

## **Two Social Representations Studies of One Social Group: Social and Methodological Aspects**

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This paper brings together two separate studies that investigated identity representations of members of a minority group in Israeli society known as Religious Zionists. The studies were carried out by different researchers a decade apart, so that each was influenced by a different social context. Each researcher adopted Emda Orr's approach to social research that urges using SR theory to enhance understanding of social issues in Israel and pinpoint possible applications of such understanding. The paper highlights similarities and differences in the findings of these two researchers who used different methodologies to examine issues of group identity in general and identity of Religious Zionists in particular. We believe that because of their inherent differences, the two studies can be usefully presented in tandem to provide a wider and more complex picture of the group's social representations and illuminate their identity negotiating process. In conclusion we consider implications of this methodology of bringing such different studies together for identity issues and for social representations theory.

*Keywords: Religious Zionist movement, social representations, identity, conflict, mandatory military service, polyphasia.*

## **IDENTITY REPRESENTATIONS**

Moscovici's Social Representations Theory (1984, 1988, 2001) posits that every human society constructs its surrounding world by using a changing set of verbal and behavioral representations. These representations are composed via interpersonal and social communication and via constraints that affect cognitive and social systems due to an ongoing dialogue between social meaning and personal meaning. As such, they allow for a 'sharing experience' and a common dynamic that lead to the formation of identity, one of the three functions of identity representations--the others being world-awareness and the creation of a symbolic system that group members assimilate into their identity. It is identity representations that construct the meaning of a society for its members by situating each individual's collection of representations within the context of the broader social world. These representations, in turn, serve to juxtapose individuals and their group with representations attributed to other groups, and they are negotiable among individuals and between them and their group. (Ben Asher, Wagner, & Orr, 2006; Orr, 2007a). Because they make up the group's unique contents even as they reflect the social positioning of both individuals and their group (Moscovici, 2001), the shared constructed contents of identity representations in the individual's consciousness and emotions also serve to define the group.

This paper brings together the findings of two different social representation studies carried out by different researchers a decade apart, each of which investigated the group identities of Religious Zionists following Orr's notion of identity as social representation. One study probed the identity representations of parents and their adolescent children among Religious Zionists, a minority group in Israeli society; the second focused on parents' representations of combat soldiers among members of this same group. We present these studies together, noting where their findings overlap and where they diverge, to suggest the advantages of such multiple views for understanding social representations. To clarify the basis of the studies, we first introduce the group "Religious Zionists" and provide a brief overview of conscription in Israel.

### **Who are the Religious Zionists?**

Religious Zionists are Israelis who belong to a socio-political group that began with the foundation of the Mizrachi movement in 1902. They identify both as religiously devout and as

Zionists who participate fully in Israeli society, sharing its occupational, educational, and cultural world. Some members of this group are Israel-born; others are immigrants from various countries. A central concern among different currents that identify with this group is the question of observing halakha (rabbinic law) in the modern world and translating halakha into representations of individual and collective action (Cohen, A., 2005).

The group is further characterized by messianic notions regarding Jewish rights to the territories of ancient historical Israel that they have translated into vigorous and systematic settlement activity (Schwartz, 2003). This proactive settlement movement, termed *hitnahlut*<sup>1</sup> in Israeli public discourse, was initiated after the Six-Day War<sup>2</sup> (1967). Later, the social movement known as Gush Emunim (“Bloc of the Faithful”)<sup>3</sup> instigated the resumption of Jewish settlement activity primarily in areas beyond the Green Line<sup>4</sup> captured in the 1967 Six-Day War. The strength of the movement was further enhanced by the results of the 1977 elections (Sheleg, 2000).

Religious Zionists belong to both a minority group with relatively high status in Israeli society (the religious) and to the majority group (Israelis); some belong to an additional minority as well, the *mitnahlim* (settlers).<sup>5</sup> Consequently, their interaction with other sectors in hegemonic Israeli society is quite extensive. Unlike with ultra-orthodox society, members of this group enlist in the Israeli army, where the younger generation encounters non-religious Jews, and take an

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<sup>1</sup> a biblical term denoting settling/taking possession of the country.

<sup>2</sup> The Six Day War is also known as the June War, and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. A period of high tension had preceded the war that was fought between June 5 and 10, 1967, by Israel and the neighboring states of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.

<sup>3</sup> Founded by the spiritual leader Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook in 1973, in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War.

