"Having It All": Cognitive Polyphasia as Preserving a Complex Reality: The Israeli Case

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The purpose of this paper is to clarify the concept of Cognitive Polyphasia as it relates to other terms of Social Representation theory as well as 'Cognitive Dissonance'. It will be demonstrated through two different sets of Cognitive Polyphasia presented as they appear in the symbolic world of Israeli Jewish parents whose sons were doing their mandatory military service in the Israel Defense Force's combat units. It will be shown that 'Cognitive Polyphasia' is preserving a situation of "having it all" that stresses the complexity of the situation as well as the difficulty in choice making. It might also indicate the complexity of actually experiencing coping with change. Even though the two different examples demonstrated were situated and used in two different and specific social settings they share a lot in common. The paper concludes by suggesting that Cognitive Polyphasia might be common sense's tool for coping with the dynamic-complex world.

How can we understand a mother of a combat soldier saying: "I prefer having peace, no doubt, it's better not having our children killed, but on the other hand, mandatory draft into the armed forces has many positive aspects, it is definitely an affirmative action"?

In this saying we can identify two contradictory representations; one that perceives peace as preferable, since it will stop the ongoing war between the Arabs and the Israelis, and hopefully there won't be any more young soldiers (parents' children) killed. Peace will help parents focus on the other important things in life that they want for their children apart from fighting and the military. They can live their lives focusing on self fulfillment and development without the need to be drafted into the army.

The other representation leans in favor of the draft into the army, thus identifying mainly the positive aspects of the military life for their children's development.

One might expect, according to the cognitive dissonance premise (Festinger, 1957), to show uncomfortable tension caused by holding such conflicting ideas simultaneously, which will end up in keeping consistency in order to reduce the dissonance, namely, changing one of those representations. None of that was traced.

On the contrary: it seems that it did make sense for the mother and actually she took it for granted. As if it was part of the every-day thinking, 'common sense' as Moscovici described it (Moscovici, 2001). That co-existence of opposing social representations within the mother of a combat soldier might point out the complicated world she experienced and the difficulty it aroused. Cognitive polyphasia might be common sense's tool for coping with the dynamic-complex world (Friling, 2006, 2007a, in progress).

The focus of this paper is to clarify the concept of cognitive polyphasia as it relates to other terms of social representation theory, and as it appears in the symbolic world of Israeli Jewish parents whose sons were doing their mandatory military service in the Israel Defense Force's combat units.

A GLANCE ON SOCIAL REPRESENTATION AND COGNITIVE POLYPHASIA

"Social representations" are the verbal and behavioral forms by which members of a society co-construct the world they live in (Marková, 2000; Moscovici, 1984). According to social representations theory (SRT), human beings construct their world using individual cognitive capacities, but they do so as members of a particular society, by communicating with each other within specific social contexts. (Moscovici, 1984; Wagner, 1995). These representations are then

shared to some extent by members of a society at any given time. Representations are constructed in evolutionary progression: new representations grow from older ones, and thus have roots in a society's representational system as manifested in the past. A society periodically encounters new and perhaps chaotic phenomena that, in its existing representation system, lack form and name. If the social representation system does not provide a ready-made appropriate clue for comprehending the new experience, its members will objectify, or construct it as a new object that they can act upon, speak about, and feel. This kind of construction does not necessarily obey the rules of formal reasoning, yet it is not chaotic. It has its own unique logic, which makes perfect sense to those who have constructed it. SRT can be a useful tool in making sense of the society in which we live in (Orr, 2007).

So is "Cognitive Polyphasia", a concept first coined by Moscovici (1984) to describe incompatible representations that refer to the same reality and which organize and interpret it in distinct ways. Wagner mentions that it was known, even in early studies of social representations, that representations with contradictory meanings were part of everyday thinking (Wagner & Hayes, 2005). As long as each representation is locally consistent and not simultaneously expressed they were not disturbing. "It is in the context of different life worlds that holding on to 'contradictory' representations makes sense" (Wagner, 1994, in Wagner et al., 2000, p. 306). As Wagner shows in the conducted study, interviewees didn't feel free to act against their family's majority will if they had to take care of a mentally ill relative. By doing so, they approved of Indian healing in the family context even though they expressed strong personal preference for 'modern' psychiatric treatment in the interview setting.

