

# CHOOSING TO STAY RELIGIOUS IN A MODERN WORLD: SOCIALIZATION AND EXPLORATION PROCESSES LEADING TO AN INTEGRATED INTERNALIZATION OF RELIGION AMONG ISRAELI JEWISH YOUTH

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## INTRODUCTION

Across the world, religious communities aspire to transmit their religious practices and beliefs to their youth. Yet, many parents who want their children to adopt religious beliefs and way of life also want them to be familiar with important aspects of the secular late modern or postmodern context (e.g., Rosenak, 1987, 2003). This late modern or postmodern context can include technological innovations and comforts, work opportunities, various secular domains of knowledge such as science, art, and culture, and leisure activities such as sports and travel. Such modern ideas and life

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practices often contradict important components of religious ways of life. Indeed, fundamentalist religious communities often perceive secular ideas as antagonistic to their religious beliefs and practices and attempt to prevent exposure of their children to these ideas and lifestyles. The more moderate religious communities face a difficult problem: how to educate children in ways that would enable them to participate in the modern world but nevertheless endorse essential components of their traditional religion (e.g., Schachter, 2000; Rosenak, 1987, 2003; Gross, 2003)?

Interestingly, the desire to maintain important aspects of religion as practiced by parents and grandparents is experienced not only by the older generations, but also by many of the youth themselves. Although this youth wish to adopt various late modern practices that are incompatible with their childhood religion, they also find it difficult to distance themselves from a religious way of life which is closely attached to their identity, their family, and their community of origin (e.g., Gross, 2002; Schachter, 2000).

It appears, then, that for many adolescents and young adults, religious sentiments anchored in childhood experiences conflict with secular ideas and lifestyles. Thus, many religious parents and youth grapple with the question of how to facilitate a *harmonious and authentic integration of religious practices and beliefs with a late modern-secular way of life*.

The present chapter focuses on socializing practices and internalization processes that may affect the extent to which religiously raised youth can develop an *integrated traditional religious identity within a late modern context*; that is, a set of beliefs and a way of life that preserves most of the religious practices and values one was raised on, which is experienced as originating from within and as reflecting who one really is and who she/he wants to become. The concept of an integrated religious identity indicates that the motivation for enacting various religious practices is experienced as autonomous rather than as controlled or coerced.

The conception of integration presented in this chapter is based mainly on self-determination theory (SDT, Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT explicitly focuses on processes that are involved in the gradual integration of various aspects of the self and the social context. Moreover, the theory specifies various socializing practices and internalization processes that can promote or hinder the development of an integrated identity. In addition, however, we employ understandings from identity formation theories; in particular, those concerned with the ways by which exploration leads to the formation of a more integrated and mature identity (Erikson, 1963; Marcia, 1966, 2002; Grotevant, 1987). Based on the above theories, we propose socialization and developmental processes that foster or undermine the *autonomous motivation*

of late modern youth to maintain significant aspects of their childhood religion. In addition, we also attempt to identify socialization processes, which promote *controlled* (coerced) *motivation* to maintain the religion of origin.

Fig. 1 describes two developmental pathways that emerge from two different socialization approaches and which are hypothesized to affect the extent to which religiously raised youth living in a modern context would be likely to integrate the religion of their community of origin into their identity. The upper pathway depicts a process that undermines the attainment of an integrated internalization, whereas the bottom pathway depicts processes hypothesized to contribute to an integrated internalization of the religious way of life one was raised on. The chapter begins by reviewing the socializing approaches that appear on the left side of Fig. 1 and the internalization processes that they are assumed to generate. Then, we describe two types of coping with the potential conflict between religion and modernity, labeled "radical" and "revisionist" exploration, which are hypothesized to result, at least in part, from the contrasting modes of socializing and internalization presented at the left part of the figure.

We end the description of our theoretical model with a description of different effects that radical and revisionist exploration are hypothesized to have on the integration of traditional religion among religiously raised youth living within a modern context. We follow with a description of empirical studies that provide support to the hypothesized processes, and end with a discussion of implications for theory and research in the domains of religious motivation, religious socialization, and identity formation. For example, we propose that the construct and scale of revisionist exploration may help to identify a type of religious motivation that is not only autonomous or intrinsic, but also reflective and critical (see Ryan, Rigby, & King, 1993, on this problem).

## CONTROLLING VERSUS AUTONOMY-SUPPORTIVE SOCIALIZATION AND THE CONSEQUENCES TO THE INTERNALIZATION OF RELIGION

SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000) distinguishes between two broad categories of socializing approaches or practices according to the extent to which they frustrate or support children's need for autonomy. Controlling (or autonomy suppressive) practices pressure children to act in ways they do not really want to through the use of threats or positive rewards that are not

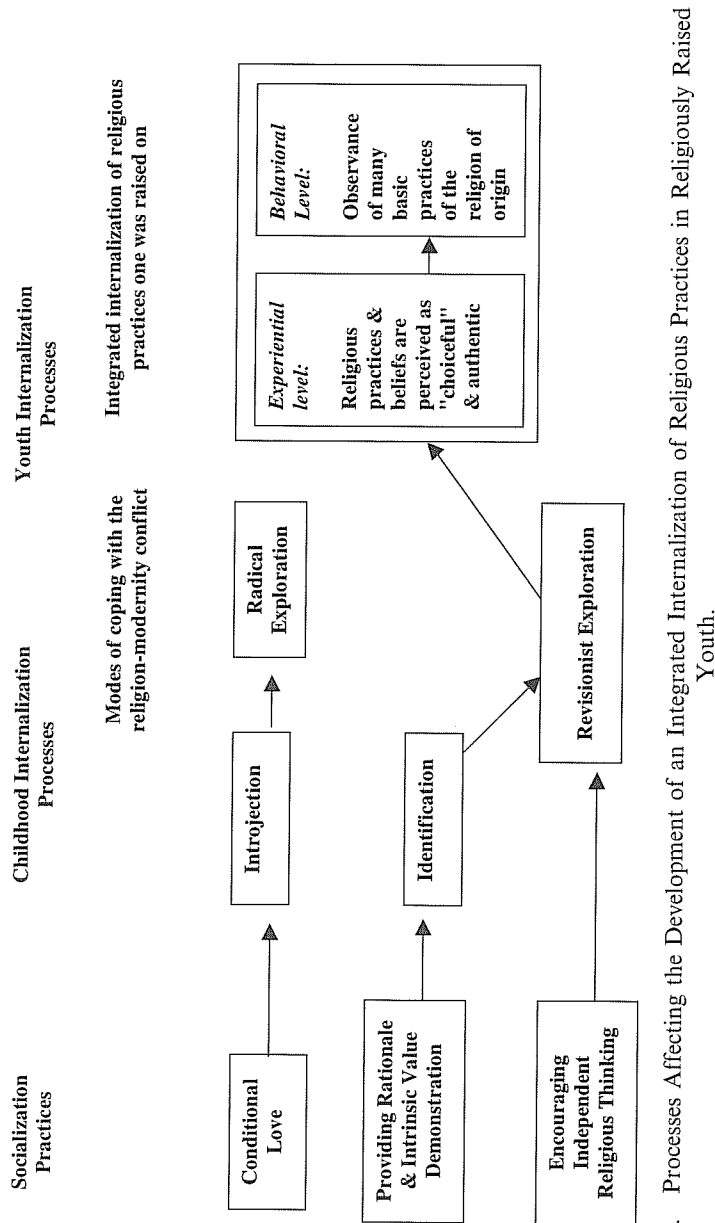


Fig. 1. Processes Affecting the Development of an Integrated Internalization of Religious Practices in Religiously Raised Youth.

inherently related to the expected behavior (Assor, Roth, & Deci, 2004; Assor, Kaplan, Roth, & Kanat-Maymon, 2005; Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997). In contrast, autonomy-supportive practices promote children's willingness to engage in specific behaviors through facilitating endorsement of the inherent value of these actions (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Grolnick et al., 1997). Thus, whereas controlling practices evoke feelings of coercion and conflict with regard to the parentally expected behavior, autonomy-supportive practices foster feelings of autonomy and coherence.

### Controlling Practices

It is possible to distinguish between two types of controlling socializing practices according to the motivational processes they engender in children (e.g., Grolnick et al., 1997). One type of controlling practices includes offering or withdrawal of material benefits, as well as threats of physical punishment. These socializing practices are assumed to lead to what SDT terms *external* regulation: a perception that the reason for acting lies outside the person. Behavior that is externally regulated is displayed only when the external agent is present to administer rewards or punishments. In the domain of religion, external regulation could manifest, for example, in children's engagement in religious practices in order to keep getting weekly allowance from parents or to avoid being "grounded."

Another category of controlling socializing practices involves *the use of various forms of conditional love, guilt and shame* (Assor et al., 2004; Assor & Roth, 2005; Knafo, Assor, & Schwartz, in press). The use of conditional love as a socializing practice involves the offering of more affection or attention when the child complies with parental expectations and the withdrawal of affection or attention when the child does not comply with parental expectations. SDT posits that the socializing practice of conditional love drives children to develop a mode of self-regulation that, in contrast to external regulation, does involve some internalization of socially expected behavior, yet the behavior is still experienced as rather coercive. This mode of regulation is termed *introjected internalization* (Assor et al., 2004; Deci & Ryan, 2002) and it represents a rigid adoption of expectations for behavior without completely accepting the behaviors' inherent value.

Introjected internalization emerges as a result of a process in which parents' contingent acceptance or rejection is transformed into self-acceptance or self-rejection. As a result, children observe various religious practices because they want to avoid feeling unworthy of love or guilty, and/or

because they want to feel worthy of love and proud of themselves. According to SDT, introjection is experienced as somewhat less coercive and controlling than external regulation, because the coercion comes from within and not from outside. Yet, the dependency of parental- and self-love on religious observance creates feelings of internal pressure and resentment that make it difficult to enjoy parentally valued religious practices. Therefore, in introjected internalization, religious practices are still experienced as fairly coercive and somewhat aversive. Consistent with this view, research by Ryan et al. (1993) has shown that introjected internalization of religious behavior in youth is associated negatively with indicators of well-being and positively with depression and anxiety.