<sup>4</sup> The Green Line designates the line between Israel and the territories captured in the Six-Day War, including the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights . The United Nations (in informal texts) the US and also Palestinian and Israeli leaders commonly refer to the green line as the "pre-1967 borders", the "1967 borders" or the "1967 lines".

<sup>5</sup> A subgroup within Religious Zionism that considers itself concurrently a participant in the Israeli majority society and champion of the cause of settling the undivided Land of Israel—a cause toward which the hegemonic Israeli majority does not have a consensus.

active role as consumers and creators of the country's cultural life. As such, the borders around this group are quite permeable its members, especially the younger ones, are at risk of attrition according to the elders' view. Hence, members of this society feel the need to protect the younger generation from "negative" effects of the surrounding hegemonic society.

To cope with the conflicts and tensions arising from the encounter between the different worlds, Religious Zionism has developed the belief that the state should be sanctified and given allegiance (Belfer, 2004). This belief imparts sanctity even to secular institutions and accommodates them into the Religious Zionist worldview. Preeminent among the institutions of state is the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Religious Zionists apply messianic passion to military service, thereby linking the military's secular endeavors to the religious awakening and sanctity of the messianic process (Cohen, S., 2007).

Few people join this diverse group of Religious Zionists from the outside; most of its continuity is predicated on the successor generation. Therefore, Religious Zionists attribute cardinal importance to the intergenerational transmission of values (Paryente& Orr, 2007; Orr, 2007b). The resulting dual reality is a material part of Religious Zionism's way of life and its goal—to imbue a successor generation with the spirit of parental (in-group) values along with a commitment to the larger community—has become a complex and difficult task.

Amid the realities of the past two decades, the Religious Zionist population has been coping in its own way with the gamut of characteristics of a human society. In so doing, it invests its commitment to society and to the secular state with dual significance: a steadily growing eagerness to enhance the religious image of Israeli society contrasts with an emerging willingness to absorb new influences of the modern Israeli world (Sheleg, 2000). This duality describes the complex zone that this group inhabits.

### **Some notes on Conscription in Israel**

Military service is a national obligation in Israel. The Security Service Law, 1949, requires every citizen to enlist upon reaching age eighteen, so that almost<sup>6</sup> every Israeli Jewish household has

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<sup>6</sup> Arab citizens and ultra-Orthodox Jews are exempted from army service. However since February 2012, after the High Court ruled that the Tal law (that set base for the legislation of the deferral of Military Service for Yeshiva students) was unconstitutional. As a consequence Leaders of the ultra orthodox Jews

someone in the army. However the law leaves service in a combat unit to be chosen on a volunteer basis. Mandatory military service in the Israel Defense Force is rooted in historical memory and Israeli culture and two hegemonic representations of it have been identified (Lissak, 2001). “*National security*” is considered the central representation in Israeli collective memory after statehood due to the need to ensure the country’s existence against the background of a long-lasting conflict. It was assumed that the Arabs would not acquiesce in the existence of a Jewish state surrounded by Arab states that are linguistically, culturally, economically, politically, and technologically different. This situation, in turn, provided a basis for the representation of a “*people’s army*” which expresses a strong sense of unity between society and the army. As a result of these two representations, almost every Israeli Jewish family finds itself in, and involved in, the army for lengthy periods of time.

In recent decades, however, questions that subvert the hitherto self-evident “national security” representation and the role of the army in Israel have begun to appear in the media, the arts, and protest movements. The dynamism and presence of the conflict in daily life beginning with the Second Intifada (2000) and Israel’s disengagement from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria (summer 2005)<sup>7</sup> has amplified this public discourse. Deliberations on themes of army and security, including military service, are regular features of the Israeli public agenda and the debate echoes in the symbolic world of Religious Zionists who are parents of combat soldiers. Military service exposes Religious Zionists to the dualism that characterizes this population group. Full military service is seen as a duty that demonstrates responsible citizenship and commitment to the security of the Jewish state. Yet this service comes at the expense of time that should be invested in study—primarily religious study—and moreover may adversely affect the

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express firm objection on one hand and some other parties consider this ruling a blessing on the other hand. It turns into a polemic matter along with growing uncertainty over the expiry of Tal law that take place in the social public Israeli discourse.

