

Men are from Mars? Gender Socialization and Variation in Jewish Life

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Summary

Sex, gender, and sexuality play a role in individuals daily life, even when it is not a conscious decision. Participation in Jewish rituals, where one sits if participating, and how one is received at such rituals are all impacted by these factors. In this workshop, we will discuss Jewish gender socialization and how this may impact patterns of engagement and feelings and thoughts about Jewish life. This discussion will provide a survey of research about gender socialization, the intersection of Jewishness and gender, and explore the implications of this research on the communities we are involved with personally and/or professionally.

Part One: Jewish Approaches to Gender

A. Introduction of Gender

Bereishit 1:26 And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and they shall rule over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the heaven and over the animals and over all the earth and over all the creeping things that creep upon the earth." **27** And God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

כּוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וַיְרִדוּ
בְדִגְלַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ
וּבְכָל־הַרֹמֵשׂ הָרֶמֶשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ: כּוּ וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים
אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצַלְמֵם:

Bereishit 2: 18 And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man is alone; I shall make him a helpmate opposite him."... **21** And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon man, and he slept, and He took one of his sides, and He closed the flesh in its place. **22** And the Lord God built the side that He had taken from man into a woman, and He brought her to man. **23** And man said, "This time, it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called ishah (woman) because this one was taken from ish (man)." **24** Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

יְחַן יֹאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא־טוֹב הָיְתָה הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ
אֶעֱשֶׂה־לּוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ: כֹּאֵן יִפְלֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | פְּרֻדְמָה
עַל־הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת מִצַּלְעֹתָיו וַיִּסָּר בָּשָׂר
מִתְחַתָּה: כּבּ וַיִּכְרֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־הַצַּלַּע אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח
מִן־הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיְבָאָהּ אֶל־הָאָדָם: כּג וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם
זֹאת הִפְעֵם עֵצָם מֵעַצְמִי וּבָשָׂר מִבָּשָׂרִי לִזְאֵת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה
כִּי מֵאִישׁ לָקַחְתָּ־זֹאת: כּד עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזֹב־אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו
וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וַיִּדְבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד:

Translation from Chabad.org

B. The Two Great Luminaries

Bereshit 1:16 And God made the two great luminaries: the great luminary to rule the day and the lesser luminary to rule the night, and the stars.

Translation from Chabad.org

טז וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים
אֶת־הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים לְמַשְׁלַת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־הַמְּאֹרֹת הַקְּטָנִים
לְמַשְׁלַת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֵת הַכּוֹכָבִים:

Chullin 60b: "Rabbi Shimon ben Pazzi notes a contradiction: 'And God made the two great lights; as it reads 'The large light, and the small light.' The moon said to the Holy One, Blessed Be He, 'Master of the Universe, How can two kings share one crown?' He said to her, 'Go and diminish yourself!' She said to him: 'Master of the universe, because I said a logical thing before you, I should diminish myself?' He said to her, 'Go and you will rule by day and by night'. She said to

רבי שמעון בן פזי רמי כתיב (בראשית א, טז) ויעש
אלהים את שני המאורות הגדולים וכתיב את המאור
הגדול ואת המאור הקטן אמרה ירח לפני הקב"ה
רבש"ע אפשר לשני מלכים שישתמשו בכתר אחד
אמר לה לכי ומעטי את עצמך אמרה לפניו רבש"ע
הואיל ואמרתי לפניך דבר הגון אמעית את עצמי
אמר לה לכי ומשול ביום ובלילה אמרה ליה מאי
רבותיה דשרגא בטיהרא מאי אהני אמר לה זיל
לימנויך בך ישראל ימים ושנים אמרה ליה יומא נמי

him, 'What is the greatness in that, How does a lamp help in the daytime?' He said to her: "Go! Israel will count through you the days and the years.' She said to him, 'Day is the primary unit of time, and I can't be used to count for days, as it says "And let them be for signs of the seasons and days and years".' He said, "Go! And great people will be called by your name: ... Yaakov the Small, Shmuel the Small, David the Small." God saw that the moon was still not happy at the time. The Holy One said, "Bring an atonement on Me for I have diminished the moon."