Moscovici (2001), on the other hand, stressed the coexistence of incompatible ways of thinking and representations as "a normal state of affairs in communications and ordinary life. It occurs not only in societies at variance with each other but also within individuals. Consequently, the logical or cognitive unity of our mental life - which is taken for granted by many social psychologists - is a desideratum, not a fact" (Moscovici, 2001, p. 245). He also highlights the importance of examining the norms, context and goals which regulate the choice people or groups make in preferring one form of thinking or the other.

Similarly, Jovchelovitch (2002a) has pointed out that although we often appear eager to defend our "own way of knowing" and separate knowledge from belief, "Knowledge thus

involves effort and desire to re-present. Understanding 'how', 'why', and 'what for' knowledge seeks to represent allows us to identify the multiple logics of which it is capable" (p.132). Therefore, knowledge must be assessed in relation to the social, psychological and cultural context of a community culture. Wagner et al. (2000) also maintain the importance of the context. They defined cognitive polyphasia as competing social representations anchored in different social settings, namely, different situations depending on the communication partner(s) and the communicative context involved. The awareness of the interviewees of the cognitive contradiction was attributed to the artificial and uncommon situation of the interview, which is not a typical everyday situation, according to Wagner et al. (2000).

While the studies we mentioned so far focus on groups and communities, Provencher's (2011) work is focused on the 'social individual' who engaged in cognitive polyphasia. She highlights the social aspect in which ideas, types of knowledge and core background beliefs are negotiated and constructed through interpersonal interactions and communicative acts, based on common history, culture and shared projects and are intertwined with the individual's representations. According to Provencher's model, cognitive polyphasia represents simultaneous active use of different types of knowledge in order to make sense of a specific social object depending on the individual's circumstances and the social representations that are outlined in the context in which it is located.

The importance of understanding the context is evident in all the conceptualizations of cognitive polyphasia mentioned. It emphasizes the existing link between the social representations and social characteristics of situations in which they are formed.

STUDYING REPRESENTATIONS OF ISRAELI COMBAT SOLDIERSW PARENTS
The Setting

This paper is based on data from studies carried out in the first decade of the century (2000-2010) that examined how parents coped with the situation of having sons who were combat soldiers (Friling, 2007a, in progress).

Israeli law requires 18 year old men to serve in the Israeli Army for three years. Fit young men are assigned to the combat forces, and many are highly-motivated, competing for limited assignment spots to high-profile and Special Forces units (Gal, 1986; Libelich, 1989; Luski,

2005). Soldiers who are willing and skilled may volunteer for additional years of service as officers. After completing their regular service, most men continue to serve for one to two months a year in combat reserve units for many years thereafter. (While many young women also serve in the IDF, most do not serve in combat units, so this paper focuses specifically on families with sons in combat units.)

The research focused on parents of three major Israeli social groups[1] whose sons served in combat units (Friling, 2007a, in progress). The first group consists of educated, middle-class, secular native-born Israelis who themselves served in the IDF. Those parents were identified as having liberal centre-left leanings. The second group is made up of parents who belong to the religious Zionist movement. Some are native-born Israelis, who served in the IDF and others are immigrants from West Europe, USA and Canada, some of whom also served in the Israeli army. In general, members of this group maintain that Jews have a fundamental right to settle throughout the historic Land of Israel, west of the Jordan River. However, some liberal members dissent from this view. The third group consists of parents who immigrated to Israel during the 1990s from the former Soviet Union. Most of the men in this group served in the Soviet Army and some of their fathers – the grandfathers of today's Israeli soldiers – fought in the Red Army in World War II[2].