<sup>7</sup> Events that illustrate the dynamism of the Israeli reality include, but are not limited to, the Second Intifada (2000), the disengagement from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria (summer 2005), the Second Lebanon War (summer 2006), Operation Summer Rains (autumn 2006), and Operation Cast Lead (Gaza Strip, December 2008), the public discourse surrounding the captured soldier Gilad Shalit, and individuation and privatization processes that swept the country.

young inductees and lure them away from religious observance (Rossman-Stollman, 2000; Paryente & Orr, 2010). To handle this dualism, specific settings that integrate religious study and military service have come into being.<sup>8</sup>

Yet the bivalent attitude of Religious Zionists toward the IDF has been exacerbated by the national security duties the army has had to undertake. They perceive the army as being concurrently a secular institution that carries out the government's instructions and the ultimate instrument of redemption. The redemptive mission of resurrecting Jewish life in the Jewish homeland<sup>9</sup> periodically collides with government policies, for example when they curtail attempts to settle disputed areas in what Religious Zionists consider the whole of the Jewish homeland.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Religious Zionists demand that the government send IDF soldiers to safeguard citizens in the settlement areas (Feige, 2009), something which politically more left leaning Israelis object to. Against this background, which reveals the complex specific context, one study (2000) probed the identity representations of parents and their adolescent children among a minority group of Religious Zionists. The second examined parents' representations of combat soldiers among this Religious Zionists group in 2009-2010.

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<sup>8</sup> An example of such a setting is the "*hesder*" ["arrangement"] yeshiva. First conceived in the late 1960s, this program has the goal of integrating religious studies and military service over a five-year period: 3.5 years of study and 1.5 years of military service. The emphasis is on a military setting that allows participants to observe the religious commandments and return to studies as quickly as possible. In the late 1980s, an additional setting was established: pre-induction programs that gives future inductees a year of preparatory training, after which they are expected to serve a full (three-year) term of service if not more. This program also encourages suitable alumni to volunteer for combat service and officer training (Cohen, S., 2007; Sheleg, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> 'The whole of the Jewish homeland' refers to the 'Promised Land' (defined in Genesis 15:18-21) or to the 'Land of Israel'. The Religious Zionist use the Hebrew term 'Eretz Yisrael Hashlema' which means the 'Complete Land of Israel' or 'Entire Land of Israel'. It is a geopolitics and ideological term in the history of the Zionism movement and the Israeli politics. The term, which refers to the historic borders of the Land of Israel as were described in the Jewish holy and literary sources, was and still is the cause for the tension and conflicts taking place in Israeli public discourse raised by this polemic representation.

<sup>10</sup>Such as the evacuation of the Gaza Strip settlements in summer 2005 and of wildcat outposts in Judea-Samaria from 2002 to the present day.

## THE FIRST STUDY

Paryente conducted the first identity representations study in 2000<sup>11</sup>. Adopting a quantitative research design, she administered an original Identity and Conflict Questionnaire and the Schwartz value scale to a sample of 1336 participants. (Paryente & Orr, 2006).

The research was done in three main phases. A preliminary qualitative stage was used to elicit components of identity reflected in the authentic discourse of group members. As the underlying premise was that the original discourse among group members is important, the researchers used statements extracted from 30 half-structured interviews to construct a pilot questionnaire. Once the pilot was administered and validated, an identities- -questionnaire was developed that mapped the content and composition of Religious Zionists' identity. (For details, see Paryente and Orr, 2006). The main analysis entailed correlating thirty-two items on the identities-and conflict-questionnaire using the SSA (small space analysis) method (Borg & Lingoes, 1987; Guttman, 1968). The analysis was performed for the entire sample (N=1236) and for each group in the sample (parents (N=824 ), children (N=412 ), settlers (N=618 ), and non-settlers (N=618)) separately.

The findings comprised three sub-identities and a conflict identity, which divided into two different conflict representations. ***Representations of the religious sub-identity*** were characterized by the centrality of God and sanctification of the IDF from the standpoint of Torah (Pentatuch). As one of the statements of the questionnaire puts it:

*"The main thing for me is the Holy One. It's from this that the Jewish people, the Torah, and the Land of Israel are derived. I try to learn as much of it as I can. Everything that happens in life should be judged and analyzed from this point of view."*

In other words, this sub-identity emphasizes that religious values and faith, are central in life.

***Representations of the settler sub-identity*** stress the importance of establishing settlements over the Green Line and strengthening those that exist, as part of the belief that the Promised Land—the entire Land of Israel in its biblical sense—includes all parts of the country. Statements such as, *"For me, settling the Land of Israel is a supreme value."* reflect

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<sup>11</sup> before and during the Second ("Al-Aqsa") Intifada and before the eruption of an internecine schism between Religious Zionists and the majority.

the high priority assigned. Another statement clarifies the code that guides those who subscribe to the settler identity: *"The Land has specific borders that are written in the Torah; the political borders don't matter a bit right now."* The crucial value, that the Torah dictates their actions, is correlated positively with the religious sub-identity. The act of settlement is typical of a generation of parents that expects its offspring to perpetuate and adopt what it defined as an important value.