Translation from Sefaria.org

<https://www.sefaria.org/Chullin.60b.5-26?lang=en&with=all&lang2=en>

אי אפשר דלא מנו ביה תקופותא דכתיב (בראשית א, יד) והיו לאותות ולמועדים ולימים ושנים זיל ליקרו צדיקי בשמיך (עמוס ז, ב) יעקב הקטן שמואל הקטן (שמואל א יז, יד) דוד הקטן חזייה דלא קא מיתבא דעתה אמר הקב"ה הביאו כפרה עלי שמיעטתי את הירח והיינו דאמר ר"ש בן לקיש מה נשתנה שעיר של ראש חדש שנאמר בו (במדבר כח, יא) לה' אמר הקב"ה שעיר זה יהא כפרה על שמיעטתי את הירח

Aish.com on Miriam Kosman's book, *Circle, Arrow, Spiral: Exploring Gender in Judaism*:

"Yet in the Kabbalistic tradition, and in a variety of ancient cultures, the moon is associated with women, and this midrash is also often understood to refer to male-female relations as they manifest themselves in the world. Most fundamentally, the sun bestows light while the moon receives it. Kabbalistic literature echoes biological reality in describing the male archetype as the 'mashpia,' the 'bestower,' and the female archetype as the "mikabel," the 'receiver.'

Kosman reads the midrash in Chullin as presenting two stages. The first stage is a cosmic ideal of equality, represented by the notion that God originally created the sun and the moon as the same size, as it says toward the beginning of Genesis 1, "and God made the two big luminaries". Yet it is challenging to sustain this ideal, as even the moon herself fears that noone is going to take her contributions as seriously as that of the sun. The second stage offers a revision of that original plan. In the second stage, God responds to the moon's frustration by, counterintuitively, diminishing her. She is baffled by this response, but He assures her that it is not punishment, rather it may offer an even more dynamic solution to her problem. With her diminishment comes her ability to wax and wane, to at times reflect the sun's light and other times be separate from it. There is a kind of active reciprocity that results between the sun and the moon, a dynamic relationship that gives the moon a degree of autonomy in when she will reflect the sun and when she will not.

...The moon also has a particular awareness that results from her diminution, and this is in regard to her relationship to God. In Judaism, righteousness is not solely a product of great abilities or accomplishments. In this midrash, God reminds the moon that in the Bible great Jewish heroes like Jacob, Samuel and David, are called "small." What distinguishes these men is not primarily their external achievements, though they are extensive, but that despite these achievements they sensed their own smallness and vulnerability and were thus able to make room for God in their lives."

<http://www.aish.com/ci/w/A-Jewish-Perspective-on-Gender.html>

C. Binah vs. Chochma

Niddah 45b: MISHNAH. The vows of a girl of the age of eleven years and one day must be examined; the vows of one who is of the age of twelve years and one day are valid; and throughout the twelfth year they are to be examined; The vows of a boy of the age of twelve years and one day must be examined; the vows of one who is of the age of thirteen years and one day are valid; And throughout the thirteenth year they are to be examined.

GEMARA...Our Rabbis taught: These are the rulings of Rabbi. R. Simeon b. Eleazar stated, The age limits that were assigned to the girl apply to the boy while those assigned to the boy apply to

מתני' בת אחת עשרה שנה ויום א' נדריה נבדקין בת שתיים עשרה שנה ויום א' נדריה קיימין ובודקין כל שתיים עשרה בן שתיים עשרה שנה ויום אחד נדריו נבדקין בן י"ג שנה ויום אחד נדריו קיימין ובודקין כל שלש עשרה

גמ'...ת"ר אלו דברי רבי ר"ש בן אלעזר אומר דברים האמורים בתניוקת בתניוקת אמורים דברים האמורים בתניוקת אמורים א"ר חסדא מ"ט דרבי דכתיב {בראשית ב' } ויבן ה'

the girl. R. Hisda stated: What is Rabbi's reason? Because it is written in Scripture, And the Lord God built the rib which teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, endowed the woman with more understanding than the man. And the other? — He requires that text for the same deduction as the one made by Resh Lakish, for Resh Lakish citing R. Simeon b. Menasya stated, And the lord God built the rib which he took from the man into a woman, and he brought her unto the man, teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, plaited Eve's hair and then brought her to Adam, for in the sea-towns they describe net-work as binyatha. But what is R. Simeon b. Eleazar's reason? — R. Samuel son of R. Isaac replied: As a boy frequents the house of his teacher his subtlety develops earlier.