Method

The findings are based mainly on 81 in-depth interviews: 35 married couples and 11 parents (9 mothers and 2 fathers) from the three social groups mentioned above: 44 interviews with religious parents, 20 with Russians and 17 secular parents (Friling, 2007a, in progress). The interviewees were contacted using the snowball sampling method (Noy, 2008).

Aside from the researcher who trained and tutored them closely, the interviewers, four women and two men, were all psychology students who studied qualitative research. They also had personal ties to the social groups to which their interviewees belonged and thus had full

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[1] Examining deeper differences between the three groups is beyond this paper. Here, I will mention significant differences.
[2] For brevity's sake, I will refer below to the three groups simply as "secular", "religious" and "Russians".

command of the relevant colloquial language and knowledge of the group from within – and were able to comprehend the inner worlds of their informants (Friling, in progress).

The in-depth interviews were conducted at the interviewees' homes. In most cases, other family members were not present. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the interviewers. Interviews lasted 60 to 100 minutes and involved the three stages based on Rosenthal's model (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008; Rosenthal, 1993).

Preliminary talk with each interviewee explained the goal of the interview (to understand the world of parents of soldiers in combat units) and asked for permission to record it. Each interview began with the same open question: "Please tell me about your son leaving home for the army". At the end of the respondents' spontaneous descriptions the interviewer asked for elaboration. In that sense, the open interview method that was chosen for this research enabled the interviewees to freely discuss their experiences and add their own interpretations.

Israeli literature and newspaper articles were also analyzed in order to provide the societal context by outlining the major social representations that were part of the social-cultural discourse.

Analysis was conducted using the qualitative constructivist paradigm, which is in accord with social representations theory, and which assumes that social knowledge is created via communication between human beings in a given social framework (Jovchelovitch, 2002b).

The next sections will discuss two sets of cognitive polyphasia clarifying first the social context in which every cognitive polyphasia occurs, followed by the social representation description and interpretation making connections to other aspects of SRT.

"MY YOUNG 21 YEAR OLD, BIG BOY"

The first set of representations brings out the coexistence of traditional parental representation of the son as a little boy, and the distinctively parental representation of the son as a young mature adult who fulfills his civic commitment.

The Social Context of the First Cognitive Polyphasia

In the dialogue taking place in Israel, the expression "parent of a soldier" is quite common. Analyzing the use of the term reveals two distinct and different representations (Friling, 2007a). The first is shared with other parents in the Western world and implies the separation of the adolescents' generation from their family in order to get on with their life. The second is unique to those countries where army enlistment at the age of eighteen is mandatory, as it is in the Israeli case.

The first distinction refers to parenthood's stages. The term "family life-cycle" is coined in reference to the expected changes in family life[3] stability (Armour, 1995; Combrink-Graham & Naneman, 1985).

One of the main events is the "launching stage". It relates to children leaving home for their personal development. This stage relates to processes of separation and individuation that individuals experience in their development and that lead them to formulate a separate, defined, independent identity (Bloom, 1980; Duvall, 1977). From the family's point of view, the separation between parents and their maturing child is the 'launching stage', and its essence lies as a passage from the parent-child pattern to a relationship of equality between adults. This change explains the nature of the development process: the success of the launching stage means that developmental achievement has been attained, which enables moving on to the next developmental stage of maturity.

The second distinction, in reference to the Israeli representations, is that leaving home is not the result of a gradual developmental process and free choice, but of having to undertake national duty (Libelich, 1989; Gon-Gross, 2003; Katzir, 1993). The significance of "Military launching" as geographical-physical distancing – leaving home – has different meaning in Israeli society; first, due to the fact that Israel is a 'small country' (geographically) and that you can cross it in a mere five hours. Secondly, the Israeli army (IDF) enables the soldier to come home for weekends on a regular basis as often as every two to three weeks. The IDF also allows family visits at their son's base (Catriel, 1999; Friling, 2007a, 2007b; Gon-Gross, 2003; Katzir, 1993). Actually, military service is not accompanied by the weakening of family ties. The family

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[3] Major events such as marriage, birth of children, their leaving home and so forth

connections are preserved and sometimes even strengthened (Almog, 2004; Friling, 2007a; Lieblich,2001; Luski, 2005; Mayseless, 2004, 2001). The fact that 85% of discharged soldiers remain in their parents' home in the first half year after their discharge, and 65% of them for three and a half years after leaving the army, indicates that military service is not a stage in which the young person leaves home for good (Israelshvili, 1996; Mayseless,& Hai ,1998).