***Representations of the Israeli sub-identity*** favored encountering the non-religious individuals who represent the majority society.

*"As contrary as it sounds, it's important for me that [the young] encounter non-religious people because [the non-religious] are as much into values as we are, just their way is different"*.

Such statements stress egalitarianism and a sense of shared identity with secular Israeli Jews.

***The Conflict Identity:*** This is the term used to designate the contents of statements grouped together by the statistical analysis that share two contradictory, conflicting representations included in Religious Zionists' identity. *"Religious conflict"* representations reflected anxiety that the secular majority would adversely affect the religiosity of the Religious Zionist minority. As one respondent explained the predicament:

*"We're in an existential paradox: we're trying to educate youth to be open to the secular public but wherever there's openness, there's a risk of ingesting negative things."*

The very values that guide Religious Zionist education—acceptance of and openness to the other—may become sources of influence that Religious Zionists consider nefarious. Another aspect of the religious conflict lies in the negative effect of the religious identity representation as described in the following statement from the questionnaire:



*“At the time of the assassination of Rabin,<sup>12</sup> they expected me to say things that were not always to my liking. I’m also allowed to express criticism, even of my own society, and to ask difficult questions.”*

This statement expresses inner conflict triggered when the expectation to conform to the group’s opinion as a member of Religious Zionist society clashes with the need to question and accommodate points of view identified with a secular outlook.

“*Settlement conflict*” representations typically conveyed a dilemma and vacillation about what it is that expresses this Israeli sub-identity. For these respondents, the wish to be part of the Israeli majority is offset by awareness that the settlement project is controversial among members of this very group. The following statement can be understood as an outgrowth of the diverse polemics and events that typify Israel<sup>13</sup>:

*“If this or that government decides to evacuate settlements, I’ll leave. It can’t be helped; that’s what the nation wants. I can be on a mission only if the nation’s behind me.”*

The acquiescence expressed here could be seen as awareness of a lack of fit between the national and personal credos or might reflect vacillation between the personal credo and the national one. A similar structure of social identity was found in all subsamples. Differences in the intensity of the identities corresponded to different places of residence. Not surprisingly, the religious and settler sub-identities were stronger in settlements than in non-settlement locations; the Israeli and religious sub-identities were stronger within the Green Line. The assumption flowing from this was that group members who are residentially more integrated into the secular majority share an identity experience with the majority group, as opposed to those who live in settlements isolated from the majority society.

The finding of high means and small variance indicates the hegemonic position of this identity structure across each sub-group of the religious and settler society and its distinctness

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<sup>12</sup> Yitzhak Rabin was an Israeli politician, statesman and general. He was the fifth Prime Minister of Israel, serving two terms in office, 1974–77 and 1992 until his assassination in 1995

<sup>13</sup> Such as the evacuation of settlements and wildcat outposts in Judea-Samaria in recent decades.

from the identity representations of the majority Israeli hegemonic society. This identity also combined intolerance of and a feeling of being threatened by the surrounding non-religious society. In contrast, members of this society shared the Israeli and conflict identities to a lesser extent, and there was a relatively large variance in those identities. The findings further suggest that in 2000, individuals and families felt free to identify themselves either as part of the surrounding Israeli society or with the conflict between these two societies. Thus, the Israeli and the conflict identities were both defined as emancipated representations.

Paryente's study demonstrates that the hegemonic religious and -settler identity coexisted with an emancipated Israeli-democratic identity among members of the Religious Zionist society. She argued that this apparent logical incompatibility is in fact a socially reasonable feature of this group's identity negotiation process.

## THE SECOND STUDY

Friling's study was carried out in 2009–2010<sup>14</sup> as part of a wider research project that mapped the symbolic world of parents of combat soldiers who belonged to one of three social groups: Religious Zionists, Immigrants of the 1990s from the former Soviet Union and Middle-class, secular native-born Israelis. Following the “grounded theory” tradition<sup>15</sup>, a process of simultaneous gathering and analysis of field data, fifty-five in-depth interviews of soldiers' parents served as a database from which the theory was derived (Shkeidi, 2003). The data were analyzed using thematic analysis and a technique focusing on segments of text as opposed to individual words or expressions (Friling, 2012; 2013).

