially constructed and it was within this social construction that women were held to these roles (Cowdery & Knudson-Martin, 2005). Thus, in nearing around sixty years since the introduction of feminism, women are still challenging the socially constructed ideologies around both womanhood and motherhood.

Redefinition of the Self

The loss of their old selves, proved significantly overwhelming for these mothers in their transition into motherhood. Similar to evidence put forth by Laney et al. (2015), in which they found the transition into motherhood consisted of a losing and regaining of oneself along with the creation of a new self, this study yielded the same conclusions. For the mothers with a primary working identity, the loss of the old self, upon becoming a mother proved a difficult struggle. Nonetheless, most of these mothers conceded to this loss through understandings of what they had gained. Despite the pressures of unequal gendered distribution of caregiving, the mothers were found to be in agreement that the unconditional love they felt towards their children and the love they received in return was the most significant advantage of their maternal identities. It appeared to provide these women with a sense of safety and comfort in a mothering role that unlike their working identities, often felt unpredictable and overwhelming.

Navigating the Maternal Identity with a Pre-Existing Working Identity

In interviewing these working mothers, it became abundantly clear that managing these two equally demanding identities was complex and difficult. The responsibility and pressure associated with sustaining two equally demanding identities was noted

by all of the mothers. However, most of the mothers agreed that, in some respects, both of these identities enhanced one another. Some of the mothers believed that since becoming a new redefined self through their maternal qualities, they had become better workers. Similar results were observed in a study on working mothers in New Zealand who occupied executive roles (Olsson and Walker, 2003). These women also believed that their working self was enhanced and bettered due to the attributes gained after becoming a mother. Some of the mothers in this study, however, acknowledged losses in their other identities due to the addition of a mother role (Olsson and Walker, 2003). It was felt that time constraints and fatigue sometimes meant that they could not excel at either of their demanding roles (Olsson and Walker, 2003). Discrimination experienced in the workplace did not aid in this struggle. However, all of the women spoke about ways that they had found to cope with the demands of the dual roles.

Motherhood in the Workplace

Despite all the advantages of having a working identity as cited by these women, there seemed to be one significant obstacle to manage regarding the integration of their maternal identities into the workplace – that of discrimination. Vidya was the most vocal participant around explicit gender discrepancies in the workplace that she had experienced and witnessed. She observed how women, and especially those who chose to become mothers, were not taken seriously in the workplace but were rather relegated to roles inferior to that of men. Consequently, if women were found to further confront their male colleagues on their behaviour they were negatively labelled. Within the working community, it appeared employees held gender stereotyped ideals within the workplace (Heilman, 2012). Men were thought to embody agency whilst women embodied communality (Heilman, 2012). Along with agency, associated attributes such as competency, assertiveness, independence and logic were linked to male colleagues (Heilman, 2012). Whilst the associations made with communality were caring, kind, warm, friendly, obedient, respectful, intuitive and understanding (Heilman, 2012). The traits women assumed to embody were not understood as conducive to an executive position. The slogan ‘think manager, think male’ was highlighted as an unfortunate reality in many workplaces. As a result, this evidenced a resistance to change within many organisations. Vidya spoke about the manner in which women challenged the status quo within her workplace and how

these women matched the aggression shown by their male counterparts. However aggression is not complementary to the manner in which women are prescribed, it may be seen as deviant from a woman's (mother) nature, enabling another source of discrimination (Heilman, 2012).

Aisha spoke about women's lack of negotiation power in the workplace. She provided an anecdote of a male colleague who recently, and without guilt, held his personal boundaries, demonstrating a clear preference for his family. Aisha remarked at his ability to achieve this without apprehension as she, along with many other women in the workplace, fear that should a woman do this, she would be perceived as lacking commitment. Thus, for many of these women, gender stereotypes in the workplace enhanced the challenge of the integration of their maternal identity.

These working mothers came to understand the judgement they faced as mothers in the workplace. As some of these mothers expressed, motherhood was perceived to be an excuse in the workplace to not perform. This belief was found to be supported in the literature. Mothers within the workplace faced a 'penalty of motherhood', in which their ability to continue contributing to the working environment was held in contempt (Maheshwari and Joseph, 2018). Aisha described this as 'being seen as a liability'. Many studies have been conducted on perceptions of mothers in the workplace all yielding similar results. Mothers are understood to have gained warmth due to her new maternal role but to have lost competence (Brown, 2010, Cuddy et al., 2004, Heilman 2012). However, fathers in the workplace did not face the same appraisal. Vidya confirmed this when she unmasked the existence of 'boys clubs' within the workplace, to which women were unquestionably not privy. Many of the participants in this study managed this discrimination against mothers by working harder to disprove these gender stereotypes. At other times, some of the mothers appeared to subscribe to the notion of adapting their work environments around their newly acquired maternal identities. Contradictory to older work-family conflict models which postulate that the home self and the work self could not coexist at work, women are understood to have embarked on the pathway toward the Kaleidoscope Career Model (Elley-Brown et al., 2018). This model posits that when making career decisions, individuals consider three key aspects, namely, authenticity, balance and challenge (Elley-Brown et al., 2018). As these three aspects were found

to be intertwined throughout a woman's career, the most valued and consist aspect when working was authenticity (i.e. could this job enabled women to be true to themselves).

Maternal Guilt

Consequently, at some point or another these women all needed to prioritise work over their children. Most of the women in this study believed that in the current global economic climate, households require two incomes to be sustained. In having to prioritise their working identity over their maternal identity, all these working mothers suffered from guilt about time lost with their children. Through comparison between working mothers and fathers, it was mothers who felt more work-family guilt as their role was more central to the family (Borelli et al., 2016). In being motivated by guilt, many working mothers often succumb to the pressures, thus altering their work life in order to be more present for their children (Aarntzen et al., 2019). Furthermore, it was this guilt which coerced women into maintaining traditional gender roles of motherhood. The guilt felt by these working mothers only seemed to increase the pressure they felt. This pressure appeared to stem from the mothers themselves but also from perceived judgement from others. These co-existing identities invited judgements from other mothers and colleagues alike, leaving these women feeling criticised no matter which role they prioritised.