The First Set of Representational Polyphasia concerns the coexistence of two different parental social representations: One representation drives the Israeli parent into a renewed concern over their son's enlistment into the army as if he was a "little child" who needs their intensive involvement in his life. For instance, one of the mothers said:

I'm worried that something might happen to him, that he is sad, that he is incapable of coping; that he can't adjust… and I can't do anything. (secular)

Another mother mentions the fact that:

I don't know where my boy sleeps. I have a 21 year old boy, not really an adult yet, and I don't know where he's been sleeping for the last 3 years… (religious)

Both mothers point to the big change, that they lost control of their sons' daily experiences.

The parents' behavior is characterized by deep concern and total devotion to their son which from the perspective of the child might seem unlikely to an adult son, and is usually represented as much more appropriate of parental baby care. It was common to all of the three groups of parents we studied, in particular among the mothers, to portray their sons as though they are incapable of taking care of themselves.

These child-like representations of sons by parents were not restricted to their physical welfare. They shape the conduct of the entire family. There were two kinds of weekends: In the first the soldier might stay at his base, in this case the family will often go visit him. In the second, a homecoming would typically consist of a Friday and Saturday which would then be focused on preparing the meals he likes, doing his laundry, and indulging him in other ways.

One religious mother said:

> We do what the boy says, what the boy asks for, what the boy requires, his needs.… I baked a lot for him… and sent him care packages.… When he came home we'd pick him up in Jerusalem… (This is quite far from their home).

It seemed like the parents are totally focused on their drafted son as if he was their only child.

Parents also emphasize the numerous times they talk with their sons, either on the telephone or face-to-face, especially during their son's difficult and stressful times. A religious father related:

> You always have an eye on the phone when your son is in the army. You know that there are times when he can call, you have your cell phone on you, you go to the bathroom with your cell phone, he might call and God forbid you might miss the call. On the other hand, you don't want to bother the boy too much. But you want to be available whenever he needs you. You always want to be close to your boy, but the army strengthens that, in the army you feel like he needs you more...

In a similar way we can explain parents' pride about their son's success in the army as comparable to what they experienced during their son's school phase. One of the mothers told us:

> I saw he accustomed so well… and I was proud to hear his commanders praising him on parents' day.

Another father emphasized his son's success:

> He completed all his military courses with honors [and counted them one by one]! (secular).

It could be considered that parents tend to relate to their sons in a regressive manner, as it did not fit the actual situation, especially when considering the fact that before recruitment these young men had been relatively independent and their relationship with their parents was completely different (Gon-Gross, 2003; Herzog, 2004; Kacen & Wittenberg, 2000; Lieblich, 1989). It could be assumed that by acting according to the traditional parental representations, parents were denying the new situation they were facing as parents, encouraged by the fact that they received no objections from their sons to this kind of behavior. In that sense, we could say, from a social representation point of view, that the parents were anchoring their familiar traditional parental representation from an earlier period, when the son was a small boy and needed his parents' protection, into the new and unknown reality they are faced when the son was drafted into obligatory army service and was exposed to danger. Anchoring functions as an action strategy representation the parents adopt in order to make their new parental role more familiar (Friling, 2006, 2007b).

Simultaneously to, and in contradiction with, the personal involvement with the son's hedonistic child-like needs, the parents expressed a second kind of representations in which the son is seen as a mature and responsible person whose role is to defend the country. One mother admits:

I feel I have a grown-up son who is already independent and is going on a new road.

She notices the changes. Many parents talk in favor of the army experience and implied that the *army succeeds in places they did not*:

They learn so many things they hadn't known before and I'm not sure there's going to be another opportunity for that.