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<sup>14</sup> after the disengagement from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria, the removal of wildcat outposts in Judea-Samaria, and the Second Lebanon War—in the middle of the national schism that overlay the Israel–Palestinian conflict.

<sup>15</sup> In essence, this is a process of simultaneous gathering and analysis of field data. Accordingly, the remarks of soldiers' parents who were interviewed (fifty-five in-depth interviews) served as a database from which the theory was derived (Shkeidi, 2003). The data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method and a technique focusing on segments of text as opposed to individual words or expressions.

The research premise was that the ongoing discourse in Israeli society affects the parents' construction of reality. The personal open-mode in-depth interview was chosen as the strategy that would best reveal the social representations from which the parents' reality is formed (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008; Rosenthal, 1993). Fifty-five interviews with Religious Zionist mothers and fathers of a combat soldier were conducted. The majority (N=35) of the interviewees lived within the Green Line<sup>16</sup> and the minority (N=20) over it.

In the symbolic world of soldiers' parents, mandatory military service in the Israel Defense Force is represented as a formative event in which the family context and national-social context are inseparable. The social representations' construction express the personal and social involvement of parents in their son's life as well as that of their nation.

On the *family context* a set of representations was identified as *combat soldiers' parents representations*. These figured importantly in their world as parents, and included such elements as pride, growth, concern, and a sense of sharing in son's experiences during his combat military service. Many parents expressed contentment and pride over their son's contribution to the national effort. This pride can be attributed to the solid foundation of values that originate in the home and reflect their success as parents. The 'growth' representation relates to the life-cycle developmental stage the son has entered, in which this service is seen as a springboard to his future as a mature person. The representations of concern express the fears and risks associated with military service along with the uncertainty and sadness accompanying the son's leaving home. Representations of concern and anxiety coexist with those of pride even though the two are contradictory representations; after all, pride about military service and national contribution mean acquiescence in the mortal danger that attaches to the military way of life and the unpredictability that it entails. Social Representation Theory, which demonstrates the quality of "common sense" as Moscovici (1984) put it, would regard this as an example of cognitive polyphasia, that is, representations with contradictory meanings that refer to the same reality which are part of everyday thinking (Markova, 2000; Moscovici, 1984; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). This may also be a function of the challenges the individual confronts in dealing with the complex and changing situations described above. Finally, it may be an instrument that the

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<sup>16</sup> see footnote 5.

individual's common sense recruits to cope with such situations (Friling, 2012). The social representations that these soldiers' parents exhibited, then, were expressed in terms of total identity that underscores parental identification more than they do group identification. In that sense, they had much in common with other soldiers' parents groups in Israeli society.

On the *national-social context*, three sets of representations were identified: The *Israeli reality representations*, the *army representations* and the *religious representation*.

The two hegemonic representations rooted in historical memory and Israeli culture described above are identified as part of the set of *Israeli reality representations*. The “*national security*” and the “*people's army*” represent the taken- for-granted representations with a core role in Israeli discourse. Mainly they clarify the ‘*no alternative*’ representations of the majority of interviewees, representations that bind Israeli society together and reflect the need to protect the state and its citizens: “*It's part of life, It's part of the Israeli agenda.*” They did not choose ‘*alternative*’ representations calling for options other than military solutions, but rather emphasized their acquiescence in and acceptance of this reality as an integral part of their Israeli identity,

By sharing these hegemonic representations, Religious Zionist parents of combat soldiers represent belonging to and connection with the Israeli majority society (Friling, 2007, 2013). However, in addition they cite their commitment to the “*Jewish project*” “*by virtue of the belief that 'the Land of Israel belongs to the People of Israel'*”, as part of the process of advancing Redemption. Moreover, religious parents declared it a privilege that “*a Jew protects Jews in the Land of Israel,*” for the first time in 2000 years. This is something they did not take for granted. This perspective emphasizes the national-collective representation of action they have adopted. *The parents' social representations of the army* as the provider of national security combines two dimensions: The army is an institution that undertakes the national mission of defending the country as a prime condition for its existence; and the army is an entity that represents the partnership and participation of all citizens in carrying out this mission. The IDF thus embodies the intersection that Religious Zionists crave with the Israeli majority. According to the parents, for many of the boys, the army is their first encounter with the different and other world, the secular world that has “*side effects*”. Many of the parent- respondents expressed openness toward the non-religious. They acknowledge and appreciate the positive contribution of secular Israelis,

yet they simultaneously stress their concerns and uncertainties about the outcomes of the encounter.