With regards to the guilt about their mothering roles, the pressure these mothers faced was intensified and perpetuated by the seemingly shared illusion of the ideal mother. The ideal mother is constructed as being engaged in 'intensive mothering' (Christopher, 2012; Damaske, 2013; Pedersen, 2012; Rizzo et al., 2013). Intensive mothering requires a full involvement from mothers in the everyday life of their children, monitoring every detail (Christopher, 2012; Damaske, 2013; Pedersen, 2012; Rizzo et al., 2013). As working mothers, these women, to greater and lesser degrees, found themselves unable to participate in intensive mothering. This seemed to result in many of these women falling prey to the Superwoman syndrome (Nicolson, 2002). This additional pressure of the Superwoman syndrome appeared to urge these women to work harder at both their careers and their mothering, as this illusion appeared attainable. It encouraged women to seek an ideal, to be an ideal.

Currently in 2019, social media is accused of perpetuating unattainable perfection. Vidya spoke about Instagram mothers and the content they post, planting seeds of an illusionary perfection. This confirmed findings in a recent study done by Djafavora and Trofimenko (2017), who uncovered mothers portray their lives in ways that attempt to preserve an image of perfection in motherhood - thus, creating fake, idealistic content (Djafavora & Trofimenko, 2017) and the perpetuation of the Superwoman Syndrome.

Coping with the Pressure to be a Productive Employee and the Primary Parent

Gender was a prominent feature in most of these women's narratives. The narratives portrayed an understanding of how gender rules in the workplace function, however some disappointment about how gender found its way into the household after becoming parents was evident. The socially conditioned manner in which men and women are raised and how they carry these identities into the household was noted. There was an unspoken but understood division of labour in the household which was ascribed according to gender. Women were three times more involved in the household than men and that both genders gravitated towards duties which fit the more traditional gender roles (Cerrato and Cifre, 2018). Men provided the upkeep of the house whilst women provided the cooking, cleaning, shopping etc (Cerrato and Cifre, 2018). These duties were deemed more feminine whilst household maintenance, more masculine. These cultural prescriptions around expectations of the mother role and gendered divisions of labour appeared to exacerbate the pressure experienced by these women. Despite this, all of the mothers interviewed for this study had uncovered various ways in which to cope with the demands. Struggling with the guilt and pressure of missing time and unmet expectations, many of these working mothers compromised and reprioritized. A quantitative study conducted by Young and Schieman (2018) aimed to understand the strategies used by mothers and fathers in order to negotiate work-life balance. Their research uncovered the contrasting manners in which mothers and fathers negotiated this through ascribed gender roles. Mothers were observed to scale back at work due to her commitments in the home whilst fathers did not (Young & Schieman, 2018). It was understood that a mother's role is more consistent with being the primary caregiver whilst fathers were understood to be the primary breadwinner (Young & Schieman, 2018). While many of these women appeared to be attempting to challenge this expectation, they also

noted increased expectations on them, as opposed to their partners, to compromise and adapt around their children's needs. Despite shifts in women's ability to enter into the labour market and having their work identity as their primary identity, women are still bound to the home and to the family.

When adaptation of their work requirements around their children was not possible, another strategy for managing their guilt around loss of time was to try to maximise the time they did have. Quality time with their children was an important factor for most of these mothers. In missing out on time with her children Lesedi felt the pressure to overcompensate when present with her children, thus relieving some of the guilt she felt for missing out. Shanè found herself being more selective with her personal time, delegating it to family time. Although working mothers spent less time with their children and more time participating in the labour market, they were more likely to invest and protect the quality time they did spend with their children (Heiland, Price and Wilson, 2017). Further results indicated that working mothers were found to be more present during quality time with their children than non-working mothers (Heiland et al., 2017). It is highly plausible that these results are due to the continuous guilt of missing out working mothers experience in comparison to non-working mothers.

Utilisation of support for the mothering role, or outsourcing, whether from paid employees such as childminders, or from extended family members, was another method that these women used in order to cope with their dual roles. In line with the gendered construction of child care, most of the women expressed a feeling of responsibility for organising the outsourced childcare. Nonetheless, the outsourcing of the mothering role left some of these mothers feeling guilty. The mere presence of an external caregiver, reinforced the mothers absence and inability to be present for her child, thus perpetuating the guilt (Scheftel, 2012). For some, this guilt was less in instances where outsourcing to family was possible, as the idea of their child with family was more tolerable. The preference for maternal kin in caring for the infant has been found in other studies (Moore, 2013). The reasons for this support varied across generations due to cultural influences. However, recent generations of women are understood to rely on maternal kin due to the trust they have in their maternal abilities, having been mothered by these mothers (Moore, 2013). This enables the

newer generation to then focus solely on a “project of self” whilst tolerating the outsourcing of motherhood (Moore, 2013).

However, despite outsourcing to family, for mothers who wished to take on a more primary maternal role, like Shane, their inability to be there for their children more often highlighted their inability (or lack of choice) to prioritise their maternal identity. Outsourcing appeared to evoke concern about their children’s wellbeing in their absence. This too could be observed with Lesedi, who struggled with immense guilt and shame in having to outsource motherhood and not be a present mother. Lesedi’s approach to handling the delicate interplay between mother and nanny was akin to that evidenced in Macdonald’s (1998) concept of the ‘shadow mother’. This idea emphasizes the split of the nanny- a surrogate for the mother, present in her absence but also absent in her presence, thus, ensuring the primary role of the mother remains undisturbed (Macdonald, 1998). The nanny is entrusted to care for all aspects which the mother is unable to attend to whilst initiating the perfect reunion between mother and her child through engineering good quality time (Macdonald, 1998). Similarly, Lesedi participated in the “fun activities” whilst avoiding the everyday chores of motherhood. Although, the everyday chores of motherhood were the foundations of milestones and Lesedi found herself resentful of missing them.