Translation from http://www.come-and-hear.com/niddah/niddah_45.html#PARTb

Maharal (Niddah 45b): *This teaches that G-d gave bina yeseira (extra understanding) to the woman* The explanation is G-d gave primordial (hayulani) intelligence to the woman because she is extra prepared for this. However the man has intelligence (seichel) and wisdom (chochma) in extra measure which is abstract intelligence. Primordial intelligences enables the woman to accept more. And thus our Sages say (Bava Metzia 59a), If your wife is short bend down and listen to her. According to one view this is referring to household matters while according to another view it is talking about worldly matters. That is because the woman's intelligence comes from primordial intelligence which is more relevant to her than the man. Consequently regarding heavenly matters one should not listen to the advice of his wife because a woman has no connection to wisdom which requires abstract intelligence. It is important to understand clearly what our Sages hint at when they say woman was given extra binah (understanding). This is based on the language "vayiven" (build) where G-d builds woman from the side of man. That is because the woman completes the building of man and from this aspect she has wisdom because completion produces this. Nevertheless the level of man is that he has abstract intelligence. It is important to understand this.

Translation from

<http://daattorah.blogspot.com/2017/01/maharal-women-have-binah-yeseira-the-y.html>

D. Laws Regarding Gender

Kiddushin 29a: MISHNA:... The mishna notes an additional difference between the obligations of men and women in the performance of mitzvot: With regard to all positive, time-bound mitzvot, i.e., those which must be performed at specific times, men are obligated to perform them and women are exempt. And with regard to all positive mitzvot that are not time bound, both men and women are obligated to perform them. And with regard

[אלהים] את הצלע מלמד שנתן הקב"ה בינה יתירה באשה יותר מבאיש ואיך ההוא מבעי ליה לכדריש לקיש דאמר ריש לקיש משום ר"ש בן מנסיא ויבן ה' [אלהים] את הצלע אשר לקח מן האדם לאשה ויביאה אל האדם מלמד שקלעה הקב"ה לחוה והביאה אצל אדם הראשון שכן בכרכי הים קורין לקלעיתא בנייתא ור"ש בן אלעזר מ"ט אמר רב שמואל בר רב יצחק מתוך שהתינוק מצוי בבית רבו נכנסת בו ערמומית תחלה

מהר"ל (נדה מה:): מלמד שנתן בינה יתירה באשה וכו'. פי' דבר זה כי השכל היולאני נתן הש"י לאשה מצד שהאשה היא מוכנת לזה ביותר, כי האישי יש לו שכל וחכמה ביותר הוא השכל הנבדל, אבל שכל היולאני מוכנת האשה לקבל ביותר, וכך אמרו בפרק הזהב (בבא מציא נט.) אתתך גוצא גחון ותלחש לה, ומוקי ליה לחד לישנא במילי דבייתא ולחד לישנא במילי דעלמא, והיינו כי האשה חכמה שלה מצד שכל היולאני שייך לה יותר מן האישי. ולכך אמרו שם במילי דשמיא אל ילך אחר עצת [אשתו] כי אין האשה שייך לה חכמה כי חכמה זאת אינ' רק מכה שכל הנבדל. אמנם כי יש לך להבין מאוד את שרמזו חכמים בזה שאמרו שנתן באשה בינה יתירה, ודבר זה נרמז בלשון ויבן, כי היא משלמת הבנין אל האישי, ומצד הזה שייך לה חכמה, כי ההשלמה ראוי לזה, ומ"מ מדריגת האישי שיש לו שכל הנבדל והבן זה:

מתני'... וכל מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא אנשים חייבין ונשים פטורות וכל מצות עשה שלא הזמן גרמא אחד האנשים ואחד הנשים חייבין וכל מצות לא תעשה בין שהזמן גרמא בין שלא הזמן גרמא אחד האנשים ואחד הנשים חייבין חוץ מכל תקיף וכל תשחית וכל תטמא למתים:

to all prohibitions, whether they are time-bound or whether they are not time-bound, both men and women are obligated to observe them, except for the prohibitions of: Do not round the corners of your head... Do not destroy the corners of your beard... Do not contract ritual impurity from a corpse... These mitzvot apply only to men, not women, despite the fact that they are prohibitions.

Translation from Sefaria.org

<https://www.sefaria.org/Kiddushin.29a.7?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en>

Deuteronomy 22:5 A man's attire shall not be on a woman, nor may a man wear a woman's garment because whoever does these [things] is an abomination to the Lord, your God.

Translation from chabad.org

ה לא יהנה כל ייִגְבֵּר עַל־אִשָּׁה וְלֹא־יִלְבַּשׁ גְּבוֹר שְׂמֵלֶת
אִשָּׁה כִּי תוֹעֵבֵת יִהְיֶה אֵלֶיהָ כְּלִי־עֵשֶׂה
אֵלֶּה:

Part 2: Sociological Approaches to Gender

A. Defining Sex and Gender

"Sex is a determination made through the application of socially agreed upon biological criteria for classifying persons as females and males...[Sex is] achieved through application of the sex criteria, but in everyday life, categorization is established and sustained by the socially required identificatory displays that proclaim one's membership in one or the other category" Candace West and Don; Zimmerman.1987. "Doing gender". *Gender & Society*. 1 (2): 125–151.