*The religious representation set* positioned faith in God as the central, unequivocal obligation in their lives, and religious observance as a crucial expression of the principles and values by which they live. As a result, these constitute hegemonic representations (Orr, 2007b). Commenting on their role in conveying these values, parents of combat soldiers emphasized the need for “*more religious education*” and expressed explicit expectations of continuity. The educational settings they choose for their children figure prominently in the development of religious consciousness and faith, and they depend on these settings to augment the education provided at home (Cohen, S., 2007). This group of parents expressed the hope that their emphasis on religious values would guide their children’s lives as adults. They viewed military service as a real opportunity to give expression to these values. Communitarianism, an important feature of both Religious Zionist society and of army life, is also understood as playing a significant role in the process of transmitting values.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the parents described the encounter between religious representations and secular ones as giving rise to multiple clashing representations that coexist without being experienced as a conflict, the situation Moscovici (1984) designates as cognitive polyphasia. The parents accept that their sons will encounter the modernity of the secular world in conjunction with their military service and its outcomes. It is evident that the coexistence of apparently contradictory identity representations in polyphasia serves Religious Zionists as a useful way to structure the complex system of values that govern their lives in contemporary Israel. This is in contrast to the expectation that such individuals might prefer a single dominant representation of identity in an effort to simplify their complex world.

Friling’s findings, then, reveal the loaded and tense encounter of religious parents of combat soldiers with Israeli society as an open and modern society. All four sets of representations described show the complex nature of the context of multi ideological and operative/ action representations guided within either hegemonic or polemic frameworks and structures.

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<sup>17</sup> The communitarianism in which social ties are strengthened unites those members of the community who share the residential setting both in synagogue and in the schools that their children attend.

**A comparison table between the two studies**

	<b>The study on representations of combat soldiers' parents</b>	<b>The identity representations study</b>
<b>The research premise</b>	The ongoing discourse in Israeli society affects the parents' construction of reality.	The original discourse among group members is important to determine how frequently the structure of the representations recurs across a range of subgroups.
<b>The aim</b>	<p>To reveal the shared symbolic world of Israeli combat soldiers' parents who are members of three major Israeli social groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The Religious Zionist* movement</li> <li>-Immigrants of the 1990s from the former Soviet Union</li> <li>- Middle-Class, Secular native-born Israelis identified as having liberal center-left leanings.</li> </ul> <p>-To reveal within- and between-group differences</p> <p>*In this paper we focus on the Religious Zionist parents.</p>	<p>To expose the structure of social identity under the condition of permanent internal conflict of parents and their adolescent children in religious-Zionists communities in the settlements and within the Israeli "Green Lines"</p> <p>- To examine the differences between family members in the strength of their identity, among the different subsamples(settlers and non-settlers).</p>
<b>The methodology</b>	Qualitative research paradigm - The grounded theory discipline	<p>A combination of qualitative and quantitative</p> <p>Phase 1- preliminary research, - qualitative stage</p> <p>Phase 2&amp;3: Quantitative research principles</p>
<b>The theoretical background</b>	Social Representations Theory	Social Representations Theory
<b>The research</b>	55 in-depth interviews with	A sample of a 1236 participants

<b>population</b>	Religious Zionist parents of combat soldiers: 29 mothers and 26 fathers (26 were married couples).	(fathers, mothers sons and daughters): 412 families and 8 partial families.  Subsamples according to residence:  Half living Settlements (without the green line)  And half living within the green line and  Half living within the green line and half in the settlements.
<b>The research tools</b>	Personal open-mode in-depth interview conducted at the interviewees' homes	Phase 1: half-structures 30 interviews to elicit main components of identity statements that reflect the authentic discourse of group members to construct a pilot questionnaire  Phase 2&3: original Identity and Conflict Questionnaire, and the Schwartz value scale conducted at the participants' homes
<b>The time of the study</b>	2010 2009	2002 2000
<b>The researcher</b>	A woman researcher unaffiliated with Religious Zionism	A woman researcher affiliated with Religious Zionism
<b>The researcher's assistants</b>	Religious Zionists instructed by the secular researcher	Religious Zionists briefed by the researcher, a member of this group
<b>The analysis procedure</b>	Thematic analysis method- with a technique focusing on segments of text; a process of simultaneous gathering and analysis of field data [the remarks of soldiers' parents who were interviewed]	Preliminary research- thematic analysis method; Main research- correlative checking of thirty-two items using SSA (small space analysis) method
<b>Finding</b>	- Their son's recruitment as a formative event.	-A social identity comprised of four sub-identities :the <b>religious</b> ,