Of all the mothers, Aisha, appeared unconcerned about the effects of outsourcing on her children. She outsourced almost all of motherhood. This could be understood in light of Aisha’s struggle with her children’s dependence on her, and therefore in outsourcing motherhood it is likely that she felt that her children’s needs could be met whilst she could hold onto her sense of independence. Through a strict structure of support Aisha alleviated her maternal stress and was able to better prioritise her working identity. Aisha presented with a survival outlook which attempted to assuage any guilt. For Aisha, the lack of her maternal presence was to ensure a stronger working presence, thus enabling her to safeguard the financial survival of her family. With material deprivation in her background, Aisha’s need for survival could be understood.

Support for their roles was also experienced in the form of feedback from their children or other mothers. In terms of work, colleagues and clients provided that

comfort, at times. The idea of "mom tribes", especially in the workplace, was understood as a form of connectedness and shared struggle with a group of people who could find support among one another. The importance of challenging societal norms in the workplace whilst supporting one another through their experiences of motherhood was cited as a hopeful function of this tribe. The importance of this support is evidenced in the maternal matrix within the 'motherhood constellation' (Stern & Menzel, 1996; Stern, 1998).

Coping with the pressure of dual and, at times, conflicting roles, sometimes also entailed what appeared to be more dismissive-type coping styles (van Ijzendoorn & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2010). While most of these mothers found ways to incorporate their new maternal self into their working self, two of the mothers found their new maternal selves threatening in relation to their work selves. Lesedi and Aisha appeared to struggle significantly more than the other mothers who were interviewed. For these two women, their desired sense of self was intrinsically connected to a sense of independence. Their need for independence was found to be rooted in their upbringings, with both women having had financially dependent mothers. Both Lesedi and Aisha emphasized the idea of motherhood having an expiration date. They believed motherhood to be temporal, thus it was of utmost importance for them to invest in themselves for after their maternal identity faded away. Interestingly, both these women spoke of experiences of deprivation during their childhoods. Individuals who have experienced lower socio-economic status were found more often to exhibit dismissive states of mind in relation to attachment needs (van Ijzendoorn & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2010). The dismissively attached individual values independence and self-sufficiency whilst struggling to develop close and intimate relationships (Bowlby, 1969). For these individuals, normalising situations is their foundational response to difficult situations. These individuals also struggle with holding empathy and sympathy. Alongside understandable prioritisation of financial means to avoid deprivation and feelings of powerlessness, it is possible that Lesedi and Aisha also limit closeness and value self-reliance as a defence against the pain of anticipated loss.

Aisha clearly expressed the desire to enable her children to claim their independence, in essence alleviating their dependence on her. She struggled significantly with the

softer side she had developed as a consequence of motherhood. She firmly believed it was her duty to instill into her children 'hard life' tools such as grit. Whist undervaluing other softer traits such as compassion and good-heartedness, which she felt were 'mushy' and could 'fill the gaps' once the important characteristics had been established. This was in contrast to Shanè and Vidya who believed their responsibility as mothers was to instill in their children a good set of morals and values in order for their children to be kind, strong and confident young adults. An evolutionary perspective could be explored to explain these kinds of differing parental ideals. Life History Theory (LHT) postulates that the environment in which individuals were raised influences the strategies of survival that they develop (Simpson & Belsky, 2008). It can be understood that individuals who struggle through a shortage of resources learn to invest in themselves in order to initiate their rapid physical development in order to procure resources (Simpson & Belsky, 2008). These individuals were shown to have developed a more dismissive-avoidant style of attachment versus an individual in a resource rich environment (Simpson & Belsky, 2008). Hence, having been raised in families with more deprived socio-economic backgrounds, it is understandable that Lesedi and Aisha take a harder stance around the need to ensure financial independence. They have developed a technique of survival against a backdrop of deprivation and this had clear influences on the ways in which they negotiated their dual identities as career-driven women and mothers.

Motherhood as Intersubjective

The pressure and difficulty in maintaining two identities of career-woman and mother often felt in conflict with each other for the women who were interviewed for this study. These women felt a large amount of guilt, pressure and judgement especially around their maternal identities. In choosing to work, these mothers felt judged for their unwillingness to choose their children. The illusion of the ideal mother who caters to her infant's every need shamed these mothers in not having met those standards. However, through interaction with these mothers, it became apparent that notions of motherhood and what it entails were being simultaneously upheld and newly created by these women. They were both intergenerationally transmitting socially and culturally prescribed versions of motherhood through their various performances of gender in their dual roles (Butler, 2004), while also transitioning and shifting the notion of motherhood for future generations (Glassman & Eisikovits,

2006; Moore, 2013). Sofia, Vidya and Shanè showed great insight with regards to their strengths and limitations as working mothers. Sofia described how each mother has good intentions for her child's wellbeing and despite her mothering being different, it does not make it wrong. Vidya challenged ideas of what it means to be a mother and discovered in order to survive the judgement, she would need to be more in touch with self-love. Shanè, in having experienced the difficult nature of mothering, found herself being less judgemental about other mothers. Overall, all these mothers understood that most women all around the world were doing their best and that their best was not always perfect. Motherhood as a journey is unique and although there were similarities in experiences, this journey was distinctive for each mother. Although at times, unconsciously striven towards, there was some conscious consensus that the ideal mother was an illusion. Winnicott (1953) developed the term "the good enough" mother, and it was clear that each of these mothers were trying to find ways to hold onto this idea within their representations of themselves as mothers.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

Findings of Research

The aim of the research was to explore the lived experiences of working mothers and their dual experiences of the working self along with maternal self. The six women interviewed demonstrated the complexities of the dual identity. For the majority of these women, their working identity was their primary identity. This is not surprising as all these women self-identified as career-driven.

The perception of the researcher prior to the interviews was that these two identities could be easily separated, however contrary to that belief, these two identities were intertwined in complex ways. The first identity developed for most of these women were their working identities. These identities brought these women much pride and joy. A large contributing factor was their ability have constructed this career on their own (i.e. they were self-made). For a large portion of these women, their urge and passion for work arose out of enjoyment. Working enabled them to contribute to the larger society but also encouraged connections among other like-minded individuals. For other women, a historical background of deprivation and unequal gender power balances were their motivation to work. Two of the women were influenced by their own mothers' lack of independence. Thus, for these women, independence and autonomy felt even more crucial in securing power in a relationship.