#### *Autonomy-Supportive Practices*

The category of autonomy support includes socializing practices that aim to promote behavior that is self-determined. According to SDT, socialization that supports children's sense that their behavior is self-determined includes practices such as taking the child's perspective, acknowledging his or her feelings, minimizing pressure, explaining the rationale for adults' expectations, providing choice, allowing criticism, and demonstrating the intrinsic value of a behavior (e.g., Assor et al., 2002, 2005; Assor, Roth, & Deci, 2000; Chirkov & Ryan, 2001; Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Koestner, Ryan, Bernieri, & Holt, 1984; Roth & Assor, 2003). These practices are hypothesized to facilitate the internalization of beliefs and action to the point of endorsing them as one's own.

SDT distinguishes between two types of internalized self-determined behavior: identified and integrated. In *identified internalization*, beliefs are held and behaviors are enacted because the person understands and identifies with their value – their utility and/or moral desirability. However, despite the sense of self-determination that accompanies identified action, there still may be a mild sense of tension involved since the person may also identify with the value of an incompatible behavior. Indeed, often people endorse values and actions that are non-complementary. This could manifest, for example, in Jewish women's wish to have many children (a normative practice) while simultaneously wishing to devote more time to religious studies. Nevertheless, identified internalization is associated with a relative sense of self-determination. Ryan et al. (1993) assessed identified internalization of religious practices and found it to be associated positively with indicators of well-being and negatively with depression and anxiety.

It is in the second type of internalized self-determined behavior, *integrated internalization*, that beliefs and behaviors are organized into a coherent self-defining structure. In this highest and most self-determined level of internalization, beliefs are held and acted upon with the sense that they reflect central aspects of one's self-defined identity and basic needs. To attain integrated internalization, people often have to resolve inconsistencies and sometimes also conflicts between practices and goals that are important to them. This can be done by prioritizing goals and by modifying practices so that they fit each other, and most importantly, so that they reflect one's authentic inclinations and self-chosen values. In SDT, this process is termed mutual assimilation of separate identifications (Grolnick et al., 1997). To the best of our knowledge, no research to date has assessed integrated internalization of religious beliefs.

Two socializing practices that support identification in childhood and might lay the foundation for integration in later developmental stages are: (1) provision of rationale, and (2) demonstration of an intrinsic value (i.e., convincing modeling). Socializing practices that clarify the rationale of a behavior promote understanding of the value of the behavior and identifying with it. Research by Assor et al. (2002), Roth and Assor (2003), and Skinner and Belmont (1993) demonstrated the importance of providing a rationale to the development of self-determined internalization of expected behaviors in the domains of schoolwork and of emotional regulation. In the religious domain, this could manifest, for example, in parents having frequent conversations with their children about the meaning and importance of various religious practices that the children are expected to observe.

Demonstration of intrinsic value involves adult behavior that naturally conveys the sense of satisfaction and growth that accompanies engagement in a behavior. Adults are likely to be convincing models of a given behavior to the extent that they do indeed fully identify with the behavior and feel content and fulfilled when engaged in the action. It is important to note that we are not talking here about a deliberate attempt to show satisfaction, but rather a sense of fulfillment that emanates from people when they engage in something that is satisfying and meaningful to them; for example, the inner peace and sense of purpose that some parents convey when praying or when saying grace after the meal. Research by Assor et al. (2000), Assor and Roth (2005), and Roth and Assor (2003) has demonstrated the contribution of intrinsic value demonstration in several domains.

Whereas both practices are likely to promote identification with the value of parentally expected behaviors and may lay a foundation for later integration, it may be that they alone would not suffice to promote integration

of religious practices that are inconsistent with potent modern ideas and practices. This is because those practices do not prepare the religiously raised youngster for the experience of coping with contradictions and uncertainties that emerge with increasing exposure to modern ideas. They only clarify why it is important to maintain the religion of origin, thus making it more difficult and less tempting to give it up or even modify it.

Consistent with this view, Gross (2002) reported that religious teenage girls felt that the religious education system did not prepare them for the encounter with the modern-secular world, even when their educators avoided controlling practices and demonstrated the value of religion in their own life. Some participants in Gross' study suggested that what was missing was open encouragement of critical thinking on religious matters.

It may indeed be that when youth already identify with a religious lifestyle, yet experience a sense of conflict when considering contradictions between religious and modern ideas, adults' acceptance and encouragement of critical and independent thinking on these contradictions would facilitate integration. Such a socialization approach entails clear endorsement of the view that in many religious matters there could be different and sometimes contradictory opinions. It involves an encouragement to turn to different religious texts and authorities for consultation, as well as an understanding that ultimately each person should arrive at his or her own judgment about some religious issues.

Clearly, such endorsement of critical thinking may seem to involve an inherent threat to religious parents: the possibility that the exploring youth would arrive at a decision to abandon important religious practices. Yet, it can also be hypothesized that when children are exposed to this socialization approach, they may be less troubled by religion-modernity contradictions, and may have more tools to cope with and resolve such conflicts in ways that preserve important aspects of their parents' religion.

When adults endorse this socialization perspective, their children's understanding of religious observance is likely to include the perception that thinking differently from others on religious issues is not a sign of lack of faith, lack of religiosity, or absence of religious depth. Therefore, such contradictions and their personal resolution would be less threatening to these adolescents' religious self-concept and identity. In addition, it is reasonable to assume that when parents encourage and value critical discussion, they may allow exposure to modern ideas at an earlier age. Consequently, children are exposed to the potential conflict between religious and modern values and practices relatively early, and thus the integration process can be gradual and less intense. Past research has shown that the acceptance and encouragement

of critical and independent opinions has positive outcomes (Assor et al., 2002; Assor, 1999). However, the contribution of this practice to the development of religious integration has not been previously examined.

### *Summary*

The different socialization approaches, which SDT categorizes into the two broad categories of "controlled" and "autonomous," are assumed to be associated with different types of internalization of parents' religion. Based on the SDT perspective and research by Assor and his colleagues (e.g., Assor & Roth, 2005), we posit that controlling socializing practices involving conditional love would lead to an introjected religious motivation among youth. In contrast, autonomous socializing practices involving the provision of rationale and demonstration of intrinsic value would lead youth to identify with the religious practices and values espoused by their parents. In addition, parents' encouragement of critical thinking on religious matters would enable youth to cope with the potential tensions between the religious and the modern in ways that, ultimately, facilitate an integrated internalization of central aspects of the parents' religion.

We further posit that the contrasting internalization paths associated with the controlling and autonomous socializing practices would lead to different modes of coping with the religion-modernity conflict. We have termed these two modes of coping "radical" and "revisionist" exploration and now turn to describe these psychological processes in more detail.

## **RADICAL VERSUS REVISIONIST EXPLORATION: TWO MODES OF COPING WITH THE RELIGION-MODERNITY CONFLICT**

### *Exploration as a Coping Mechanism*

In moderate orthodox communities, religious adolescents and young adults are increasingly exposed to late modern ideas and lifestyles. As they become more independent and mobile, and particularly when they begin to make transitions from home to different social contexts, some of which are secular (e.g., college, army, work), adolescents are likely to encounter beliefs and practices that may conflict with the traditional beliefs and lifestyle they grew up with. Particularly at this developmental stage, when people strive to

assume an autonomous voice and attempt to form an identity, such exposure is likely to elicit questioning and exploration (Erikson, 1968; see also Arnett, 2004; Schwartz, 2001).

The identity-formation process involves attempts to explore the possibility of integrating childhood and contemporaneous identifications into a larger, self-determined, and relatively coherent set of self-identified ideals that feels authentic and meaningful (Erikson, 1968). Exploration, which Grotevant (1987) argued to be the "work" of identity formation, describes a core process of finding and processing self-relevant information and attempting to integrate such knowledge into a comprehensive set of values and commitments. In our research (Cohen-Malave & Assor, 2003), we identified two styles of exploration that religiously raised youth employ when they cope with the religion-modernity conflict: *Radical Exploration* and *Revisionist Exploration*.

*Radical exploration* is characterized by a highly emotional, and at times oppositional, questioning of one's personal-emotional relations with the religion's core beliefs and lifestyle. This type of exploration revolves around the personal costs involved in maintaining a religious way of life and the extent to which a religious lifestyle conflicts with personal dispositions and beliefs (e.g., an assertive feminist woman who opposes what may seem to be gender discriminatory religious practices). It also includes a concern with the sense of authenticity and level of internalization of one's religious involvement (e.g., "Why is it that I became a Catholic? Does it reflect the real me?"). The term "radical exploration" highlights the emotional intensity and the grappling with deep and fundamental personal issues that are associated with this process. Although radical exploration often involves questioning of the merits of a religious way of life, it is usually not particularly sophisticated, thorough, or cognitively complex. In fact, because of its highly emotional nature and its commonly oppositional quality, radical exploration often may be quite unsystematic and simplistic. This type of exploration seems to be focused more on raising difficult questions and on making extreme decisions than on the process of resolving the conflict through synthesis and integration.

In comparison, revisionist exploration focuses mainly on synthesis and integration: the question is not whether to maintain the religion of origin, but how to do it in ways that would be coherent with various beliefs one endorses? Thus, in this style of exploration, fundamental religious tenets and the merits of maintaining a religious way of life are not questioned. In addition, revisionist exploration involves little preoccupation with the personal emotional costs of maintaining a religious lifestyle or the extent to

which one's religiosity feels authentic and self-chosen. Rather, such exploration involves serious reflection and decision-making concerning the *kind* of religious life one wants to lead.

In the Jewish and Christian religions, revisionist exploration may involve, for example, grappling with questions concerning the role of women in religion, sexual relations before and after marriage, issues pertaining to human rights (e.g., abortion, euthanasia, and homosexual relations), and the meaning of scientific theories and findings to religion. Although these are serious and often emotionally laden issues, their examination is not dominated by intense emotional reactions involving personal costs, and therefore is relatively balanced and cognitively complex. In terms of basic orientation toward religion, it appears that radical exploration has a disconfirming and oppositional approach, whereas revisionist exploration is basically confirming in its orientation. We now turn to socializing and internalization processes assumed to promote the two modes of exploration, and to the expected effects of the two exploration modes on young adults' motivation and capacity to form an integrated religious identity.