Another father mentions that:

It prepares them for their future lives apart from their families.

He hints at the many responsibilities and decisions their soldier sons were facing during the army service as defenders of national security thereby emphasizing that their sons are already grownup people.

It seemed that most of the parents see the army as a springboard for their son's personal development in the future and as a possible turning point in their relationship with their maturing sons as equal to adults (Friling, 2006, 2007a, in progress; Gon-Gross, 2003).

To sum up, the traditional parenthood social representations presented to us focused on enfolding parental responsibility. It could be seen as an example of a hegemonic social representation that is familiar in the universal parenthood context. The same context comes across simultaneously with new and different social representations of parent-mature son relations which shapes differently parental responsibility.

"DESPITE ALL THAT, I REALLY CAN'T IMAGINE THEM NOT DOING IT"

A second set of incompatible social representations were uncovered in the parents' interviews regarding the state of Israel. Hegemonic representations emphasize social solidarity and national security versus a polemic representation which disputes those representations taken for granted.

The Context of the Second Representational Polyphasia

In the Israeli social context we find two central representations: "The people's army" and "The entire nation is an army" which expresses the sense of unity between society and the army. These representations are rooted in the collective historical consensus of the Israeli Jewish culture and supported by an obligatory military service law legislated in 1949 (Lissak, 2001, 2007; Zerubavel, 2004).

Prior to the founding of the state of Israel, the public discourse, which was dominated by traditional, hegemonic, ideological representations, spoke of "national security" and called for the "defense of the homeland" as an existential need. It started during the first decade of the 20th century, when the new Jewish immigrants worked in agriculture in back-breaking conditions, paved roads and was labeled the "pioneer". With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948,

and as a result of an escalation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, a differentiation and separation were created between settlement and security, with the latter receiving priority. The Israeli social discourse emphasized nationalism, and the figure of the "fighter" (soldier) became a dominant representation. By the end of the War of Independence, the representation of the 'fighter' was deeply anchored in the Israeli national consciousness (Cohen, 1995). "National security" became the foremost representation in the Israeli social experience of this period, expressing the need to guarantee the state's survival (Lissak, 2001). National security was based on the representation that the need for security is embedded in light of the ongoing conflict with the Arab states (Horovitz, 1993; Lissak, 2001).

This approach assumed that since the Arabs categorically rejected Israel's existence, a peace agreement would be nearly impossible to reach with them under conditions that Israel considered vital for its survival. The Jewish state is surrounded by Arab states which are distinguished by culture, language, economy, technology and political views and agendas. From the state of Israel's birth until the present day, Israel has gone through nine wars with its Arab neighbors, and between the wars the IDF has engaged in numerous other military actions. Thousands of soldiers have been killed, with a myriad of others wounded and disabled. Due to the fact that the country is small, nearly every citizen is in some way intimately involved with a bereaved family. Those who were killed in wars and other violent incidents were represented as heroes who gave their life to defend the country (Feige, 2007; Rozental, 2001). This became an important feature in Israeli education, especially in the wake of the Jewish holocaust (Zafran & Bar-Tal, 2003).

The social representation of the pioneer-fighter-defender of the state and the consensus surrounding the representations of national security and sacrifice are the cornerstones of the Israeli internal dialogue and the way a system of symbols were created within and by the Israeli society. A social dialogue which places an emphasis on the social representation of collectivism that expected all the Israelis to give priority to the state's assets in favor of their own personal interests.

In the early 1970s reservation and criticism began to be heard in the Israeli internal social dialogue, challenging those hegemonic representations with "optional war" or "occupations and

conquerors", along with "The longing for peace" (Almog, 2004; Barzilay & Inbar, 1996; Ben-Eliezer, 2001; Peri, 2001).

There were new protest movements, plays and debates that had been widely covered by the media which became an important factor. All object any military action. It disseminated the representations questioning the superiority of the military authority that until then had stifled any attempt at criticism (Hadari, 1998).