Women in the workplace is a fairly recent topic as prior to the first wave of feminism, women were relegated to more domestic spheres of life. Some of the women in this sample found their working identities challenged along the lines of gender. The women in more corporate environments often felt unwelcome in a predominantly male-dominated arena. There were clear indications of 'boys clubs' which women were not privy to. However, the women in this sample challenged the status quo of their male-dominated workspaces. Instead of 'opting-out' these women were 'leaning in' and looking for opportunities to advance in their careers (Eddy & Ward, 2015; Elley-Brown et al., 2018; Kossek et al., 2017; Zimmerman and Clark, 2016).

At a certain juncture in their working lives, these women all became mothers. They described the overwhelming and unpredictable nature of the motherhood transition.

Through this transition, these women began to lose their old selves. Most of the mothers struggled with this loss. For two of the mothers the shift from independence to dependence of a new infant was most challenging. In losing their old selves, the introduction of the maternal identity brought with it new attributes. Thus, a redefined self began to emerge. This new self was a combination of parts of the old self only enhanced with maternal qualities such as empathy, patience, kindness and the ability, for some mothers, to be less judgemental. However, these women also found themselves entering into a new, unknown territory. Along with the positive attributes arose negative attributes. These new mothers came to discover a heightened sense of responsibility and anxiety. This appeared to be heightened by pre-existing motherhood ideologies which perpetuated the ideal of the perfect mother. These mothers reported feeling met with judgement and guilt when deviating from the prescribed motherhood ideologies.

In being working mothers, maternal guilt featured prominently. A large amount of guilt stemmed from the loss of quality time with their children. As these women were career-driven, work was an undeniable presence and priority in these women's lives – which often meant they had to choose work over their children. These women felt immense guilt in this regard, often from other mothers who showed a clear preference for their children. The maternal guilt also came from within these mothers as they all feared they were missing out on important moments and milestones in their children's lives. This guilt subsequently increased the pressure these mothers exerted on themselves. For some of the mothers, overcompensating when with their children was a way to ease their guilt. For another mother it was easing back on her career. Nevertheless, as long as these women continued to work whilst being mothers, the guilt appears not to subside.

All of these mothers acknowledged the need for support in navigating these two identities. The biggest form of support these mothers subscribed to was outsourcing of motherhood and childcare. This did however differ amongst the mothers. While some women were considered lucky enough to outsource to family members, others had to hire help. The level of outsourcing was also unique to each mother. Some mothers were selective about what they outsourced (i.e. school activities, taking care of the household) whilst others outsourced it all. Mothers who were selective about what

they outsourced seemed to display more anxiety around judgement of their mothering as opposed to mothers who outsourced everything. Another manner in which some of these women coped was through feedback, either directly from their children or from other mothers observing their mothering. This helped the mothers feel supported but also encouraged a network of support.

The second way in which some of these mothers navigated both identities was to role switch. Their maternal identity was consistent as they would remain mothers whilst at work. This was seen when some of the mothers were called for their child's doctor's appointments while at work. However when these women got home, most of them had to switch off the work identity and be fully present with their children. Most of these mothers mentioned working again once their children had gone to sleep, thus switching back into a working mode. This helped mothers maximise their time with their children and prioritising their maternal identity over their work identity due to guilt for having to previously prioritise the latter. This switching is similar to what Garey (1999) referred to as the need for working mothers to 'weave' their roles into each other, making space for the needs of each identity within the other.

Having experienced gender discrimination and inequality prior to being a mother, this experience appeared only to intensify post baby. These mothers feared being perceived as having lost competence since having a child and for some this was a reality, not being awarded bigger projects or promoted while still 'child-bearing'. Despite the discrimination these women experienced in their workplaces, they refused to opt-out. Rather, they attempted to work harder in trying to prove their working identity superseded their maternal identity. With the added pressure from home life, this added pressure from work only seemed to wear these mothers out further. While some of these women appear to have fallen prey to the Superwoman syndrome, they also appear to have reprioritised where possible and made compromises.

Some of the mothers in this study showed a great deal of insight around motherhood and the ideal mother. They have come to understand that motherhood is in fact subjective. That a motherhood ideal does not exist. Rather, most mothers have their children's best interests at heart and are doing what they identify is best for their children. Thus, leading women to believe that the idea of 'best' is different for each

mother. These mothers are influenced by their own mothers in both positive and negative ways suggesting that motherhood is transmitted but also that motherhood is transitioning as these women are developing motherhood in their own unique ways.

Strengths and Limitations of Study

This research study has a number of strengths worth noting. The most significant of these strengths is its contribution to working mother literature. As previously discussed, in detail, this area of research lacks the exploration of working mothers lived subjectivities through firsthand accounts of their experiences. Thus, this body of work is in contribution to the unfilled space within this research area. Other strengths worth noting are the inclusive and diverse sample of women used in this study. Previous studies have predominantly been conducted in Westernised, First World countries. As this research was conducted in South Africa, the diversity within this country was reflected within this body of work. Additional elements such as the understanding of gender and cultural discourses enriched the data. In conducting this research, the interview process allowed for these women to self-reflect. Thus, unintentionally encouraging these women to be in touch with themselves. It could be argued that the interview process provided a cathartic release for some of these mothers. Providing them with a confidential space to air their grievances.

Despite the many strengths of this study, there are clear limitations as well. Despite the data reaching saturation, as there were only six participants the results in this study are unique to these six working mothers. Therefore, these results cannot be generalised to all mothers. However, despite the sample size presenting as a limitation, it strengthened the theoretical framework of this study (i.e. IPA). As IPA is concerned with the richness and depth of lived experiences of individuals, this sample size aided in achieving this goal by allowing the researcher to limit focus and seek more depth. As the sample also included an array of races in the South African context, cultural understandings as well as socioeconomic factors heavily influenced the outcome of the data. If this research was replicated elsewhere, it may not yield the same results thus, possibly posing an obstacle to transferability. Another limitation of the study was the lack of cultural issues explored. As this research aimed at being more streamlined, the researcher was unable to capture the broad range of mothers and motherhood according to cultural prescriptions of the former. This was a large

limitation of the study as cultural considerations are a major piece of the South African landscape.