Gender is often conceptualized as a social role people play; however, unlike other roles it is not attached to a certain organization or institution: "We can think of gender as a system of social practices within society that constitutes distinct, differentiated sex categories, sorts people into these categories, and organizes relations between people on the basis of the differences defined by their sex category (Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin 1999)". In which social categories, "refer to the social labeling of people as male or female on the basis of social cues presumed to stand for physical sex (West and Zimmerman 1987)." Quotes from Ridgeway, Cecilia L. 2011. *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gender is "an organizing force in everyday social relations... social relations are situations in which people form a sense of who they are in the situation and, therefore, how they should behave, by considering themselves in relation to whom they assume others are in that situation...I argue that people use sex/gender as an initial, starting framework for defining 'who' self and other are in order to coordinate their behavior and relate, whether they do so face-to-face, on paper, over the Internet, or on a cell phone" (7).

Ridgeway, Cecilia L. 2011. "The Puzzle of Persistence." p. 3-31 in *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

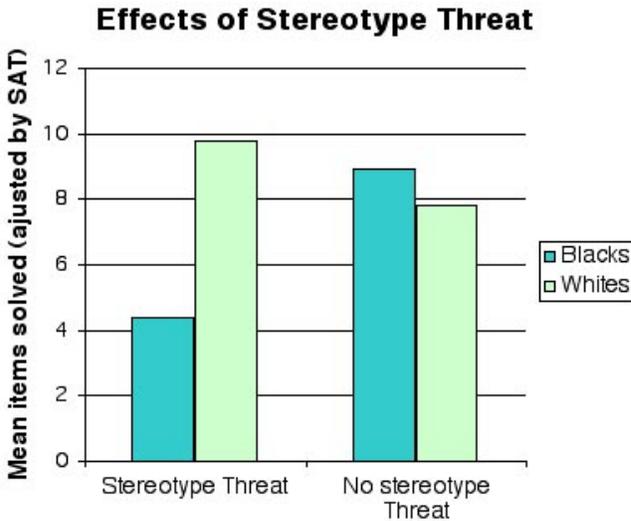
"Gender proves to be performance—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing." Judith Butler. 1990. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge. p. 25.

"When we say that gender is performed, we usually mean that we've taken on a role; we're acting in some way... To say that gender is performative is a little different... For something to be performative means that it produces a series of effects. We act and walk and speak and talk that consolidate an impression of being a man or being a woman... we act as if that being of a man or that being of a woman is actually an internal reality or simply something that is true about us. Actually, it is a phenomenon that is being produced all the time and reproduced all the time." Judith Butler: Your Behavior Creates Your Gender(Video). Big Think via YouTube.

Through social interactions individuals "learn what is expected, see what is expected, act and react in expected ways, and thus simultaneously construct and maintain the gender order"

Lorber, Judith. 2013. "Chapter 5, Sexism: 'Night to his day': the social construction of gender". In Adams, Maurianne; et al. *Readings for diversity and social justice* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. p. 327.

B. Stereotype Threat & Ambitions



“Stereotype threat refers to the risk of confirming negative stereotypes about an individual’s racial, ethnic, gender, or cultural group. The term was coined by the researchers Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson, who performed experiments that showed that black college students performed worse on standardized tests than their white peers when they were reminded, before taking the tests, that their racial group tends to do poorly on such exams. When their race was not emphasized, however, black students performed similarly to their white peers.”

“Glossary of Education Reform” at <https://www.edglossary.org/stereotype-threat/>

"The Effects of Stereotype Threat on the Standardized Test Performance of College Students (adjusted for group differences on SAT)". From J. Aronson, C.M. Steele, M.F. Salinas, M.J. Lustina, *Readings About the Social Animal*, 8th edition, ed. E. Aronson

Other studies show how cultural beliefs about gendered ability shape self-assessment of competence of a task and future career aspirations (Corell 2004; Gupta et al 2007). Employers often designate tasks differently to employees based on their genders, have differing expectations for their performances, and compensate them dissimilarly (Ridgeway 2011; Ridgeway 2009; Correll et al 2007). These findings are important because they may shed light into the persistence of gender based variation in the job market.

References:

Corell, Shelley J. 2004. "Constraints into Preferences: Gender, Status, and Emerging Career Aspirations." *American Sociological Review* 69: 93-113.