#### *Developmental Origins and Effects of Radical and Revisionist Exploration*

##### *Controlled Socialization, Introjected Motivation, and Radical Exploration*

Our model suggests that parental conditional love fosters introjected internalization, which, in turn, leads religiously raised youth to cope with the religion-modernity conflict through a process characterized by radical exploration. Because the religious practices were acquired using a socializing approach that evokes a great deal of anger and internal conflict, it is very difficult for youth to fully own them and feel at peace with them (see Assor et al., 2004, 2005). The poor internalization and the internal conflict characterizing introjected religious beliefs dispose youth holding those beliefs to be rather susceptible to the influence of contradictory modern ideas. Therefore, when developmental and contextual processes converge to highlight the discrepancy between religious and modern-secular lifestyles (e.g., when late adolescents go to college, Arnett, 2004), youth with introjected internalization of religion are likely to experience a strong internal conflict. Perhaps they even feel tempted to adopt modern ideas as a way of expressing their resentment against the coercive process that has caused them to adopt the religious way of life as a way of maintaining parental love. This resistant reaction may develop along the lines sketched by Brehm's theory of reactance (Brehm, 1966, 1993; Brehm & Brehm, 1981).



Thus, it is possible that modern ideas join latent internal reservations concerning the religious way of life to produce a type of questioning that is not aimed at the attainment of coherent integration, but rather toward liberating one from what is experienced as an internal religious tyranny. Moreover, the emotional turmoil which accompanies introjected internalization makes it difficult to consider complex possibilities for integrating the secular-modern and the religious belief systems. Therefore, the questioning that would arise from encountering the religion-modernity conflict is likely to be framed in radical terms: either one or the other.

Radical exploration is not likely to lead to the formation of an integrated internalization of the religion of origin because persons involved in such exploration do not possess the psychological and developmental foundations on which such a coherent identity can securely rest. To the contrary, the intense and radical exploration of one's religious way of life is likely to further erode what are already unstable religious foundations.

Yet, interestingly, it is not at all clear that intense radical exploration would lead to the abandonment of religion and the full adoption of a non-religious way of life. The use of conditional love to promote introjection of religious practices is based on implied threats of love withdrawal and derogation if the child fails to adopt the expected practices. In the case of religious beliefs, the loss of esteem and love is not only from one's parents, but also from God and from most, if not all, the older generation in one's community of origin. Thus, abandoning, or even considering the abandonment of religious practices, may evoke strong emotions of guilt, worthlessness, and loneliness (Barzilai, 2004). In addition, renunciation of religion may also undermine youth's sense of meaning. Religion provides a structure that enables many people to handle and find meaning in pivotal and often unsettling aspects of life (death, birth, marriage). Loss of such a structure can be experienced as very threatening (Granqvist & Hagekull, 1999; Saroglou, Delpierre, & Dernelle, 2004). Thus, whereas some of the young adults who engage in radical exploration may indeed decide to reject religion and adopt a secular lifestyle, many others would not.

However, even those who choose to maintain their religious identity and lifestyle are unlikely to form a harmonious and integrated religious identity. Thus, the intense radical exploration of one's religiosity, and the experience of inner-coercion that would be associated with the decision to maintain the religious way of life, are likely to make it very difficult to reach a state of authentic integration of the religion of origin.

In summary, while radical exploration is not likely to lead to an integrated internalization of religion, it is also unlikely to lead most youth to reject the

religious way of life. Rather, it may lead most youth to an intense crisis and vacillation between the religious and the modern.

#### *Autonomous Socialization, Identified Motivation, and Revisionist Exploration*

The second path in our model suggests that the autonomy supportive socialization practices of providing rationale and demonstrating the intrinsic value of engagement in religious practices are likely to contribute to identified internalization of religious beliefs and practices among youth. When children identify with the religious way of life, they tend to adhere to it because they understand and like it. Consequently, when adolescents with identified religious internalization face contradictions between religion and modernity, they prefer to settle it in ways that preserve the fundamentals of the religion they have come to appreciate and love. Moreover, the warm and appreciative feelings toward one's childhood religion (including the way religious adherence was fostered), cause questions like the merit of a religious way of life to have self-evident positive answers. As a result, to the extent that these youth engage in an attempt to resolve the tension between the modern and the religious, they do it via a revisionist rather than radical exploration.

However, provision of rationale, demonstration of intrinsic value, and the resulting identified motivation may not be sufficient to support a revisionist exploration that involves thorough examination of and adequate coping with the potential contradictions between modernity and religion. Serious attempts at resolving contradictory belief systems require psychological resources and skills beyond those associated with identification (cf. Flum & Kaplan, in press; Fowler, 1981; Perry, 1968; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Here, the socializing practice of encouraging critical thinking on religious matters may provide those resources and skills. It is the willingness to withhold judgment, to entertain uncertainty and paradox (cf. Fowler, 1981), to accept the co-existence of non-complementary systems of explanation, and to engage in complex self-reflection and reasoning, that critical thinking on religion may help to develop and that would aid young adults in integrating both religion and modernity into their identity. It appears, then, that thorough revisionist exploration is likely to develop most fully in youth with identified religious internalization whose parents encouraged critical religious thinking.

Fig. 1 describes the construct of integrated internalization as involving experiential and behavioral aspects. At the experiential level, religious practices and beliefs are perceived and felt as "choiceful" and authentic; that is reflecting who one really is and wants to be. At the behavioral level, there is continual enactment of many religious practices because they are perceived

as reflecting one's authentic, self-chosen religious identity, and not because of external or intjected reasons.

It is important to note that integrated internalization of the religion of origin in modern contexts is a dynamic process that, probably, never comes to a complete conclusion. Thus, people who have reached a fairly high level of religious integration are still likely to encounter new issues and practices that challenge some of their religious beliefs and practices and that raise conflicts, which may remain unresolved or lead to changes and revisions. It appears, then, that one of the identifying features of people who have reached integrated religious internalization within a modern context might be their ability to live with some inconsistencies, and their willingness to acknowledge that in some areas they (and various religious authorities) have not been able to attain a satisfactory solution. While continuing to search for a satisfactory resolution, these people do not experience feelings of great urgency or stress regarding such unsolved issues, even if they understand that solutions may not be found.

In the next sections, we review empirical findings which bear on our model. We first summarize previous studies conducted in this domain, and then follow to present the studies that we have conducted.

## INDIRECT EMPIRICAL SUPPORT

Whereas no published research has examined all, or even most, of the components in the model presented above, several studies provide indirect support to some of its important aspects. In the following section, we begin with a review of research pertaining to parents' role in religious socialization, focusing mainly on parental strategies which appear to moderate the relations between parent and offspring religiosity. We follow with a brief review of theory and research concerned with exploration – its antecedents and its influence on religious identity and behavior.

### *Parental Practices as Determinants of Offspring Tendency to Internalize Parents' Religion*

Many contemporary researchers view parents' religiosity as central in determining their adolescents' religiosity. There is a common perception that adolescents are more likely to embrace religion if their parents participate in religious practices (see Arnett, 2004; Clark, Worthington, & Danser, 1986;

Francis & Brown, 1991; King, Furrow, & Roth, 2002; Willits & Crider, 1989; Martin, White, & Perlman, 2003). However, there is less agreement concerning the extent to which children of religious parents remain religious after they enter emerging adulthood (see Arnett, 2002; Francis & Brown, 1991; Willits & Crider, 1989; Hoge, Johnson, & Luidens, 1993, 1994; Hoge, Dinges, Johnson, & Gonzales, 1998). For example, whereas Arnett (2004) claims that there is no relationship between emerging adults' religious beliefs and practices and those of their parents, Myers (1996) contends that parents play a very influential role in offspring's religious socialization even after they establish their independent households.

Such contradictory findings suggest that the relation between parents' and emerging adults' religious beliefs and practice is labile and that it depends on a variety of factors. One important factor that might moderate the relations between parents' and young adults' religiosity might be the type of socializing practices that parents employ. Thus, several studies found that when the parent-child relationships is close and supportive, or when offspring report secure attachment to their parents, there is greater correspondence between the religious beliefs and practices of parents and their offspring (Granqvist, 1998; Granqvist & Hagekull, 1999; Hoge & Petrillo, 1978; Hood, Spilke, Hunsberger, & Gorusch, 1996; Strahan, 1991; Myers, 1996 – although see Nelsen, 1980).

In the proposed model, one component that comes close to the variable of parental support (more precisely lack of support) is the practice of parental conditional regard, which implies lack of dependable, unconditional parental support. The findings indicating that lack of parental warmth and support appears to undermine the inter-generational transmission of religious beliefs are consistent with the notion that conditional regard is not likely to facilitate integration of parents' religion. Yet, conditional regard is quite different from lack of parental warmth, support, or secure attachment, and therefore its effects should be tested more directly.

The empirical findings (based on research done by other authors) that are most relevant to the proposed model come from the longitudinal study reported by Myers (1996), which found that parental support and moderate strictness (control) had a direct effect on offspring religiosity 12 years later. In addition, those parental practices moderated the effects of parents' religiosity on their offspring's subsequent religiosity. Thus, parents' religiosity was found to have a stronger impact on offspring's religiosity at higher levels of parental support and at moderate levels of strict control. The findings concerning the positive effects of moderate strictness appear to contradict our assumptions that controlling parental practices do not promote



integrated internalization of parents' religion. However, the nature of the variable termed moderate parental strictness is not clear. It is quite possible that in the Myers (1996) study, low parental strictness reflected parental neglect rather than autonomy support. And as shown in many studies (e.g., Baumrind, 1971; Grolnick et al., 1997), it is possible that controlling parenting is better than neglectful parenting.

One qualitative study that bears on the concept that encouraging independent religious thinking can lead to further religious internalization was done by Gross (2003), which examined the perceptions of female emerging adults concerning their religious education and the ways it influenced their religious worlds. Gross interviewed 40 young religious female emerging adults regarding their religious high school schooling. Gross concludes that teachers have a rather limited influence on the emerging religious world of their students.

Furthermore, it appears that most teachers were not perceived as encouraging reflective processes, although reflective *teachers are apparently preferable to instrumental ones insofar as construction of one's religious identity is concerned*. The female emerging adults perceived four major aspects of teaching to have a defining effect on their religious development: positive interaction with teachers (including an empathic attitude, respect, and pleasantness toward students), a favorable personal religious example set by the teachers, description and analysis of teachers' own religious experiences (which can be viewed as a form of reflection on behavior), and encouragement of critical reflection on religious issues (although this aspect of teaching was rarely reported, it was viewed as very meaningful when it occurred).

Although Gross' study did not refer to parental practices, the finding that reflection-oriented teachers were perceived as preferable and as more helpful in the construction of religious identity is consistent with our assumptions regarding the positive effect of parenting which encourages critical religious thinking.