Those voices matched a new approach to the military and national security developed in the western world. They were based on the outcomes of the Cold War, the crumbling former Soviet Union, integration of the European community and the declaration to abandon war strategies (Levi, 2003). There was a desire to use resources for growth, to solve economic problems and eliminate defense budgets, to minimize or even cancel mandatory recruitment (Peri, 2001).

The fundamental change that took place in Israel was regarding the definition of the territories that were occupied during the 1967 war and the conflict it has caused on one hand, and on the other hand, the benefits of a peace process like the peace treaty with two Arab countries (Israel's neighbor in the south, Egypt, and Jordan in the east) and the partial acceptance of Israel by the Arab world. The essence of the disagreement is reflected in the famous hand shaking between Rabin and Arafat signing Oslo Accords on the 13th of September 1993 in Washington: some saw it as the Oslo peace treaty and some as the Oslo national disaster.

The parents' voices became more and more prominent in the Israeli society and press. Beginning in the 1990s, it became common to read and hear criticism of the IDF in various areas: military training, accidents that were investigated by the army rather than by external investigating committees, the uniform engraving on soldiers' gravestones and the collective representations of *"We are all one family", "they are all our children"*. Parents increasingly questioned incidents that their sons were involved in during their military service and supported their sons in cases of conflict with the military authorities and even on political action. For example, the "Four Mothers" Movement is considered to be one of the most influential forces for the Israeli Withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000. (Ben Eliezer, 2001; Peri, 2001). Those voices are the social representations of individualism.

The Second Set of Cognitive Polyphasia was the expression of the historical collective faith in one's obligation to serve one's country and, with the same degree of relevance, the coexistence of more recent individualistic orientation with its reservations regarding this faith.

A group of parents who were mainly secular and religious represented their unreserved traditional faith and confidence in the state of Israel and its army. At the same time they were also critical with regards to the political actions and decisions made by the authorities concerned with the activity of the army. Parents expressed reservations regarding the IDF's role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. One of the mothers said:

> To send my child who I had reared to observe human rights, to serve in the army, was against my conscience, against my set of values. I find it difficult to feel connected to this need to defend the state... It's something that... I know I grew up to observe. Some of my friends were killed in the war; and this was very hard on me... It goes against my values to send children to fight, to kill, and I'm not speaking about getting killed. I'm not speaking about that part of [military service] at all... but about injuring other people... something that I do not find as justified, where it is not self-defense but related to the occupied territories. (secular)

In her words, this mother expresses her simultaneously contradicting representations: she views the intrinsic representation of "the need to defend the state" that "she grew up on" as no longer unquestionable while she actually did 'send her son to the army'. That is the way parents spoke about their soldier sons. Instead of saying that their son was drafted into the army, they said *"I send my boy into the army"*. In other words, parents in general and this mother in particular take personal responsibility for their son's military service.

As seen above, the updated discourse shapes differently the social representations concerning mandatory military service and national security which had its influence on parents of soldiers' representations.

The following quotation clearly expresses the "new" perspective regarding the state of Israel:

…In the last decades my sense of national solidarity has been eroded. For years I believed it could not been shaken. Today it is increasingly difficult for me. When I was young, I was certain that the goals were honorable, but now I am not so sure that it is always so. On the one hand, there is the feeling of how vital giving [to the country] is, that there really is no other way, and that maybe it would be better if this giving was not taken for granted so much. Those who decide to take should know that they won't get it at every price. They need to convince me that the purpose is worthy... You come with questions. (secular)

This father of two sons serving as combat soldiers expresses his concern about the army's ineptitude and about political aspects of the army's operations alongside the contradictory representation of faith in his obligation to serve his country.

Most religious parents also spoke of the political ramifications of army service but while some expressed their reservations about Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, others asserted Israel's right to the entire biblical Land of Israel. The following religious father took a reserved oppositional standpoint on this:

The army expresses part of the political-mundane experience, there are all sorts of things that you can discuss, there are the things that have to be done, there are things that the army does but it's not always to our liking, you can say this also from the left and from the right, there are things that they assign the army to do, there's the scuffling with the Palestinians, which we don't always completely agree with what's going on there, we understand that you've got to do certain things, but we don't like the situation where they give that to the soldiers to do, that they have to do it.