Lastly, as the researcher was not a mother and this research area proved vulnerable for some of the women, it is possible that some of the mothers may have held back on certain aspects and felt the need to portray elements of their experience more strongly than others. This could be due to fear of judgement from the researcher. The researcher did attempt to create rapport and reiterate the point of sharing to one's comfort level, however this body of work is considered vulnerable for some, which would understandably mean some mothers are hesitant.

Suggestions for Future Research

More research around women's first hand experiences need to be conducted, especially in South Africa. Research focused on the cultural and racial diversity and the meaning of motherhood for each racial and cultural group will help inform employers of the kind of support women need. More research will also highlight the lack of support mothers feel at the workplace and will encourage interventions being put into place in order to support working mothers rather than forcing them out. Clinical work regarding working mothers in therapy needs to be aware of the pressure, guilt and loss that these women experience. Acknowledgement of the tension between the roles of career woman and mother, and the unique motherhood ideologies informing these tensions is paramount.

References

- Aarntzen, L., Derks, B., van Steenbergen, E., Ryan, M., & van der Lippe, T. (2019). Work-family guilt as a straightjacket. An interview and diary study on consequences of mothers' work-family guilt. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 115*.
- Ainsworth, M. S. (1979). Infant–mother attachment. *American psychologist, 34*.
- Albrecht, J. W., Edin, P. A., & Vroman, S. B. (2000). A cross-country comparison of attitudes towards mothers working and their actual labor market experience. *Labour, 14*, 591-607.
- Arendell, T. (2000). Conceiving and Investigating Motherhood: The Decade's Scholarship. *Journal Of Marriage And Family, 62*, 1192-1207.
- Badinter, E. (1981). *The myth of motherhood: An historical view of the maternal instinct*. Souvenir Press (E & A).
- Bailey, L. (1999). Refracted Selves? A Study of Changes in Self-Identity in the Transition to Motherhood. *Sociology, 33*, 335-352.
- Bailey, L. (2000). Bridging Home and Work in the Transition to Motherhood. *European Journal Of Women's Studies, 7*, 53-70.
- Borelli, J. L., Nelson, S. K., River, L. M., Birken, S. A., & Moss-Racusin, C. (2017). Gender differences in work-family guilt in parents of young children. *Sex Roles, 76*, 356-368.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). Attachment and loss v. 3 (Vol. 1). *Random House*. Furman, W., & Buhrmester, D.(2009). *Methods and measures: The network of relationships inventory: Behavioral systems version. International Journal of Behavioral Development, 33*, 470-478.
- Bowlby, J. (2008). *A secure base: Parent-child attachment and healthy human development*. Basic books.
- Bureau of Labour Statistics. (2018).
<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/famee.t04.htm>
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. New York: Routledge.

- Butler, J. (2006). Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. In *The Routledge Falmer reader in gender & education* (pp. 73-83). New York: Routledge.
- Campbell, R. (2001). Heidegger: Truth as aletheia. In *A Hundred Years of Phenomenology: Perspectives on a philosophical tradition*. Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Cerrato, J., & Cifre, E. (2018). Gender Inequality in Household Chores and Work-Family Conflict. *Frontiers in psychology, 9*.
- Choi, P., Henshaw, C., Baker, S., & Tree, J. (2005). Supermum, superwife, supereverything: performing femininity in the transition to motherhood. *Journal of reproductive and infant psychology, 23*, 167-180.
- Christopher, K. (2012). Extensive mothering: Employed mothers' constructions of the good mother. *Gender & Society, 26*, 73-96.
- Cole, E., & Knowles, J. P. (2014). *Woman-defined motherhood*. Routledge.
- Cooper, P. J., Tomlinson, M., Swartz, L., Landman, M., Molteno, C., Stein, A., et al. (2009). Improving quality of mother-infant relationship and infant attachment in socioeconomically deprived community in South Africa: randomised controlled trial. *Bmj, 338*, 974.
- Cowdery, R. S., & Knudson-Martin, C. (2005). The construction of motherhood: Tasks, relational connection, and gender equality. *Family relations, 54*, 335-345.
- Cuddy, A., Fiske, S., & Glick, P. (2004). When Professionals Become Mothers, Warmth Doesn't Cut the Ice. *Journal Of Social Issues, 60*, 701-718.
- Damaske, S. (2013). Work, family, and accounts of mothers' lives using discourse to navigate intensive mothering ideals. *Sociology Compass, 7*, 436-444.
- Del Boca, D., Locatelli, M., & Vuri, D. (2005). Child-care choices by working mothers: The case of Italy. *Review of Economics of the Household, 3*, 453-477.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2002). *The qualitative inquiry reader*. Sage.

- Dillaway, H., & Paré, E. (2008). Locating mothers: How cultural debates about stay-at-home versus working mothers define women and home. *Journal of Family Issues, 29*, 437-464.
- DiQuinzio, P. (2013). *The impossibility of motherhood: Feminism, individualism and the problem of mothering*. Routledge.
- Djafarova, E., & Trofimenko, O. (2017). Exploring the relationships between self-presentation and self-esteem of mothers in social media in Russia. *Computers in Human Behavior, 73*, 20-27.
- Duncan, S., Edwards, R., Reynolds, T., & Alldred, P. (2003). Motherhood, paid work and partnering: values and theories. *Work, employment and society, 17*, 309-330.
- Eddy, P. L., & Ward, K. (2015). Lean in or opt out: Career pathways of academic women. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 47*, 6-13.
- Elley-Brown, M. J., Pringle, J. K., & Harris, C. (2018). Women opting in?: New perspectives on the Kaleidoscope Career Model. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 27*, 172-180.
- Erikson, E. (1963). *Childhood and Society. (Revised edition.)* (2nd ed.). Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Erikson, E. (1994). *Identity youth and crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Fagan, C. (2001). Time, money and the gender order: work orientations and working-time preferences in Britain. *Gender, Work & Organization, 8*, 239-266.
- Fengxian, W. (2012). The " Good Wife and Wise Mother" as a Social Discourse of Gender. *Chinese Studies in History, 45*, 58-70.
- Flakowicz, M. (2007). Daughter, mother, wife: Transitions from ideals to the real family. *Infant Observation, 10*, 295-306.
- Garey, A. I. (1999). Weaving Work and Motherhood. *Social Forces, 78*, 1165.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