Overall, the survey of the pertinent research literature suggests that, while parental practices involving support and warmth, and to a lesser extent strict control and encouragement of critical thinking, received some attention, no study to date has examined the effects of parental autonomy support or conditional love on inter-generational transmission of religion. The study of the latter parental practices (on which the proposed model focuses) is particularly important because it can perhaps show that, at least in the case of conditional love, low strict control (as indicated by low conditional love) is associated with a higher degree of inter-generational religious transmission than moderate strict control, and this is especially so when low conditional love is associated with a high degree of autonomy support.

### *Exploration: Its Antecedents and Its Influence on Religious Identity and Behavior*

As the proposed model focuses also on the process of exploring religious questions, we now survey research related to religious exploration – its antecedents and its influence on religious identity and behavior. Grotevant (1987) offers a process model of identity formation where the exploration process is a central component. This model emphasizes the role of the social context in identity formation. The social context includes the societal/cultural level as well as family, friends, school, and/or workplace.

Grotevant and Cooper (1985) examined the influence of the family context on exploration and identity formation. They indicate that patterns of family interaction were different in families with adolescents who are high versus low on exploration. In families of adolescents high on exploration, differences among family members were openly examined, whereas the families of adolescents low on exploration tended to avoid dealing with differences. Identity achievement was enhanced when the family context was supportive, cohesive, and encouraged examination of differences of opinion among family members. Although this study did not deal directly with religious exploration, it did include religious exploration among the various exploration domains that were considered in determining participants' identity status.

As the status of identity achievement is closely related to the notion of integrated internalization (see Marcia, 1966, 2002) and encouragement of different opinions is closely related to the fostering of critical thinking, it is reasonable to assume that the findings reported by Grotevant and Cooper (1985) are consistent with our view that parents who encourage independent and critical thinking facilitate the development of an integrated identity. The study, however, did not examine directly the notion that youth whose parents' encourage critical religious thinking are more likely to reach an integrated internalization of their parents' religious way of life.

One study that did focus more directly on the influence of relationships with parents on the way offspring cope with religious issues and on religious development was conducted by Granqvist and Hagekull (1999). It was found that youth who reported poor attachment to their parents described their religiosity as involving sudden religious conversions and intense religious changes at a later life period, and their attitude to religion was highly emotional. In contrast, youth whose religiosity is characterized by early, gradual, and less emotional adoption of religious practices and standards reported secure attachment to their parents.

Granqvist and Hagekull (1999) description of the rather emotional and crisis-oriented religious development of youth with insecure attachment is close to our notion of radical exploration as rooted in introjection and conditional parental love. In addition, the gradual and less emotional religious development of youth with secure attachment has some features in common with the proposed concept of revisionist exploration. Yet, the concepts of insecure attachment and conditional love are quite different, as are the constructs of revisionist exploration and the gradual pattern of religious development described by Granqvist and Hagekull (1999). Moreover, it is quite possible that parents who are experienced at providing secure attachment can still be perceived as using more benign forms of conditional love in the religious domain (mainly those relying on conditional praise).

Interestingly, despite the centrality of religion within Erikson's (1963) theory of identity and psycho-social development, very little research has examined religious identity development (see Markstrom, 1999; Hunsberger, Pratt, & Pancer, 2001 for a review), and most of that research does not pertain directly to our proposed model concerning the role of religious exploration in the development of religious integration. In addition, all of this research uses a global indicator of identity status across different domains (including religion) and does not provide information on the specific correlates of identity status in the religious domain. Despite this problem, it is reasonable to view the status of identity achievement as a remote indicator of some kind of religious integration, where foreclosure can be viewed as representing a less advanced level of internalization and integration, which often is a product of introjective processes.

Fulton (1997) studied college students and found that the status of identity achievement correlated positively with an internalized religious orientation. Fulton's study, however, did not inform us about the socialization or developmental antecedents of religious integration or on its effects on religious behavior. Hunsberger et al. (2001) examined the relations between identity formation and two styles of consultation when having religious doubts: belief-confirming consultation (BCC) and belief-threatening consultation (BTC). The interesting results regarding the exploration styles were as follows: Identity achievers were found to be seeking both BCC and BTC. Moratoriums were seeking BTC but avoiding BCC, whereas foreclosures were seeking BCC but avoiding BTC. Finally, diffusers were avoiding any consultation altogether (both BCC and BTC).

The finding that the status of identity achievement is related to an internalized religious orientation and to the capacity to consider both supportive

and controversial opinions suggests that identity achievement can be treated as a remote indicator of religious internalization and integration.

Markstrom-Adams, Hofstra, and Dougher (1994) studied the relations between identity status and church attendance among high school students. They found that both Foreclosure and Identity Achievement were related to increased church attendance. A similar pattern was also found by Hunsberger et al. (2001) in a much larger sample of adolescents. The finding of positive correlation between identity achievement and church attendance is consistent with our view that religious integration (as indicated by identity achievement) leads to religious behavior. The positive correlation between foreclosure and behavior can also be expected in the case of high school students. However, it can also be expected that after leaving home and being confronted with conflicting values and ways of life, many of the foreclosed individuals who did not engage in revisionist exploration and tend to be highly introjected, would find it difficult to adhere to their religion of origin.

Markstrom (1999) studied the relations between identity formation status and religious involvement in a rural sample of high school students. This time, however, identity status did not relate to religious involvement. The difference between the results of the studies in which Markstrom was involved might stem from the fact that in the second study participants were from smaller, more rural and poorer communities, which might be much more controlling with regard to religion and therefore do not allow personal differences to affect religious behaviors.

Taken together, the studies conducted within the identity formation paradigm suggest that some youth do form an integrated internalization of their childhood religion, which is associated with a more advanced level of general identity formation. When this occurs in contexts that are not highly controlling (e.g., in communities that are large and less rural) religious beliefs that are integrated also contribute to religious behavior. Given that parental contexts that encourage critical thinking were found to contribute to identity development (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985), and given the link between identity development and religious integration, we can assume that criticism-enabling parental practices are also likely to contribute to the development of integrated religious internalization. However, clearly there is a real need for research that examines those processes directly. This was the aim of the following three studies.

The studies were conducted with religious Jewish Israeli youth and examine different parts of the proposed model of processes affecting the development of an integrated internalization of religious practices (see Fig. 1). While the first two studies employed quantitative methods, the third one

used a qualitative methodology. The first study focused on socializing practices hypothesized to affect the quality of offspring internalization of parents' religion (i.e., the left part of the model depicted in Fig. 1). The second investigation examined the role of integrated religious internalization as a potential mediator of the relations among revisionist and radical exploration and religious observance (i.e., the right part of Fig. 1). Finally, the qualitative study explored most of the processes included in our theoretical model. Together, those studies provide data that directly bear on the validity of the proposed model.

## DIRECT EMPIRICAL SUPPORT: QUANTITATIVE STUDIES

### *Study 1: The Relations Between Perceived Parental Practices and Religious Internalization*

Study 1 (Assor & Friedman, 2005; see also Assor & Roth, 2005) investigated the hypothesized relations between adolescents' perceptions of their parents' strategies of conditional regard and of providing rationale and demonstrating intrinsic value and their introjected and identified internalization of religious practice, respectively.

Two hundred and twenty-two ninth–eleventh grade students in two all male and two all female Jewish-orthodox religious high schools in Israel responded to self-report surveys in their classroom. Items in the survey were modeled after similar instruments in different domains (e.g., Assor & Roth, 2005; Assor et al., 2000, 2004; Knafo & Assor, 2005; Knafo et al., in press; Roth & Assor, 2003) and included three scales assessing parental strategies of mother and of father in the domain of religious practice: (a) perceptions of parental conditional love (e.g., “I feel that I would lose some of my father's/mother's affection if I would not keep Kosher;” “I feel that my father/mother would give me more affection if I pray everyday in the synagogue”);

(b) perceptions of provision of a rationale (e.g., “My father/mother explains what is the source of the commandments (*mitzvot*) that are hard to keep”); and

(c) perceptions of demonstration of intrinsic value (e.g., “My father/mother enjoys studying the Torah;” “My father/mother prays with seriousness and intensity (with *kavana gdolah*).”).

The survey also included scales assessing three levels of internalization of religious practice: identified internalization (“When I say grace after meals, I do so because I understand the importance of this commandment (*mitzvah*)”); introjected internalization (“I keep the Sabbath so that I would not feel guilty”); and external internalization (“I keep the Sabbath because this is what is required of me”). In addition, extent of religious observance was also assessed. All scales manifested appropriate statistical properties.

As expected, the two autonomy-supportive parental strategies – provision of rationale and demonstration of value – were positively and strongly correlated with each other, but only mildly correlated with the controlling strategy of conditional regard. Identified regulation was negatively correlated with external regulation, whereas introjected regulation was mildly and positively correlated with external as well as with identified regulations. This pattern replicates the Simplex structure assumed by self-determination theory (see Ryan & Connell, 1989), in which constructs representing closer levels of internalization (e. g., external and introjected) are expected to have stronger positive correlations than constructs representing more distant levels of internalization (e.g., external and identified).

As hypothesized, perceived use of conditional maternal and paternal regard was positively correlated with introjected as well as with external regulations of religious practice, but was unrelated to identified regulation. In contrast, demonstration of intrinsic value and provision of rationale were positively correlated with identified regulation, but were unrelated to or negatively related with introjected and external regulations. In addition, while perceptions of intrinsic value demonstration and providing rationale were positively related to offsprings' reports of religious observance, perceived parental conditional regard was mostly unrelated to offspring religious observance.

Study 1 had two methodological limitations. First, we relied only on adolescents' reports to assess parents' practices. Second, we employed data collected at one point in time. Nevertheless, the results were consistent with our conceptualization regarding the socializing antecedents of identified versus introjected modes of internalization of a religious way of life.

### *Study 2: Exploration, Integrated Internalization, and Religious Observance*

This study (Cohen-Malayev & Assor, 2003) aimed at developing instruments to assess radical versus revisionist exploration of religious identity, as well as integrated internalization of religious practice. In addition, we

examined the hypothesis that revisionist, but not radical, exploration enhances integrated internalization of the practices of one's childhood religion, which then results in present adherence to those practices. Participants in this study were 160 religious Jewish young adults (ages 18–30), whose participation was voluntary. Participants responded to a survey that included scales assessing the above variables as well as open, free response, questions (the findings of which are reported in a later section of this chapter).