Correll, Shelley J., Stephen Benard, and In Paik. 2007. "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?" *American Journal of Sociology* 112(5): 1297-1338.

Gupta, V. K.; Bhawe, N. M. 2007. "The Influence of Proactive Personality and Stereotype Threat on Women's Entrepreneurial Intentions". *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*. 13 (4): 73–85.

Ridgeway, Cecilia. 2009. "Framed Before We Know it: How Gender Shapes Social Relations." *Gender and Society* 23: 145-60.

Ridgeway, Cecilia. 2011. *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Part 3: Jewish Behaviors

A. Confidence

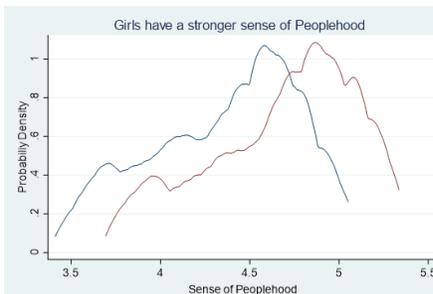
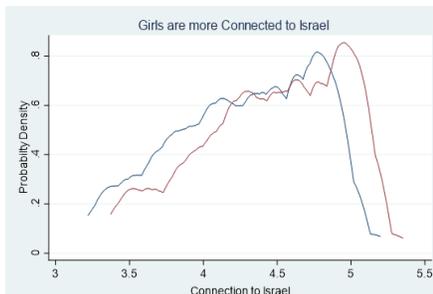
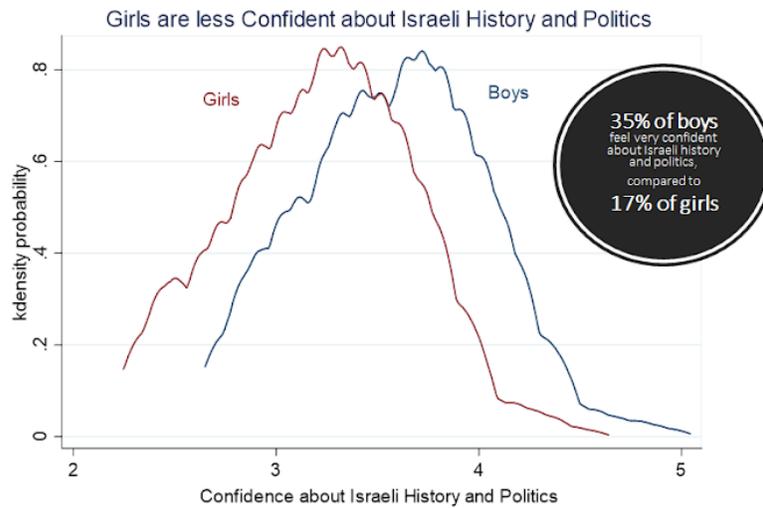
How does stereotype threat apply to Jewish situations/confidence?

- Girls are more confident in culture, house activities
- Are girls just as knowledgeable?

- Confidence is a belief in one's ability to succeed
- Confidence is formed through self-efficacy beliefs, which are beliefs we hold about our capabilities and about the outcomes of our efforts (Bandura, 1977).
- Self-efficacy is associated with motivation constructs, such as self-concept, optimism, achievement goal orientation, academic help-seeking, anxiety, and value.

E. Imagine you're with a group of friends who are having a conversation about the topics below. How confident are you in your knowledge to talk about these things?

		Not at all confident	Only a little	Somewhat confident	Confident	Very confident	Completely confident
1	The history of the United States in the past 100 years	<input type="radio"/>					



Girls are slightly more confident on 3 measures:

- Jewish religious customs
- Cyberbullying
- Jewish culture (food, films, music, books)

Boys and Girls are equally confident on 9 measures:

- Holocaust
- American Culture (films, music and books)
- Difference between Orthodox, Conservative, Reform movements
- Jewish law (Halacha)
- The equality of women in society
- Jewish attitudes towards homosexuality
- Why some people suffer and others don't
- Daily life in Israel
- Contemporary Israeli culture (films, music and books)

Boys are more confident on 12 measures:

- G-d
- Current events in the US
- Arab-Israeli conflict
- Meaning of Life
- Geography of Israel
- US history 100 years
- Reasons for emergence of Zionism
- Importance of Tenakh
- Current events in Israel
- The history of Jewish people in the past 100 years
- Global climate change
- Status of religious movements in Israel