- Glassman, I., & Eisikovits, R. A. (2006). Intergenerational transmission of motherhood patterns: Three generations of immigrant mothers of Moroccan descent in Israel. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *37*, 641-657.
- Greene, F. J., Han, L., & Marlow, S. (2013). Like mother, like daughter? Analyzing maternal influences upon women's entrepreneurial propensity. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *37*, 687-711.
- Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Ectj*, *29*, 75.
- Hand, K., & Hughes, J. (2004). Mothers' reflections about work and family life. *Family Matters*, *69*.
- Heiland, F., Price, J., & Wilson, R. (2017). Maternal employment and time investments in children. *Review of Economics of the Household*, *15*, 53-67.
- Heilman, M. E. (2012). Gender stereotypes and workplace bias. *Research in organizational Behavior*, *32*, 113-135.
- Iacovou, M., & Tavares, L. P. (2011). Yearning, learning, and conceding: Reasons men and women change their childbearing intentions. *Population and development review*, *37*, 89-123.
- Jacob, S. A., & Furgerson, S. P. (2012). Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The qualitative report*, *17*, 1-10.
- Josselson, R. (1987). Finding Herself. *Family Relations*, *37*, 238.
- Kelly, K., Slade, A., & Grienenberger, J. F. (2005). Maternal reflective functioning, mother–infant affective communication, and infant attachment: Exploring the link between mental states and observed caregiving behavior in the intergenerational transmission of attachment. *Attachment & human development*, *7*, 299-311.
- Kossek, E. E., Su, R., & Wu, L. (2017). “Opting out” or “pushed out”? Integrating perspectives on women’s career equality for gender inclusion and interventions. *Journal of Management*, *43*, 228-254.

- Kroger, J. (2002). Commentary on "Feminist Perspectives on Erikson's Theory: Their Relevance for Contemporary Identity Development Research". *Identity: An international journal of theory and research*, 2, 257-266.
- Kruger, L.M. (2006). Motherhood. In Shefer, T., Boonzaier, F., & Kiguwa, P. (Eds). *The gender of psychology*. Juta Academic.
- Kumar, V., & Maral, P. (2015). Involvement in Decision Making Process: Role of Non-working and Working Women. *Journal of Psychosocial Research*, 10, 73.
- Ladge, J., Clair, J., & Greenberg, D. (2012). Cross-Domain Identity Transition during Liminal Periods: Constructing Multiple Selves as Professional and Mother during Pregnancy. *Academy Of Management Journal*, 55, 1449-1471.
- Laible, D. J., & Thompson, R. A. (2000). Mother-child discourse, attachment security, shared positive affect, and early conscience development. *Child Development*, 71, 1424-1440.
- Laney, E., Carruthers, L., Hall, M., & Anderson, T. (2013). Expanding the Self. *Journal Of Family Issues*, 35, 1227-1251.
- Laney, E., Hall, M., Anderson, T., & Willingham, M. (2015). Becoming a Mother: The Influence of Motherhood on Women's Identity Development. *Identity*, 15, 126-145.
- Langdale, C. J. (1986). *A Re-vision of structural-developmental theory*. In G. L. Sapp (Ed.), *Handbook of moral development: Models, processes, techniques, and research*, 15-54, Birmingham.
- Liamputtong, P., & Ezzy, D. (2005). *Qualitative research methods* (Vol. 2). Melbourne: Oxford university press.
- Losoncz, I., & Bortolotto, N. (2009). Work-life balance: The experiences of Australian working mothers. *Journal of Family Studies*, 15, 122-138.
- Lupton, D., & Schmied, V. (2002, January). "The right way of doing it all": First-time Australian mothers' decisions about paid employment. In *Women's Studies International Forum*, 25, 97-107.

- Macdonald, C. L. (1998). Manufacturing motherhood: The shadow work of nannies and au pairs. *Qualitative Sociology*, 21, 25-53.
- Maheshwari, M., & Joseph, J. (2018). Work Role-Motherhood Role Constructions & Conflicts in Workplace Interactions. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, 54.
- Mainiero, L. A., & Sullivan, S. E. (2005). Kaleidoscope careers: An alternate explanation for the “opt-out “revolution. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 19, 106-123.
- Mangelsdorf, S., Gunnar, M., Kestenbaum, R., Lang, S., & Andreas, D. (1990). Infant proneness-to-distress temperament, maternal personality, and mother-infant attachment: Associations and goodness of fit. *Child development*, 61, 820-831.
- Marshall, N. L., & Tracy, A. J. (2009). After the baby: Work-family conflict and working mothers' psychological health. *Family Relations*, 58, 380-391.
- May, V. (2008). On being a good mother: the moral presentation of self in written life stories. *Sociology*, 42, 470-486.
- Mercer, R. (2004). Becoming a Mother Versus Maternal Role Attainment. *Journal Of Nursing Scholarship*, 36, 226-232.
- Montemurro, B., & Siefken, J. M. (2012). MILFs and matrons: Images and realities of mothers' sexuality. *Sexuality & Culture*, 16, 366-388.
- Moore, E. (2013). Transmission and change in South African motherhood: black mothers in three-generational Cape Town families. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39, 151-170.
- Morgenroth, T., & Heilman, M. E. (2017). Should I stay or should I go? Implications of maternity leave choice for perceptions of working mothers. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 72, 53-56.
- Nicolson, P. (2002). *Having it all?: Choices for today's superwoman*. John Wiley & Sons.