The first phase of this study involved the construction of scales assessing radical and revisionist exploration of a religious identity. Following generation of items, an exploratory factor analytic procedure, and reliability tests, two scales were created to assess the two respective variables. Items assessing past radical and revisionist exploration appear in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Items Assessing Past Radical and Revisionist Exploration.

**Past Radical Exploration:**

1. In the past, I often questioned the extent to which the *halachic* approach is suitable to me
2. In the past, I dealt with subject matters in Judaism, which disturb me personally
3. In the past, I dealt with the difficulties I experience when fulfilling the *mitzvot* (commandments)
4. In the past, I had strong emotional responses in relation to religion and it was important to me to examine their significance
5. In the past, I thought of my personal motives for keeping the *mitzvot* (commandments)
6. In the past, I wondered if I would have become Jewish if I was raised in a different environment
7. In the past, I asked myself why do I really keep the *mitzvot* (commandments)
8. In the past, I dealt with the question: is my Jewish religious devotion originating from my personal choice and understanding or is mainly a product of the influence of others on me.

**Past revisionist exploration:**

In the past, I tried to find out how different approaches to Judaism deal with the following subject matters:

1. Women's status/women's role:
2. The attitude of Judaism to other nations (the notion of the chosen people)
3. The holocaust
4. The authority and power of the civil courts (especially the Supreme Court) versus the religious courts
5. The relations between religion and science (for example, with regard to the theory of genesis)
6. Sexuality (homosexuality, full sexual relations prior to marriage)
7. Human rights (euthanasia as an example)
8. Religious coercion – obliging secular Israeli Jews to behave according to religious law: marriage, burial, keeping the Sabbath (religion–state relations, separation between state and religion).

The items assessing past radical exploration capture a preoccupation with the sources of one's adherence to religious practices (i.e., Why am I a religious person? and Why do I observe religious laws and practices?) as well as with the emotional costs of such commitment to religious law. The items assessing past revisionist exploration capture attempts to examine different perspectives within Judaism concerning various controversial issues over which liberal-modern values and those of orthodox Jewish institutional religion in Israel are in tension. These are, for example, the status of women, homosexuality, premarital sexual relations, abortion, euthanasia, and more generally, the separation of church and state, which currently does not exist in Israel, due to a large extent to pressure of orthodox religious parties and institutions. The correlation between radical and revisionist exploration was  $r = 0.21$  ( $p < 0.05$ ).

We also constructed a scale to assess integrated internalization of religious practice. The items ask the respondent to indicate how much enactment of specific practices and adherence to various religious beliefs is "choiceful" and reflects the personal identity she or he has constructed (e.g., "I make an effort to keep the commandments because keeping the commandments is an important part of the identity I formulated for myself," "when I wear a yarmulke/dress modestly I express my decision to be an observing Jew – something I thought about a lot in the past.").

Behavioral observance of orthodox religious practices was assessed by a scale that asked participants to indicate the frequency of observing certain commandments such as "keeping the Sabbath," "keeping Kosher," "wearing a yarmulke/dressing modestly," and "studying Jewish law." All scales manifested appropriate statistical characteristics.

As expected, revisionist, but not radical, exploration was associated positively and significantly with integrated internalization and with religious observance. Mediation analyses supported the hypothesis that revisionist exploration leads to integrated internalization, which in turn leads to behavioral observance. Thus, the positive and significant regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of revisionist exploration on observance dropped significantly (Sobel's, 1982 test,  $p < 0.05$ ) when integrated internalization was entered as a second predictor of observance. Although the mediation is only partial and the design does not allow us to test causal hypotheses, the results are consistent with the view that while revisionist exploration leads to integrated internalization of the religion of origin in youth living in modern contexts, this is not true in the case of radical exploration.

The findings from studies 1 and 2 provide initial support for the proposed model. However, it is clear that much more research is required in order to

establish the temporal links between the various constructs. For that, longitudinal designs are imperative. Moreover, the conceptualization of radical and revisionist exploration is still in its inception. Therefore, more in-depth exploratory methods are required in order to gain a richer and more comprehensive understanding of these modes of religious exploration. We provide a beginning of such an endeavor in the next section, in which we report on the findings from the qualitative part of the second study presented above.

### *A Preliminary Qualitative Investigation of Radical versus Revisionist Religious Exploration*

#### *Objectives and Method*

To gain further insight into the nature and dynamics of radical versus revisionist exploration, we asked 11 persons who participated in the larger study and currently belong to a sub-sample of 53 students attending a secular Israeli university to respond to an open-ended questionnaire. Six of the participants were selected to represent clear cases of radical exploration, whereas five represented clear cases of revisionist exploration. Thus, in the group representing radical exploration, participants scored at least half of a standard deviation above the mean of the total sample on the radical exploration scale. In addition, they also scored higher on the radical exploration scale than on the revisionist exploration scale. The reverse was true for the five persons representing revisionist exploration. The students were asked to describe the questions and/or issues pertaining to religion that have occupied them in the past and/or are occupying them in the present, what started the questioning and what did they do or are doing about it.

The general framework used to analyze the students' responses was based on the phenomenological approach for identifying themes in verbal accounts (Giorgi, 1975; Creswell, 1998; Ratner, 2002). However, as our research question emerged from a specific theoretical background, we combined a priori theme analysis with a more open-ended theme analysis. It is important to note that the researchers who conducted the analysis were blind to the classification of the participants as radicals versus revisionists.

#### *Plan of Analysis*

First, we attempted to assess the extent to which the features that define the two exploration styles according to the self-report scales were also present in the open descriptions. Specifically, we looked for three features: (1) the extent to which participants deal with religious issues (including the tension

between religion and modernity) in a very emotional way, emphasizing the personal costs of a religious way of life, (2) the degree to which those persons are concerned with the sources of their belief and the extent to which their religious adherence is a product of their own choice, and (3) the manner of coping with the religion-modernity conflict: a self-disciplined and gradual attempt to find the solution within the realm of Jewish scholarship versus a more impatient and open search, which includes examination of non-orthodox and even secular ways of life.

Then, we looked for other features of radical versus revisionist exploration that we might have neglected in our self-report scales but did appear in our conceptualization. The result of this was the discovery of the central place of existential questions such as the existence of God, his goodness, and the merits of doing *Mitzvot* (commandments). Then, we turned to educational or family sources of the ways in which participants cope with religious questions and finally to the possibility of deep integration of traditional religion with the present or future lives of our participants.

#### *Findings*

As can be expected, based on our conceptualization of radical versus revisionist exploration, religious practices and questions evoked *more negative emotions* in participants scoring high on the self-report radical exploration scale (i.e., "radicals") than in participants scoring high on the self-report revisionist exploration scale (i.e., "revisionists"). Thus, most of the radicals emphasized personal difficulties and costs involved in the attempt to maintain a religious way of life, which sometimes lead to anger or resentment toward religion.

In response to the question "Describe religion-related topics that have occupied you in the last year, what caused you to think of them, and what did you do about it?," one "radical" (David) responded in the following way:

*Faith* – Doubts that rose in me concerning faith. The doubts undermined my whole identity, I talked with my brother and with Rabbis in the Yeshiva about it.

*Divine providence (Hashgacha Elyona), sin and punishment* – Things I saw, I felt an existential difficulty with the suffering in the world from a faith (*emoonit*) perspective, I talked with my Rabbi in the Yeshiva about this.

*Modesty* – Coming to the University and bumping into an immodest reality, a feeling of an almost impossible conflict between the duty of "watching your eyes" and the non-modest reality all around; **I asked myself if I am not "screwed" because I am religious, a feeling of some resentment** (our emphasis). I talked with my Rabbi in the Yeshiva I once studied in and he strengthened me and eradicated the feeling of resentment.

*Prohibitions on touch* – **A feeling of resentment toward the Halacha** (religious law) (our emphasis); I talked about it with my Rabbi in the Yeshiva that I once attended and he

explained me the logic of the prohibitions of touching, and has eradicated the feeling of resentment (Quote # 1).

David's resentment toward religion is clearly expressed vis-à-vis the sexual religious prohibitions that stand in sharp contrast to the modern university context he now lives in. The way in which he deals with this conflict would be discussed later in relation to the possibility of religious integration among the radicals.

The theme of having to sacrifice sexual pleasures because of religious codes appeared in the response of another man (Jacob) to the question regarding issues he was lately concerned about:

Relations between man and woman, to what extent is it necessary to be strict about it and to **sacrifice** (our emphasis), how do I overcome instincts and urges, leave the marginal and focus more on *Torah* and *Mitzvoth*. (Quote # 2).

Jacob then added that stresses in the university and traumas that he went through were some of the causes that led him to examine important aspects of religion.

The issue of personal difficulties as an instigator of religious questioning appeared also in the answer of one young radical-exploration woman (Tamar), who wrote that she started questioning the existence of God "because my personal situation and the situation of the country were both not so good" (quote # 3). Although she does not get into an elaborate discussion of her personal difficulties, it appears that the religious exploration emerged, at least in part, from personal distress.

A second radical-exploration woman (Yael) also focused on emotionally problematic aspects of religion as sources of her religious exploration. In response to the question regarding what caused her to become concerned with various religious questions she wrote:

- a. The feeling that religion causes life to be less joyful and flowing (not in an absolute way, depends how you do this)
- b. I felt that the climate I grew up in (that was related to the religious way I was educated in) did not do me good. (Quote # 4).

Interestingly, Moshe, another radical-exploration man, who provided a very brief three-sentence response, also mentioned the difficulties that religion causes. Thus, his longest sentence was: "why is this heavy burden of religion?" (Quote # 5).

The highly emotional nature of the radical-exploration process is, perhaps, best exemplified by the sixth member of the radical exploration group (Rachel), who provided the following summary of the history of her religious

questioning and the ways she has tried to cope with her religious doubts and needs:

... In grade seven, I was struck by the recognition that sacrificing is a religious ritual which is similar to pagans' and other cultures' religious rituals. This understanding led to the collapse of the conception that the Jewish religion is more exalted and absolute, and slowly other understandings and axioms were shattered, leading me to finally doubt G-d's existence. I felt tremendous guilt – I did not share this with anyone – as well as felt great fear because I felt I lost something tremendous and was left alone. I decided to continue my studies in a more liberal religious high school since I felt that by belonging to a liberal setting it will be easier for me to keep living within the religious framework. During high school I have developed the illusion that I am comfortable with living with this contradiction. However, at some point I understood it is not realistic and that it causes me pain and frustration. I decided that once high school will be over I will become secular. In a way I was looking for appreciation from the people around me about the transfer I made, mainly from religious people – actually because I wanted to be convinced back. Today I am dealing in a deep and non-compromising fashion with all these questions with myself along with my (religious) boyfriend. I accumulated a lot of anger toward the religion and G-d which "disappointed" me and today I am in a state of reconciliation. (Quote # 6).