Moscovici's (1988) term of "polemical representations" refers to those created by subgroups at times of social controversy, struggle or conflict. Distinct from the general consensus in society, they express the antagonism between those who hold opposing representations and are accompanied by ideological conflict and power struggles between subgroups. In the present

polyphasia, however, the two opposing representations were held by the same individual. The fact those combat soldiers' parents were considered also as a social group (Friling, 2006, 2007a, 2007b) indicates the cognitive polyphasia within a group too. Actually, we faced hegemonic representations that underscore national security and social solidarity with an emphasis on peoples' citizenship and the fulfillment of their civic duty. These collective representations were taken for granted by the majority of Jewish-Israeli citizens (Lissak, 2001; Ben Eliezer, 2007).

Those hegemonic representations "bump into" polemic representations which ask to re-examine the "nature of the contract" (Bar-on, 1990) between Israeli society and the parents of soldiers regarding their handing over their sons' safety to the army's hands.

It seems that as the disapproval and the distrust in the nation's leadership grows, it's harder for people to accept the inhumane aspects that the army might embody. Those polemic representations undermine the historic consensus and represent the situation in civic liberal terms. [And interestingly none of the Russian immigrants group expressed such social representations] (Friling, 2007a, in progress).

One of the mothers summed up the interview by saying:

It surprises me to think that I'm so upset that they [her sons who do compulsory military service] need to give up these three years... I feel that the state is undeserving of my sons! ... But what is true is that I can't imagine for a moment them not going into the army; they too can't imagine such a situation, and despite all that I've said, I really can't imagine them not doing it. (secular)

As we have seen, presenting opposing representations simultaneously, the way this mother presented herself, the obligation to serve the state at the same vine with the strong feeling that this country doesn't deserve that sacrifice, has been reflected in other interviews of this research. Such an encounter clarifies combat soldiers' parents' difficulty in giving up the hegemonic representations, and intensifies the tension brought up by the polemic representations on one hand while caught by it on the other hand.

CONCLUSIONS

Polyphasia is defined as a natural condition in daily life where concurrently distinct social representations exist (Moscovici, 2001). Two sets of cognitive polyphasia were identified, reflecting the symbolic world of Israeli combat solders' parents: the first focused on the parental individual-oriented social representations and the second focused on parental national-oriented social representations as Israeli citizens.

The two sets of Polyphasia described illustrate the complexity of the daily reality of combat soldier's parents that runs counter to a widespread psychological assumption regarding the logical-cognitive uniformity of our mental lives (Moscovici, 2001). This uniformity may be an ideal, but the cognitive polyphasia that we have identified shows this phenomenon to be a commonplace and natural condition in daily life which resembles everyday knowledge (Jovchelovitvh, 2008; Wagner & Hayes, 2005) and, in social representations terms, 'common-sense' (Moscovici, 2001).

More than that, the two examples mentioned above share the same features even though their context is very different. Both present hegemonic social representations coming across as opposing emancipated representations in the first example and opposing polemic representations in the second one. Therefore, cognitive polyphasia, the simultaneous existence of those contradictory representations, actually reflects the intensive changing reality the parents of combat soldiers are coping with (Wagner & Hayes, 2005, pp. 235). This is true for soldiers' parents' representations when looked at both individually and as a group.