- Okimoto, T. G., & Heilman, M. E. (2012). The “bad parent” assumption: How gender stereotypes affect reactions to working mothers. *Journal of Social Issues, 68*, 704-724.
- Olsson, S., & Walker, R. (2003). Through a gendered lens? Male and female executives’ representations of one another. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 24*, 387-396.
- Parker, R. (1995). *Mother love/mother hate: The power of maternal ambivalence*. BasicBooks.
- Parker, I. (2005). Interviewing. In I. Parker (Ed), *Qualitative psychology*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Patel, C. J., Govender, V., Ramgoon, S., & Paruk, Z. (2006). Working mothers: Family-work conflict, job performance and family/work variables. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology, 32*, 39-45.
- Pedersen, D. E. (2012). The good mother, the good father, and the good parent: Gendered definitions of parenting. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, 24*, 230-246.
- Pezalla, A. E., Pettigrew, J., & Miller-Day, M. (2012). Researching the researcher-as-instrument: An exercise in interviewer self-reflexivity. *Qualitative Research, 12*, 165-185.
- Pietkiewicz, I., & Smith, J. A. (2014). A practical guide to using interpretative phenomenological analysis in qualitative research psychology. *Psychological Journal, 20*, 7-14.
- Portman, T. A. A., Bartlett, J. R., & Carlson, L. A. (2011). Relational theory and intergenerational connectedness: A qualitative study. *Adulthood Journal, 9*, 88-102.
- Rizzo, K. M., Schiffrin, H. H., & Liss, M. (2013). Insight into the parenthood paradox: Mental health outcomes of intensive mothering. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 22*, 614-620.
- Rosenthal, L., & Lobel, M. (2016). Stereotypes of Black American women related to sexuality and motherhood. *Psychology of women quarterly, 40*, 414-427.

- Sandberg, S. (2013). *Lean In: Women. Work and the Will to Lead*, London: WH Allen.
- Scheftel, S. (2012). Why Aren't We Curious about Nannies?. *The Psychoanalytic study of the child*, 66, 251-278.
- Scotland, J. (2012). Exploring the Philosophical Underpinnings of Research: Relating Ontology and Epistemology to the Methodology and Methods of the Scientific, Interpretive, and Critical Research Paradigms. *English language teaching*, 5, 9-16.
- Shapiro, M., Ingols, C., & Blake-Beard, S. (2008). Confronting Career Double Binds. *Journal Of Career Development*, 34, 309-333.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for information*, 22, 63-75.
- Silverstein, M. J., & Sayre, K. (2009). The female economy. *Harvard Business Review*, 87, 46-53.
- Simpson, J. A., & Belsky, J. (2008). Attachment theory within a modern evolutionary framework. *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications*, 2, 131-157.
- Smith, J. A. & Osborn, M. (2015). Interpretive phenomenological analysis. In *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. Sage.
- Sorell, G., & Montgomery, M. (2001). Feminist Perspectives on Erikson 's Theory: Their Relevance for Contemporary Identity Development Research. *Identity*, 1, 97-128.
- Stern, D., & Menzel, B. (1996). The motherhood constellation. *Psycritiques*, 41, 499-500.
- Stern, D. N. (1998). *The motherhood constellation: A unified view of parent-infant psychotherapy*. Karnac books.
- Thornham, S. (2004). Second wave feminism. In *The Routledge companion to feminism and postfeminism*. Chapter 3. (pp. 36-46). Routledge.
- Tichenor, V. (2005). Maintaining men's dominance: Negotiating identity and power when she earns more. *Sex Roles*, 53, 191-205.

- Tomlinson, M., Cooper, P., & Murray, L. (2005). The mother–infant relationship and infant attachment in a South African peri-urban settlement. *Child development, 76*, 1044-1054.
- Trice-Black, S. (2010). Perceptions of women’s sexuality within the context of motherhood. *The Family Journal, 18*, 154-162.
- Turner III, D. W. (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The qualitative report, 15*, 754-760.
- Van Ijzendoorn, M. H., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J. (2010). Invariance of adult attachment across gender, age, culture, and socioeconomic status?. *Journal of social and personal relationships, 27*, 200-208.
- Walker, C. (1995) Conceptualising motherhood in twentieth century South Africa, *Journal of Southern African Studies, 27*, 417-437.
- Wilde, E. T., Batchelder, L., & Ellwood, D. T. (2010). *The mommy track divides: The impact of childbearing on wages of women of differing skill levels*. National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1956). Primary maternal preoccupation. *The maternal lineage: identification, desire, and transgenerational issues, 59-66*.
- Young, M., & Schieman, S. (2018). Scaling Back and Finding Flexibility: Gender Differences in Parents' Strategies to Manage Work–Family Conflict. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 80*, 99-118.
- Zimmerman, L. M., & Clark, M. A. (2016). Opting-out and opting-in: a review and agenda for future research. *Career Development International, 21*, 603-633.

Appendix A



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050
Fax: 02711 7174037
Tel: 02711 7174007

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Consent Form (Interview)

The “Double Identity”: Navigation of maternal and career identities in partnered, career-driven mothers.

Researcher: Kimona Premjith

I understand that:

- My participation will remain anonymous (i.e. a pseudonym shall be used).
- The researcher may use anonymous quotes in her research report.
- The interview will be audio recorded.
- The information I provide may be used anonymously by the researcher and her supervisor following this project.
- There are no direct benefits for me participating in this study.
- There are no anticipated risks for me participating in this study.
- And agree to the anonymised transcript being archived for future research purposes.

I, _____, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve.

_____ (signature)

_____ (name of participant)

_____ (date)

Appendix B

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050
Fax: 02711 7174037
Tel: 02711 7174007

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Consent Form (Audio Recording)

I _____ give consent for my interview with Kimona Premjith for her study on the navigation of maternal and career identities in partnered, career-driven mothers, to be audio-recorded. I understand that:

- The recording will not be heard by anyone other than the researcher.
- The anonymised transcript will not be seen by anyone other than the researcher and her supervisor.
- The anonymised transcripts will be kept in a password-protected file on a computer which only the researcher and her supervisor will be able to access. The printed transcripts will be kept in locked offices.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or journal paper.
- Although direct quotes from my interview may be used in the journal paper, I will be referred to by a pseudonym (Respondent X, Respondent Y etc.).