Clearly, the above summary is consistent with the view that the radicals perceive religious questions as personally disturbing and as evoking negative feelings such as guilt, fear, anger and loneliness. The above quote has other important features, which we will discuss later.

In contrast to the participants scoring high on radical exploration, participants scoring high on the revisionist exploration scale dealt with religious questions in ways that are less emotional and angry. Thus, while revisionists did note that the various religious practices are quite problematic and do not fit modern ideas, they dealt with those issues in a less personal and emotional manner, sometimes even adopting a scholarly way. Another theme that appears in three of the six responses of the radicals, and is completely absent in the case of the revisionists, is *the concern regarding religious practice as being freely chosen rather than externally induced*. That is, a concern with the sources of one's religious adherence and *the extent to which the religious way of life feels autonomous or self-determined versus controlled*.

Thus, Yael, who was cited above (quote # 4) noted that in the past she was concerned with the question: "To what extent is my connection to religion internal and real?" In addition, Rachel (who is also cited in quote # 5) writes: "I want to feel free – liberated while I am religious." Finally, one radical (Tamar) explicitly focuses on the reasons for observing the religious code:

The sheer fact that I am Jewish is the cause and the reason for observing the *Mitzvoth*. I would not observe the *mitzvoth* (religious commands) because I would be rewarded



to-day or in the future but rather observe the *mitzvot* because I was born Jewish. And if I were someone else, the commands of the Jews would not have been binding for me (our emphasis). I accepted this approach cognitively but not emotionally. As a result I am still working to accept this approach and to accept it out of love and not only because of the thought that it is the right way. (Quote # 7).

Interestingly, this participant is aware of various reasons or motivations for religious behavior, and appears to struggle with an acute awareness that she observes the religious practice because she has to and not because she fully identifies with it. The lack of deep identification with the religion of origin appears to be reflected in her tendency to consider "the commands of the Jews" from the external perspective of those who are not Jews. As we read her account, we get the impression that the fact that she was born and raised in a religious-Jewish community is a source of an internal conflict for her. In terms of SDT, she appears to be trying to move from a controlled and introjected religious motivation to a more autonomous integrated and perhaps even intrinsic religious motivation.

A third theme that distinguishes between the "radicals" and the "revisionists" is their *style of coping with the religion-modernity conflict*. Thus, while four out of the five "revisionists" try to resolve the conflict through a *fairly demanding, gradual and complex exploration process involving considerable study of religious writings*, the "radicals" search for answers appears to be more *impatient, relying almost exclusively on other people as authorities or sources of ideas rather than taking the more laborious route of inspecting various writings and making the decision themselves*. We will illustrate this difference with some examples.

Miriam, one woman scoring high on the "revisionist" exploration scale, has been recently dating a secular young man who feels that physical contact and sexual relationship are central to intimate relationship and thus would like to have some sexual relationship. After describing her partner's view, Miriam proceeds to describe her response:

My feeling – internal conflict – on the one hand the natural desire for physical contact and on the other hand – the *Halacha* and Judaism as I perceive it. What do I do – I am still struggling with this problem ... I read a little of the Jewish opinions on the subject (our emphasis).

The turning to religious writings in an attempt to make up her own mind also applies to other issues that have concerned this woman, issues such as good and evil, the logic of various religious commands, morality, and the creation of the world (genesis). With regard to her preoccupation with the

logic of religious commands (*Mitzvot*) she writes:

This issue rose because of my difficulty to keep a *mitzvah* that seems to me without purpose or logic. Especially with *mitzvot* that I find personally difficult to apply. Then I had a greater need to ask – why should I do this? What is the logic ... What did I do – At the beginning I tried to read on and understand each *mitzvah* that was unclear to me and hard – to understand what underlies it, but while simultaneously studying Jewish philosophy and thought (our emphasis) – I arrived at some reconciliation that not everything has a reason that I will understand, and an important part of the principles of Judaism is to act also if you do not understand.

The above quote also highlights the less emotional and less angry nature of the "revisionist" exploration process. Thus, although adherence to the religious codes clearly complicates this woman's current romantic relationship and she also does not understand the justification for many religious commands, she still does not express anger or resentment toward religion or God.

Another person in the revisionists group (Haim) is concerned with the fact that children born out of wedlock are considered by Jewish law "bastards" and are hurt, although it is not their fault. He tries to deal with this disturbing aspect of the Jewish religion *by turning to religious writings*, although he notes that he still does not understand the reason for this practice also after he examined various sources. Importantly, although Haim is concerned with many morally problematic aspects of religious law and practice (e.g., euthanasia, civil marriage, keeping of Sabbath in Israel, drafting of young women to military service), he still does not show an angry or oppositional attitude toward Jewish religion as a whole.

Daniel, another "revisionist," wrote that what caused him to question various religious practices is "the difference that is present between the classical sources and references of the *Halacha* [*Mishnah/G'marah*] and life nowadays." In particular, he refers to the place of women in the synagogue and in the Jewish religion versus their place within the modern world. He then proceeds to suggest the following way of resolving the tension between religion and modernity:

I arrived at the conclusion that one should examine the historical development of the *Halacha* while understanding the importance of keeping the tradition as we have received it today. Following this, I am open to Jewish studies of all approaches and I am still trying to formulate and consolidate my religious lifestyle – *Halachically* speaking.

Perhaps the best example of the willingness of the revisionists to engage in a serious religious exploration as a way of addressing the modernity-religion

conflict is provided by Yehuda, who provides the following account:

I was preoccupied with things like the development of the *Halacha* versus its continuity, fitting the religious values to the modern world, relevance of Jewish subjects to my identity ... relations between the sexes, a deeper learning of the religious system ... the "seculars", limits and red lines, the issue of modesty as an example of some clash between the different eras ...

Generally, I chose to immerse myself in religious subjects out of a will to live as a critical and thinking religious person. I did not consider taking extreme steps in this matter but it was important to me to live as a thinking (reflective) religious person who understands Jewish thought and law (*Halacha*). I chose to study after high school in a certain Yeshiva, because I felt that there they give room to every real question that arises and there is no thought "censorship". Generally, I was raised to think critically and therefore when I was confronted with religious issues that were difficult for me, it was important for me to study them and cope with them ... it was important for me to examine to what extent and in what ways does the *Halacha* adapt itself to the changing world and how is it possible to promote such issues that are important to me.

Male-female relations – I also talked to people about this issue and read about it in an attempt to see what is the "recommended" way according to the religion ... This topic, of course, occupies many people my age in my surrounding, and in my opinion it is the number one reason for identity problems and conflicts regarding religious observance during adolescence and later on. Today, I am still in the process of searching for a way to grant a place to the religious world within a lifestyle which is not within a religious framework ... The status of women – for me this issue is very problematic. There is no doubt that there is a gap between our perception of this subject as people in a modern society and the way the *Halacha* treated this issue until very recently. In my opinion a change in this domain is starting to emerge ... and I hope that this tendency would continue with an understanding for the need of the *Halacha* to be conservative and to defend the value system it represents.

Yehuda appears to have been deeply concerned with the conflict between modernity and religion for a long time, yet he is not angry or guilty because of it. Rather, he seems to have the patience and initiative to cope with the various dilemmas in a thorough and gradual way, turning to both books and people, selecting an open-minded learning context, and above all, trying to make his own decisions in a balanced and critical way, rather than turning to some external authority to make the decision for him. Yehuda's account is a prototypical example of a revisionist response in some other ways, as will be demonstrated later on.

Unlike the revisionists, the "radicals" cope with the modernity-religion conflict in ways that appear more impatient, less complex, and at times less willing to take responsibility and make one's own decisions. For example, David repeatedly writes that he has tried to deal with modesty and sexuality issues by turning to his Rabbi, and indeed the Rabbi has succeeded to "strengthen" him and drive away the resentment (see quotes 1 and 2). In the

case of David, then, it appears as if he could not gather the strength and the courage to make his own decision and had a strong need to rely on an external authority to make the decision for him. The turning to external authority in this case stands in sharp contrast to the more active and autonomous way in which Yehuda and Miriam (two revisionists) seek to resolve their conflict on issues pertaining to male-female relations.

Jacob, another "radical," does not cope with his religious conflicts by turning to an external authority that would make the decisions for him. Yet, he also does not give any indication of what *specific* actions he has taken in an attempt to make up his mind on the issues that concern him:

One has to check, to examine, to get deeper and to think, trying with the Torah and the *Mitzvoth*, to be more observant and rigorous, to ask questions and to look for answers.

As we read his response it seems that he has not initiated any systematic attempts to solve his dilemmas. In that sense, his explorative process seems to be less serious than the type of effortful investigation described by the revisionists.

Other "radicals" either do not describe how they are trying to resolve the serious conflicts they are coping with (Tamar, Moshe) or they briefly mention exposure to a variety of religious people and opinions as a way of coping, without ever mentioning self-study of religious sources (Yael, Rachel).

The contrast between the radicals and the revisionists is particularly apparent in the ways in which two participants (Rachel – a radical woman and Yehuda – a revisionist man) have approached and utilized their stay within a relatively open religious educational context. While Yehuda seems to have used his stay in the relatively liberal context to ask difficult questions, Rachel does not mention such questioning and appears to have retained her questions to herself.

Although our questions did not address directly the quality of the internalization of the religion of origin and its socialization sources, it is interesting to examine the responses from this perspective as well. With regard to internalization, the themes of conflict, resentment, and guilt that appear only in the responses of the radicals strongly suggest that these persons indeed have internalized the religion of origin in a highly introjected way. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that half of the radicals are explicitly concerned with the extent to which their connection to religion feels "internal and real", suggesting that, as can be expected in the case of introjection, the beliefs do not feel authentic and self-expressive.