As stated, cognitive polyphasia exhibits social knowledge that concedes the simultaneous existence of incompatible representations. In this sense, it could be presented as opposing the cognitive dissonance premise that Festinger (1957) was talking about in three ways:

1. *Basic assumptions*: Cognitive dissonance is based on the cognitive consistency theory (Abelson et al., 1968) and it assumes that the individual's natural tendency is to preserve intellectual and emotional consistency. It assumes that holding conflicting ideas simultaneously leads to a feeling of tension, and therefore it is uncomfortable for two conflicting thoughts to exist in the mind concurrently once we are aware of them. The tension, namely, cognitive dissonance, motivates the drive to reduce dissonance and reach

consonance, sometimes through irrational behavior (Festinger, 1957; Harmon-Jones & Harmon-Jones, 2007). According to Festinger, inconsistency alone is enough to cause dissonance[4]. Cognitive polyphasia, on the other hand, subscribes to the polyphasic nature of knowledge and reasoning and is based on the assumption that reality consists of competing representations, communications and conflicts, and social change. Individuals are capable of coping with it, as they are not monophasic and it is natural and doable (Moscovici, 2001).

2. *Way of thinking*: Cognitive dissonance became one of the most influential models in social psychology, arousing great interest and stimulating further search for evidence for its existence and effects (Jones, 1985; Harmon-Jones & Mills, 1999; Moscovici, 2001). According to the theory, after a decision, all the cognitions in favor of the chosen alternative are consonant with the decision, while all the cognitions that favor the rejected alternative are dissonant. It represents rationality known as scientific knowledge, like Jovchelovitch (2008) clarified, it is based on a system of common rational principles with inner consistency. As Moscovici described it, "they are tied to the question asked and the answers provided in a specific context" (Moscovici, 2001, p. 90). Scientific ways of thinking are hardly accessible to the non-scientific person and, until the mid-1950's, represented the ethos of science as higher-order thinking, along with the devaluation of common sense. Cognitive polyphasia, on the other hand, is derived from everyday thinking, where different modes of thinking and knowing co-exist. Emphasizing it as 'common sense' shows "the essential functions of survival and responds to human needs that no other system of knowing can address", according to Jovchelovitch (2008, p. 445). It is a way of thinking that functions differently in addressing the human needs that science does not and cannot respond to (Jovchelovitch, 2008, p. 440).

3. *Expected outcomes*: Cognitive dissonance eventually leads to change of either the conflicting belief or the action (Festinger, 1957). It initiates a process of making a choice which leads to giving up one alternative in favor of the other, thereby creating a dissonance situation: even though the person chooses one option, he thinks of the advantages of the other as well as the

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[4] More recently, however, others have argued that the connection is more complex than Festinger's view. These researchers emphasize that only important and self relevant inconsistencies have the potential to arouse dissonance, mentioning actions that compromise moral integrity or threaten a positive sense of self (Baumeister, 1982; Steele, 1988; Steele et al., 1993).

disadvantages of the chosen one. In other words, coping strategically with cognitive dissonance could be seen as the functional tool which motivates a solution. The change of an idea is the expected outcome. The cognitive polyphasia exposed among the soldiers' parents did not show such a change. It seems, as presented in this paper, that on one hand, the individual has difficulties giving up the hegemonic representations and, on the other hand, finds it hard not to embrace and recognize the polemic representations that catch his attention. There is a wish to have one's cake and eat it too. From this aspect, we can see cognitive polyphasia as preserving a situation of "having it all" that stresses the complexity of the situation as well as the difficulty of making choices. It is hard to make sense of complex situations created as part of the dynamic and changing reality. It might also indicate the complexity of actually experiencing coping with the change discussed earlier. We might say that positioning contradictory representations next to each other enables the individual's understanding of the world around him as if it was signaling the individual about the dynamically changing reality. In that sense, the cognitive polyphasia is also a functional tool that allows the individual or the group to preserve it all as part of their coping with the complex reality they are facing. It follows the SRT assumption about the social representations' functionality (Moscovici, 1984, 1988). 'Having it all' is the expected outcome.

Lastly, I can say that the theoretical concept of cognitive polyphasia presented in this paper also demonstrates an encounter between theoretical conceptualizations such as SRT and the social-historical context that was examined. In that sense, cognitive polyphasia signals the complexity of the daily reality a combat soldier's parent has to deal with due to the changes in values and the disagreements that characterize the Israeli society from a conscripted and monolithic society into a diversified and critical society.

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