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix C
Interview Schedule

1. How has becoming a mother changed your life?
 2. How do you understand motherhood?
 3. What benefits (physical, financial and emotional) do you feel being a mother gives to you?
 4. What are some of the challenges of being a mother?
-
1. Have you always known that you've wanted to be a working/career woman?
 2. What does "working identity" mean to you? Do you feel as though you have developed a "working identity"?
 3. What does building up and having a career, mean to you as a person?
 4. What benefits (physical, financial and emotional) do you feel working gives to you?
 5. What are some of the challenges of being a working woman?
-
1. How do experience having a career and being a mother simultaneously?
 2. What does the term 'working mother' mean to you?
 3. How do you see your role as a mother in relation to your role as a career woman?
 4. Have either identities enhanced or weakened the other?
 5. How do you cope with being a mother and a working woman?
 6. What are the attitudes around being a mother in the workplace?
 7. How do these attitudes impact on you?

Appendix D

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050
Fax: 02711 7174037
Tel: 02711 7174007



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Participant Information Sheet

Dear Madam,

My name is Kimona Premjith and I am a Masters student in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I am undertaking a research project, and I am investigating maternal and working identities in partnered, career driven women. The aim of this research project is to understand how working mothers come to navigate their maternal identities with their working identities through accounts of their lived experiences.

As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in a face-to-face interview. This activity will involve answering some questions around your maternal and working identities and will take around 60 minutes. With your permission, I would also like to audio record the interview using a digital device.

You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this research, and there are no disadvantages or penalties for not participating. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question, if you do not want to. The interview will be completely confidential. As this research will be conducted through face-to-face interviews, anonymity cannot be guaranteed during the interview process. However, all identifying information shall be changed and a pseudonym shall be used to protect your identity in the final research report. The information you give to me will be held securely. Only I will listen to the audio-recordings and only myself and my supervisor will read the anonymised transcripts of the interviews. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, we will stop the interview or resume at another time.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. The findings may also be published in a journal. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send this to you. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 7171408, email hrec-medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za

Kind regards,
Kimona Premjith

Researcher: Kimona Premjith
Kimpremjith@gmail.com
0749700758

Supervisor: Dr. Katherine Bain
Katherine.Bain@wits.ac.za
011 7174558

If you have experienced any distress through this process, you may contact the following centers for help:

Emthonjeni Center
1 Jan Smuts Ave, Wits University, Braamfontein, Johannesburg.
Tel: 011 717 4513

At the Emthonjeni Center you shall be put in touch with a therapist, who may help you, through therapy sessions.

Lifeline
Tel: 0861 322 322

You may also contact Lifeline. Lifeline is a national counseling hotline, available both day and night.

Appendix E

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: MCLIN/19/006 IH

PROJECT TITLE:

The "double identity": navigation of maternal and career identities in partnered, career-driven mothers

INVESTIGATORS

Premjith Kimona

DEPARTMENT

Psychology

DATE CONSIDERED

05 July 2019


DECISION OF COMMITTEE*

Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 05 July 2019

CHAIRPERSON
(Dr Esther Price)



cc Supervisor:

Dr Katherine Bain
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and one copy returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2021

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix F

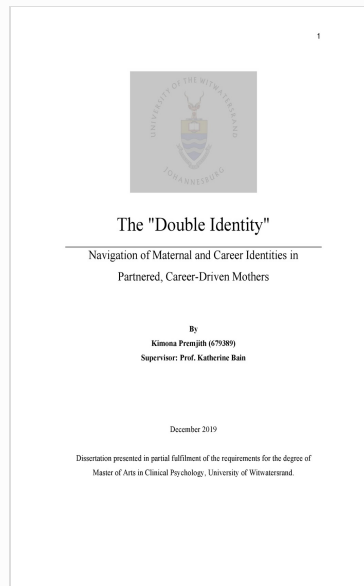


Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

Submission author: Kimona Premjith
Assignment title: Research Report submission link
Submission title: 679389:Final_for_Turnitin.docx
File name: nts_084c0437-6f4b-4fea-b0cf-e5d4...
File size: 284.59K
Page count: 147
Word count: 53,570
Character count: 265,457
Submission date: 13-Dec-2019 11:10PM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID: 1234144564



Turnitin Originality Report

Processed on: 13-Dec-2019 11:14 PM SAST

ID: 1234144564

Word Count: 53570

Submitted: 1

Similarity Index	Similarity by Source
1%	Internet Sources: 0%
	Publications: 0%
	Student Papers: 1%

679389:Final_for_Turnitin.docx By Kimona Premjith

< 1% match (Internet from 15-Mar-2018) https://era.library.ualberta.ca/files/bh128nd833/Myskiw.pdf
< 1% match (publications) Lianne Aarntzen, Belle Derks, Eilanne van Steenberg, Michelle Ryan, Tanja van der Lippe. "Work-family guilt as a straightjacket. An interview and diary study on consequences of mothers' work-family guilt", Journal of Vocational Behavior, 2019
< 1% match (student papers from 26-Apr-2010) Submitted to Indiana State University on 2010-04-26
< 1% match (Internet from 04-Apr-2014) http://196.21.83.35/handle/10530/1261
< 1% match (student papers from 21-Oct-2018) Submitted to American Public University System on 2018-10-21
< 1% match (student papers from 17-Apr-2013) Submitted to Massey University on 2013-04-17
< 1% match (Internet from 22-May-2019) http://stikespanritahasada.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Nursing-Theory-Utilization-Application-2014-CD.pdf
< 1% match (student papers from 03-Mar-2017) Submitted to University of Sydney on 2017-03-03
< 1% match (Internet from 11-Sep-2017) https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/24092/Solomonson_Glen.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1
< 1% match (student papers from 27-Apr-2016) Submitted to Chamberlain College of Nursing on 2016-04-27