One of the radicals, Yael, also linked her conflict with religion to the type of religious education she got and the way she was raised, and another

radical woman, Rachel, writes that when her religious doubts emerged at the seventh grade, she felt a tremendous sense of guilt and did not share her doubts or feelings with anyone. This suggests that the type of context she grew up in perhaps did not encourage open discussions of religious issues and might have even fostered a sense of guilt as a way of promoting religious internalization.

In contrast to the introjected nature of the radicals' responses, the accounts of the revisionists suggest a more autonomous type of religious internalization. Thus, although all the revisionists viewed certain aspects of religion as problematic and inconsistent with desirable modern ideas and were deeply concerned with those issues, these concerns were not accompanied by feelings of anger, fear, or guilt, which often suggest the existence of introjective processes. Moreover, the accounts of the revisionists suggest deep appreciation of religion even when it has some problematic aspects. This type of appreciation, together with the absence of feelings of anger, fear, or guilt suggests that the revisionists identify with core aspects of the religion of origin. Yet, the fact that most of the revisionists still experience serious religious dilemmas and struggles indicates that most of them have not reached a highly integrated level of internalization of the religion of origin. Interestingly, while none of the radicals mentioned an educational or familial background that encouraged critical thinking, at least one of the revisionists did refer to such a background.

Let us now turn to the possibility of an integrated internalization of the religion of origin. The strong feelings of anger and resentment characterizing the radicals, together with the diffuse way in which they try to cope with the religion-modernity conflict suggest that they are not likely to form an integrated internalization of key aspects of their religion of origin. The radicals do care about religion, and many of them may try hard to keep their connection with it. However, their anger and guilt may not allow them to conduct the kind of gradual exploration and integration that systematically examines and reorganizes one's religious views until one has reached a religious way of life that is coherent with one's modern principles and lifestyle.

Thus, although David turns to his Rabbi to "strengthen" him and help eradicate the doubts and the resentment, one gets the sense that this method of coping is not likely to result in deep integration because he does not think about his religious doubts and resentment seriously in an attempt to form a type of identity that would address the contradictions underlying his doubts and anger. Rather, there is a recurrent attempt to simply push the doubts and the anger away with the help of respected external authorities. However, the anger and the doubt appear to continue to simmer also when David feels

temporarily strengthened, and we get the impression that David makes no real progress toward a religious self-definition that takes into account the religion-modernity conflict.

The deep need of the radicals to retain the connection to the religion they grew up with is evident also in the account of Rachel who says she has accumulated a great deal of anger toward religion and God that have let her down. Thus, she says that even when she left the religious way of life (in the army), she actually wanted to be "convinced" back. Today, despite her anger, she describes herself as being in a state of reconciliation with religion and as investing much effort and time in trying to find an orthodox religious way of life that would fit her. While it is possible that Rachel might eventually reach a workable integration of the modern and the religious, the strong shifts between the religious and the secular and the extreme feelings and terms that appear in her account do not suggest that she is moving in a direction of a thorough and relatively comfortable integration of the modern into the religious. In fact, although she has been concerned with the religion-modernity conflict for a long time (since the seventh grade), she does not describe even one *specific* area in which she has made some integrative progress, and has formed an approach that indeed represents mutual assimilation of the religious and the modern or the creation of an identity that accommodates the modern within the religious.

In contrast to the radicals, the revisionists appear to be engaged in a thorough and less emotional exploration process that will allow them to maintain fundamental aspects of their religion of origin, while at the same time revising their religious beliefs and lifestyle in a way that allows them to accommodate aspects of modernity they find important. For example, although Yehuda thinks that there must be a substantial change in the way Jewish orthodox religion treats women and other issues where religion contradicts valuable modern ideas, he also thinks that Jewish law should be changed in a cautious way that attempts to preserve core religious values. As we read Yehuda's account, we get the impression that although he is forming a religious identity that deviates from the traditional orthodox practices in many ways (and is compatible with modern ideas and practices), his self-constructed identity still retains the core beliefs and practices of his religion of origin.

A similar attempt to create a balance between Jewish orthodox religion and modernity appears in the responses of Daniel, who is actively engaged in an attempt to form his own approach to various religious issues, yet emphasizes the importance of keeping the tradition. Interestingly, Daniel says that lately he is less interested in issues of justness of different ways of

life and is more interested in issues of practice (what kind of religious practices he adopts and what kind of a community of practice he fits into). The move from abstract justice questions to issues of practice may be interpreted as an indication of increased commitment to a religious way of life, a commitment that is not based on ignoring basic abstract questions, but on the understanding that a religious identity also involves doing and belonging to a community, along with a continued deliberation on some unresolved fundamental issues.

The account of Miriam – a revisionist – highlights an aspect of religious integration that is particularly worth noting and perhaps is more likely to appear among revisionists than among radicals. Miriam struggles with various aspects of religion that she finds difficult to accept. She studied various Jewish sources in an attempt to understand the logic of various sexual prohibitions and formulate her own opinion. Yet, she wrote that in parallel with her studies in Jewish thought she got to:

Some acceptance of the fact that not everything has a reason I would understand ... not in the sense of being stupid, but accepting the fact that you are small and not everything we could understand here ... an issue of faith in G-d in which one has to act even if one does not always understand.

The willingness to accept *some* problematic aspects of traditional religion not because of feelings of guilt and fear or because an admired Rabbi said so, but as an act of faith may be construed as one route to the integration of the religion of origin in cases where it collides with modernity. But, note that, at least in the case of Miriam, the acceptance without understanding emerged from a serious examination of the troubling issue, it applied only to some issues, and it did not grow out of fear or guilt.

The notion of acceptance of incomprehensible religious commands is of course an important issue in many religions and has occupied many religious writers and philosophers (e.g., see Malantschuk's, 1971 analysis of Kierkegaard thought). Fowler (1981) in his theory of religious development also suggests that some acceptance of inconsistencies can be a part of mature religious thinking. Thus, thought-based, guilt-free, conscious acceptance of incomprehensible problematic religious elements can be part of the integration of the religion of origin among youth living in a modern context. We further assume that strong identification with the religion of origin allows revisionist youth to accept some incomprehensible aspects of it because they have already experienced the value of a religious way of life. Thus, the basic appreciation of religion and the interest in its preservation allow the revisionists to accept some problematic religious practices and to fully

acknowledge the fact that there are some aspects of their faith and practice that they cannot explain.

We now turn to one factor that distinguishes among the revisionists and the radicals, yet was not included in our quantitative assessment. This factor is the preoccupation with doubts concerning the existence of God and the possibility of a personal connection with a God. Thus, David writes about doubts concerning faith, sin, and punishment (*Sachar Vaonesh*), which "undermine my whole identity." Jacob's crisis of faith is expressed even more directly: "Does G-d exist? ... Do I really believe?" Tamar is also concerned with the existence of God and the extent to which God really pays attention or is concerned with every individual. Her approach to this issue is now more favorable toward the traditional religious view than it was in the past, but she is still concerned with fundamental existential questions and doubts:

Often, the questions I was concerned with in the past mainly originated from the question of the existence of G-d in the world and his connection to us ... often, I am still concerned with those questions, but, today my approach to those questions has changed. It turned from an anti and a negative examination of Judaism to prove to myself that I am right in my decision not to be religious, to a search for answers that would help me decide if I want to be a religious Jew.

It appears that although Tamar is trying to develop an integrated orthodox religious identity, her strong doubts (together with her long-standing conflict with religion and a lack of a natural worm connection to religion (indicated in previously cited quotes)) would make it difficult for her to really form an integrated and (internally harmonious) religious way of life.

Finally, Rachel also writes that both in the past and at present she has been concerned with the question of the existence of God, and in particular

the existence of G-d as a choosing and intervening entity, that is "interested" in people's way of life and the thought of crime and punishment.

In contrast to the radicals, none of the revisionists raised doubts concerning the existence of God or the idea of a connection between God and oneself.

At present, it is not clear what is the role of doubts concerning the existence of a God (often, a personal God) in the radical exploration process. Based on the socialization and internalization conception that has guided our investigation, we tend to assume that controlling inter- and intrapersonal processes cause youth to develop negative feelings against religion and God, which ultimately lead them to doubt God's existence, power, or benevolence.

There is, of course, another way to explain the connection between basic doubts concerning the existence of a (personal) God and radical exploration.

Thus, it is possible that due to some incidents that are not related to a controlling style of socialization, youth lose their faith in God, and this in turn causes them to experience emotional difficulties and become concerned with the authenticity of their religious way of life. According to this alternative view, radical youth reveal what appears to be a highly emotional and introjected approach to religious practices and questions because their belief in God has been shuttered and not because of their controlling socialization.

Because the open questions given to the participants in the qualitative part did not focus on socialization experiences, the qualitative study cannot help us in the attempt to understand the place and role of basic existential questions and doubts in the religious exploration process. Ongoing research is now attempting to address this issue.

## DISCUSSION

The motivation of religiously raised youth living in modern contexts to stay religious was viewed in this chapter as a motivational outcome, which is affected by various socialization, internalization, and exploration processes (e.g., Cohen-Malayev & Assor, 2003). While there are processes that motivate such youth to stay religious (e.g., the sense of meaning and belongingness that religious observance provides), there are other processes that drive youth to give up or modify many of the religious beliefs and practices they were raised on (e.g., introjection, incompatibility with modern ideas).

The studies described in the previous sections have provided initial support for the proposed model of processes which facilitate an integrated internalization of the religion of origin in youth living in modern contexts. Assuming that this model would be supported by further empirical research, it is now interesting to examine possible theoretical implications of our conception. We first focus on implications for the domains of religious socialization and religious motivational orientations, and then discuss potential implications for conceptions of exploration and identity-formation processes in general.

### *Religious Socialization*

The motivation of youth who were raised religious to maintain their religious identity and observance presents a complex issue for investigation. In his research on the religious beliefs of emerging adults, Arnett (2004), for example, argues that one of the strongest finding concerning the development

and change of religious beliefs is "how little relationship there is between the religious training [people] received throughout childhood and the religious beliefs they hold by the time they reach emerging adulthood" (p. 174). Whether this finding is ubiquitous or not, clearly there are multiple processes that play a role in the decisions that adolescents and adults make with regard to their religious life.