	<p>- The symbolic world of combat soldier's parents includes four sets of representations: <b>Soldiers' parents' representations</b>, <b>The Israeli reality representations</b>, the <b>army representations</b> and the <b>religious representations</b>.</p> <p>- Parents cope with complexity of context</p>	<p>the <b>settler</b>, the <b>Israeli</b> and the <b>conflict</b>.</p> <p>- Differences in the intensity of the identities corresponded to different places of residence</p> <p>- The religious and the settler- as hegemonic to this society co-exist with the Israeli and the conflict identities that were defined as emancipated representations</p>
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### Contribution and implications

The two separate studies presented above both dealt with the social representations of the religious Zionist movement. This group is unique in that its representations combine the sacred and the secular as part of the group's socio-ideological positioning. Within a changing political context, these representations emphasize the group's distinctiveness compared to other religious and secular social groups. Their compound dynamic reality requires a built-in process for negotiating the group's identity.

Both researchers were students of professor Emda Orr, and since our work related to the same social group and a common socio-cultural context, we followed her lead as a social researcher by adopting this unorthodox presentation of our two studies together. Thus, in this paper we have used SR theory to examine Israel's social issues. We have used our combined findings to investigate the group's representations from different times and in a changing social context. In conclusion we note implications of these studies for social representations theory.

### What can we learn about the religious Zionist social group?

The similarity in identity structures revealed in the two studies conducted ten years apart is particularly interesting given events that occurred during the intervening years between 2000<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>The year 2000 was before and during the Second ("Al-Aqsa") Intifada and before the eruption of an internecine schism between Religious Zionists and the majority.



and 2009–2010<sup>19</sup> that led to significant changes in the social and political context. The fact that each study examined the group and its social representations from a different angle further corroborates and reinforces the validity of the findings. Paryente's study of the construction of Religious Zionists' social identities revealed the structures of four representations of sub-identities, which compounds the nature of the identity negotiating process. Friling's study, that examined representations of combat soldiers' parents, highlighted the complexity and internal diversity of each identity structure, and enriched our understanding of the group members' sub-identity representations.

*Religious identity* entailed the obligation to enlist in the IDF, the importance attributed to army service, and the expectation that religious law would govern the daily conduct of group members. This is so despite the current debate concerning observance of halakha (rabbinic law) and the conflict sub identity that creates a split between group members and is translated into diverse action representations accordingly.

*Israeli identity* was enhanced when parents viewed the army as a vehicle for unity with and integration into the majority group. Their willingness to cooperate and avoid strife mirrors the Israeli sub-identity and demonstrates what all Israeli citizens have in common. It is also reflected in the growing numbers<sup>20</sup> of IDF soldiers identified as sons of Religious Zionists.

*Settler identity*, a hegemonic identity for the group and an important identity representation at the beginning of the twenty-first century, has changed. It stresses settling the Land of Israel and "fulfilling the Zionist enterprise" by establishing and reinforcing settlements in all parts of the country, not only those east of the Green Line. At the time of writing, we see this change as explicitly directed to outreach and connection with other Jewish subgroups. The group discourse on this issue appears to have changed in the decade between 2000 and 2010 and the findings of the two studies, when considered together, illuminate the changing reality

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<sup>19</sup> The year 2009 was after the disengagement from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria, the removal of wildcat outposts in Judea-Samaria, and the Second Lebanon War, in the middle of the national schism that overlay the Israel–Palestinian conflict.

<sup>20</sup> Between 2011- 2008 the numbers of the Religious Zionists soldiers in the IDF was doubled thanks to the 'pre-induction programs' This program also encourages suitable alumni to volunteer for combat service and officer training (Cohen, S., 2012).

surrounding this group that contribute its representations to evolve. The debate about settlement became more trenchant among soldiers' parents when the question of evacuating settlements with IDF participation was brought up; it conflicted with and dampened enthusiasm for the army as an institution representing oneness with the majority society.

Manifestations of the religious conflict that surfaced in the group's identity representations in 2000 were polyphasic ten years later among soldiers' parents (Friling, 2012). In the parents' world, both representations—fear that the army may induce young religious men to abandon observance, and appreciation that the army is an institution of state that facilitates involvement with the majority society—plainly coexist even though they would seem to clash with each other. This evolution of representations of conflict into a polyphasic state may be understood as constituting a crucial process of adaptation: a “common sense” effort to accommodate the complexity of a dynamic and demanding reality. Our findings do not indicate what mitigated the impact of the conflict experience on Religious Zionist society collectively and individually, making polyphasia possible. It is possible that at least one element may have been just the passage of time.