In her conclusion, Horwitz offers a few thoughts about implications

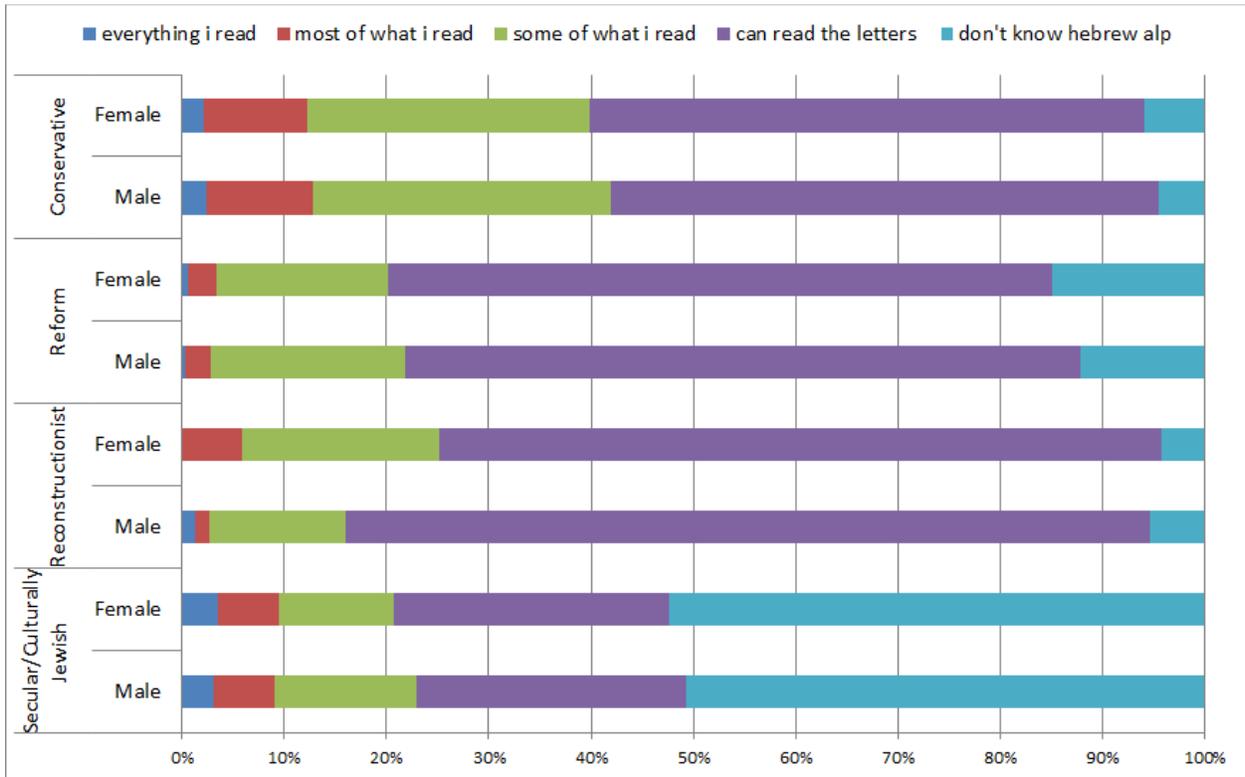
- If day schools are the training ground for Jewish leaders, we should consider how females are being socialized into gender norms early on
- The lack of female leaders in Jewish organizations may not be a reflection of a poor pipeline, but of a confidence and self-efficacy issue that emerges as early as adolescence. Females are more confident with realms of knowledge related to domestic religion.
- Understanding the role that the Jewish educational ecology plays in creating and developing students' academic confidence would inform academic practices aimed at fostering and nurturing these important self-beliefs

-Ilana M. Horwitz & Ari Y Kelman, Connected but not Confident: The Gender Gap in Jewish Day Schools. May 2018.