The model that we propose suggests that processes specified by self-determination theory may shed light on at least some of the mechanisms underlying people's religious choices. Moreover, this perspective allows us to forgo the question concerning the extent to which offspring maintain their parents' religious beliefs and practices, and ask instead: *what are the parental and contextual attributes which enhance the tendency of emerging adults to adopt their parents' religion in ways that feel integrated and authentic?*

Self-determination theory suggests that when social environments support the basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence, offspring are more likely to internalize parental values. Previous studies showed that family contexts that support the need for relatedness usually facilitate inter-generational transmission of religion (e.g., Granqvist, 1998; Granqvist & Hagekull, 1999; Hood et al., 1996; Strahan, 1991; Myers, 1996). The research that we conducted goes beyond those studies and suggests that, in addition to relational support, *autonomy support* also plays a crucial role in fostering internalization of religion. Moreover, our research specifies three autonomy-supportive socialization practices that are likely to facilitate self-determined motivation to maintain basic features of the religion of origin in the face of ideological and practical life conflicts. Those three autonomy-supportive socialization practices are: (1) provision of a rationale for adopting questionable or demanding religious beliefs and practices, (2) demonstrating the intrinsic values of such beliefs and practices, and (3) encouraging critical thinking on various religious practices and beliefs. The practice of provision of a rationale has been shown to be a facilitator of autonomous internalization in multiple contexts (see Grolnick et al., 1997). In our research, we have also highlighted the important roles of *demonstration of intrinsic value* and *the encouragement of critical thinking* – autonomy-supportive practices about which there are only a few studies. Our research in the religious domain, as well as in other domains, also points to the practice of *conditional love* as a problematic socializing practice (Assor et al., 2004; Assor & Roth, 2005).

It is important to note, however, that the type of internalization and exploration that youth experience is likely to be affected not only by parents' socializing methods, but also by the religious "content" which they seek to

transmit to their children. SDT will suggest, for example, that religious practices that strongly frustrate basic human needs (e.g., practices which cause physical pain, and involve humiliation, coercion, detachment, or sexual frustration) can never be autonomously integrated. Therefore, according to SDT, parents and educators living in a modern context who are interested in the transmission of their religious way of life to their offspring are more likely to succeed in this difficult task if they endorse religious practices that are compatible with basic psychological needs, and, in addition, rely on autonomy supportive methods.

#### *Motivational Orientations Toward Religion*

Ryan et al. (1993), following Batson and Ventis (1982), pointed out that extant measures of an internalized religious orientation (for example, the identification sub-scale developed by Ryan et al. (1993) or the scale developed by Allport and Ross (1967)), do not differentiate between critical and reflective believers and those who are not reflective and critical. In fact, some people who score high on those measures might be rather dogmatic "true believers." Batson and Ventis (1982) and Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis (1993) attempted to address this problem through their Quest scale, which is aimed at capturing a more critical, doubt-valuing, and reflective orientation to religion. However, research has indicated that this scale often reflects lack of endorsement or internalization of religiosity (see Donahue, 1985; Fulton, 1997; Ryan et al., 1993).

It is possible that the present conceptualization and measures of revisionist exploration and integrated internalization may allow us to distinguish between critical and non-critical internalization of a religious way of life, and therefore fulfill the need for measures of a reflective and critical religious internalization. Thus, participants scoring high on revisionist exploration and on integrated internalization engage in critical thinking on important religious issues, while simultaneously valuing and observing the religious way of life. Thus, researchers attempting to capture an identified/autonomous religious orientation that is also critical and reflective would do well to look for people scoring high on both identified/integrated religious internalization and on revisionist exploration.

#### *Different Views of the Exploration Process: What Kind of Exploration is Desirable?*

The different qualities associated with radical and revisionist explorations raises interesting questions regarding the criteria that we use when

evaluating a process of exploration as desirable, mature, or "deep" versus "shallow."

Some philosophical conceptions of freedom and autonomy would highlight the desirability of radical questioning of the most fundamental nature (see Aviram, 1986 for a review of different approaches to autonomy). Indeed, existentialists such as Sartre (1956) and Binswanger (1963) hold such skepticism concerning normative and institutionalized beliefs and practices as the cornerstone of individual liberation. From this philosophical standpoint, radical exploration may be considered more valuable and desirable, despite the social and emotional difficulties that are involved – or perhaps because of these difficulties. Indeed, some philosophers may see such exploration as an act of courage that represents personal as well as universal responsibility.

However, psychological conceptions such as Erikson's (1968) psycho-social approach and Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) suggest that the criterion for desirable exploration is not the extent to which it involves the most daring questioning of fundamental issues, but rather the extent to which such exploration allows people to best reconcile conflicting values, goals, needs, and commitments in a way that promotes development and well-being. From this point of view, basic and sacred axioms should be questioned only to the extent that they appear to clash with other axioms and identifications, and even more importantly – with one's basic needs.

Clearly, the question regarding which type of exploration is more desirable is philosophical and ethical, and requires a discussion that is beyond the scope of this chapter. Nevertheless, the model we proposed and our research results point to various practical or empirical issues that should be taken into consideration when thinking about the kind of exploration we would like to foster in youth. For example, whereas radical exploration may reflect a more courageous willingness to engage with the "unquestionable," the cognitive quality of this exploration can at times be rather shallow.

Consequently, this type of exploration might fail to meet the criteria of philosophers who would advocate for such a process, and thus may not justify the emotional costs, which often accompany this exploration. On the other hand, it is possible that leaders of religious, moral, and social breakthroughs in highly traditional, hierarchical, and collectivist societies must engage in radical exploration, and such exploration might contribute to the development of a powerful revolutionary ideology even when it is not very thorough from a cognitive point of view (see, for example, Erikson's, 1962, analysis of young man Luther).



*Integrating Different Traditions in the Study of Identity Formation and Self-Development: Foreclosure as an Example*

One of the strengths of our model is its integration of three different traditions in the study of identity formation and self-development: a humanistic emphasis on the search for authenticity and self-realization as a key aspect of identity and self-development (Ryan, 1993; Waterman, 1999; Sheldon, 2002), Marcia's (1966) notion of exploration and commitment, and perspectives emphasizing the striving for continuity and sameness (Schachter, 2004; Van Hoof, 1999; cf. Waterman & Archer, 1990; Sheldon, 2002).

More specifically, the model employs understandings from these three traditions to suggest an integrated premise concerning the fundamental motivations and processes guiding the development of identity: *People strive to feel authentic and to experience their life (or life-story) as coherent and meaningful, and they engage in exploration as a major developmental vehicle for fulfilling these motivations.*

Accordingly, individuals who engage in practices that they feel as unauthentic or contradictory (due to various past and present experiences, introjections, and identifications) seek to reconcile contradictions as well as to liberate themselves from non-authentic features by creating an authentic and relatively coherent identity (i.e., a way of life and a set of beliefs and goals). So far, our research suggests that while revisionist exploration leads to relatively successful resolution in terms of authenticity and coherence, this is less so in the case of radical exploration.

The merit of a theory combining the notions of authenticity and internalization based on SDT and the constructs of exploration/commitment and the resulting identity statuses (Marcia, 1993) can be illustrated with regard to the identity status of foreclosure. Before we proceed with this example, let us recall that in SDT terms, feelings of perceived autonomy and depth of internalization are considered phenomenological manifestations of the extent to which a certain value or action is authentic.

The status of foreclosure is characterized by uncritical commitment to parental values and expectations, so that major life plans, decisions, and opinions are adopted without any attempt at exploring options which are different from those espoused by one's parents and community of origin. In identity statuses theory (e.g., Marcia, 1993), the foreclosure status is therefore characterized by high commitment and low exploration. Consideration of temporal and cross-domain continuity is not likely to add much to our understanding of the foreclosure status as most foreclosures are likely to be quite consistent in their actions, opinions, and choices.

However, if we examine this status using the authenticity criteria we can see that people in the foreclosure status may fall on different points on the authenticity, perceived autonomy, and internalization continuum posited by SDT. Thus, some foreclosures adhere to parental values due to introjective processes and therefore are likely to feel fairly stressed and pressured by their commitments. Others might endorse parental values due to identification processes and therefore do not feel pressured by their commitments, perhaps even feel a clear sense of choice. Consistent with this analysis, we have shown that, at least in the religious domain, some foreclosures hold an introjected internalization, whereas others hold an identified internalization (Cohen-Malaye & Assor, 2003).

It can be seen, then, that adding the authenticity or perceived autonomy dimension to the identity status typology enables us to distinguish between very different types of foreclosures. It is also important to note that Marcia's descriptions of the foreclosure status depict mostly an introjected type of foreclosure, but without explicitly adding authenticity or introjection as a third dimension (in addition to commitment and exploration). Given that past research (Marcia, 1993) often failed to detect the hypothesized problematic correlates of foreclosure (particularly for women), it is possible that consideration of the authenticity/autonomy dimension would lead to the identification of the expected foreclosure-related difficulties.

*Limitations and Concluding Remarks*

Many questions are left unanswered. Our research has established only initial support for the model by relying on ad hoc methods and by exploring the processes in one particular group of participants: Israeli-Jewish young adults who were raised religious and who live in late modern context. Future investigations should aspire to examine these processes longitudinally. Moreover, theoretical and empirical developments should examine the relevance of similarities and differences between Judaism and other religions to the processes described as socio-cultural processes operating across religious groups as well as within Judaism may prove highly relevant for these processes. For example, internalization and exploration in search of an authentic self may take different forms in cultural groups that are characterized by independent versus interdependent self-schemas. Finally, conditions and factors such as persecution, minority-majority relations, inter-national and inter-ethnic conflicts, affluence, and poverty, can all affect the development of religious identity and religious motivations.

These challenges hint at the daunting task of investigating the processes involved in religious motivation and the construction of a religious identity. The multitudes of issues that emerge as potentially relevant suggest that such investigations would benefit greatly from integration of understandings from multiple disciplines and domains of knowledge. In that, the seemingly fundamental human experience of religiosity (cf. Arnett, 2004) may hold the potential to facilitate scholarly collaboration and to contribute to our understanding of basic, ever relevant, human processes.

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## PERSONAL RELIGION AND PROSOCIAL MOTIVATION

C. Daniel Batson, Stephanie L. Anderson and Elizabeth Collins

### INTRODUCTION

Does religion motivate prosocial behavior? Clearly, it intends to. Some version of the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you,” is known in all major religions, East and West. The faithful are admonished to love neighbor as self. And who is one's neighbor?

Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” (Luke 10:30-36 NRSV)

The answer is obvious.

There are even frequent admonitions to extend the scope of concern for others beyond strangers in need to enemies as well: “Love your enemies, and

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