As we have attempted to show, examining the findings of two studies conducted by two researchers following different methodologies at different times has important advantages. Treating our findings together has enabled us to demonstrate the evolution of social representations of Religious Zionists, and their process of negotiating identity in response to changes in the particular circumstances of their group and in Israeli society at large.

### **Implications for Social Representations Theory**

Each researcher represented here used a different methodology, but in keeping with Mosovici, both used authentic statements culled from the real discourse of group members to reflect the group's symbolic world. This allowed us access to the socio-cultural context as constructed by those group members whose social representations we aimed to study, and to avoid imposing our own as researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Sciarra, 1999). In this way, Paryente was able to clarify the concepts of hegemonic and emancipated representations, to define their distinct nature, and to offer a system of operational definitions by which these phenomena could be quantified

(Orr, 2007b). For the qualitative paradigm, capturing the group's members own representations is a fundamental principle.

Moreover, each of these studies was context-specific rather than universal, and tapped and investigated collective rather than individual factors in keeping with Social Representations Theory which emphasizes the significance of context and posits that the understanding of a shared cultural background shapes the representations of collective memory such that a society's nature is based on its historical and cultural contexts (Farr, 1989; Moscovici, 1988; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). This was relevant since Paryente was herself affiliated with Religious Zionism. There are both advantages and disadvantages when the researcher is a member of the group under study. She is situated in the group, conversant with its social discourse, familiar with the core relevant topics and acquainted with many of the group's members. On the other hand, emotional involvement along with personal expectations and her own social representations when these are not in sync with those of the group might blur the borders between the research field and her home (El-Or, 1998). As Paryente herself admits, she had to confront the fact that the religious identity was not equal to the Israeli identity though they do fit together but with the religious identity as the core and hegemonic identity, while the emancipated Israeli identity occasioned less intensity and controversy. This unique situation of researching one's home can easily turn into "the taking for granted trap". Orr's strategy was 'to turn the familiar into a stranger', namely to step back and look for a different angle (Orr, 2007a). The present paper provided an opportunity for such a different angle by bringing together the work of a researcher who belonged to the group being researched and the findings of a colleague who was external to it. This made it possible to integrate involvement, thorough familiarity, and the potential of outside observation that is not "captive" to the group's reified representations as Moscovici described it (Moscovici, 1984) or in El-Or's terms "*to operate on 'home'*" and not just "*in home'*" (El-Or, 1998). Actually We believe this encounter has enabled us to overcome two different blindness issues that we named "the taking for granted trap', reciprocally: the 'stranger' researcher help to overcome the familiarity blindness of the in-group researcher and at the same time the 'in-group' researcher help to overcome the 'outsider' blindness the 'alien' researcher demonstrate.

Our findings have helped to show how the shared contents of identity representations in the individual's consciousness and emotions serve the group's existence as well by using the

group's unique contents and how they reflect the social positioning of both the individual and his/her group (Moscovici, 2001). Orr considered identities to be social representations whose specificity derived from their function as social markers, for example, in contrast to Duveen (2001). She claimed that by emphasizing the common denominators of the group we strengthen the lines of similarity among its members. Identity representations are not limited to those used by individuals and societies to represent themselves verbally; they are also constructed by observers and include representations members of a society may not be aware of. These representations are derived by social scientists from what members of a society say and do that distinguishes them from other societies (Orr, 2007b). The evolving structure of sub identities of religious Zionists that emerges from our combined findings serves to illustrate how social identity may be negotiated under circumstances of cultural conflict. The overall picture is not one of identity coherence. On the contrary, it dramatizes a logical incompatibility that socially 'makes sense'. The hegemonic religious and settler identities coexist with the logically inconsistent emancipated Israeli-democratic identity among Religious Zionists.

In sum, the research findings presented in this article demonstrate the specific contributions of Social Representations Theory. Its underlying assumptions call attention to the continual evolution of the social reality that it examines. Thus, it identifies both hegemonic group representations that remained constant, stable, and pivotal over the years—representations numbered among the group members' most treasured assets—along with the dynamism of and changes in other representations, suggesting processes the group underwent in connection with contextual changes over the period of a decade. The picture obtained by presenting these two studies in tandem, strengthens, deepens, and enriches what we know about the way group members negotiate identity over time through their evolving social representations.

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*Received: 22 February, 2013 Final version accepted 8<sup>th</sup> December 2013.*