B. Knowledge

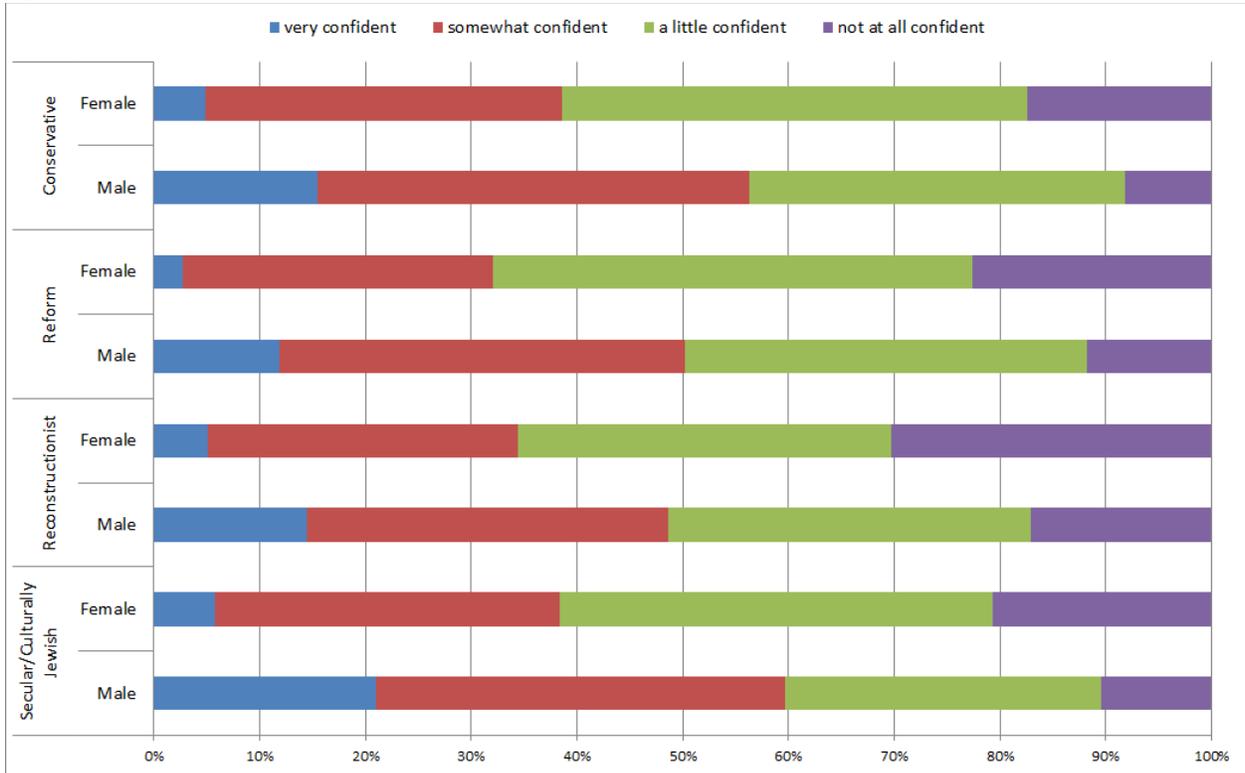
The follow data come from a survey of Birthright Israel applicants to Wave 16 of the trip. Surveys were conducted before the trip. Due to the eligibility, we have excluded individuals raised Orthodox as they are likely not representative of the whole movement community.

If you were asked to read a text in Hebrew how much would you understand?

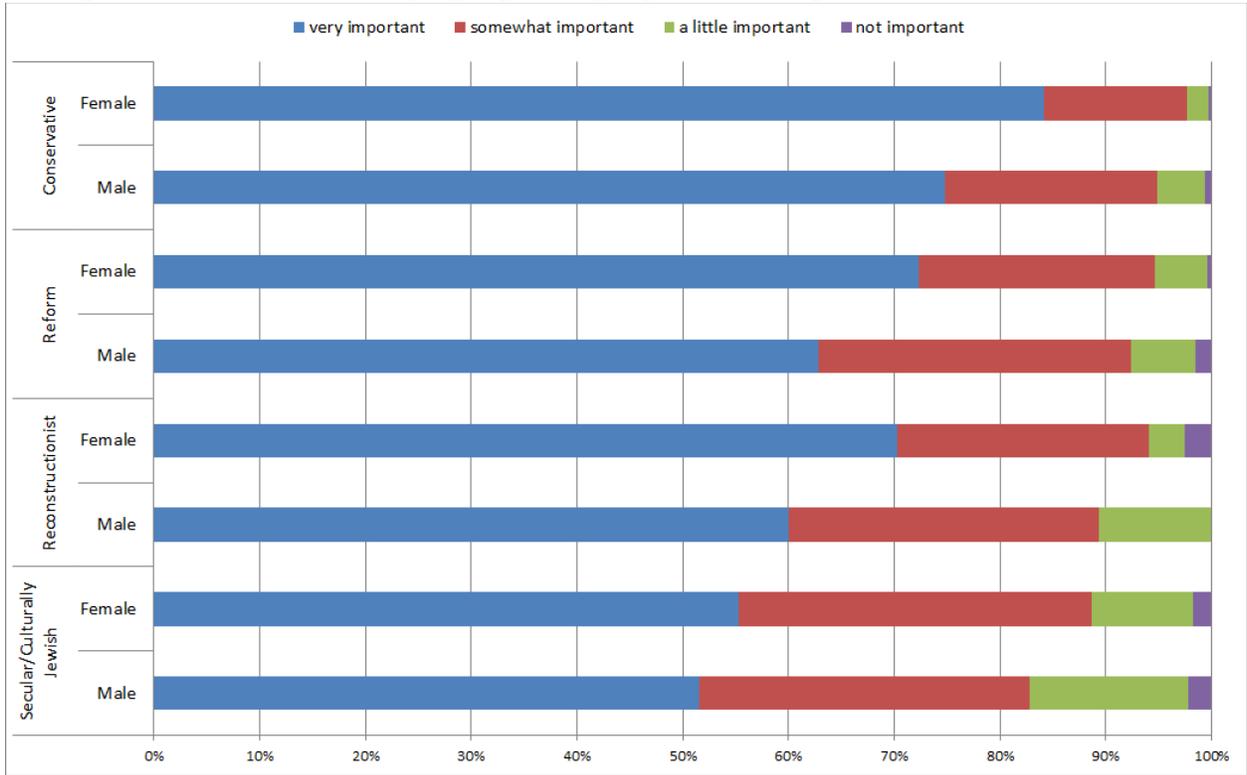


D. Feelings

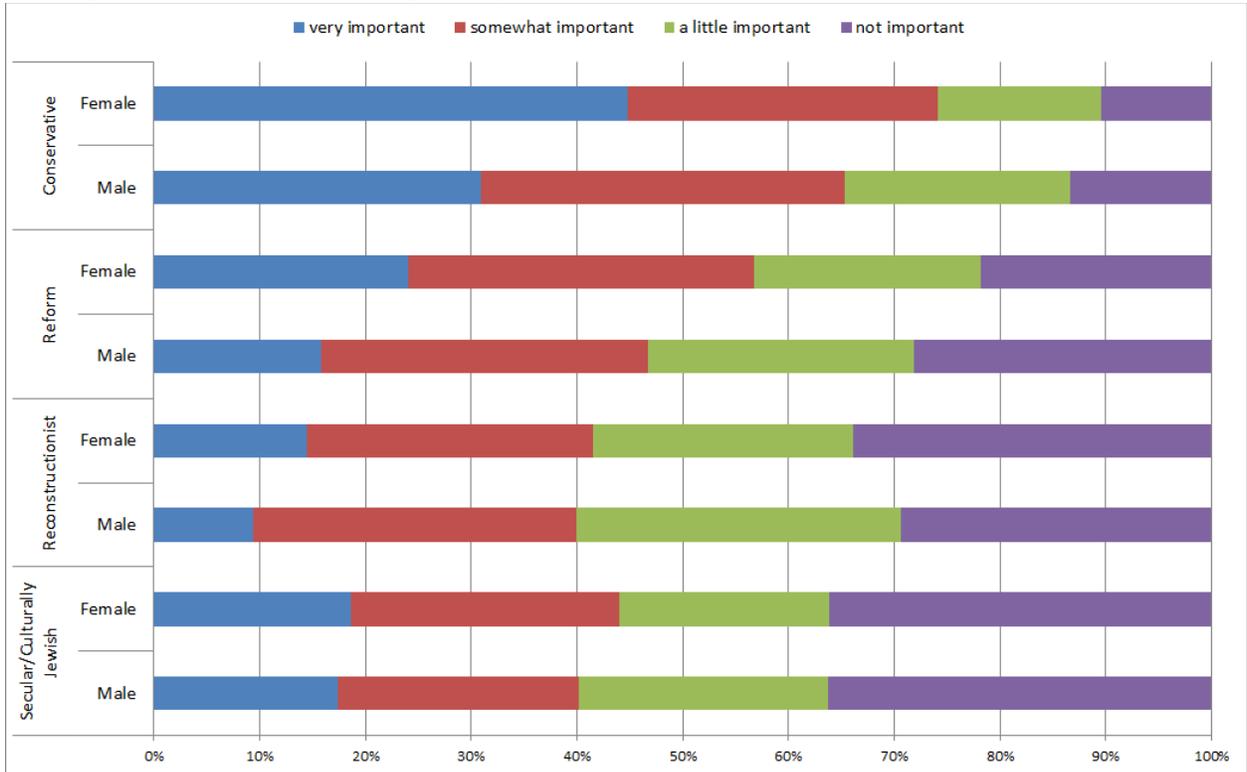
If someone asked you about the current situation in Israel, how confident do you feel in your ability to give a good explanation?



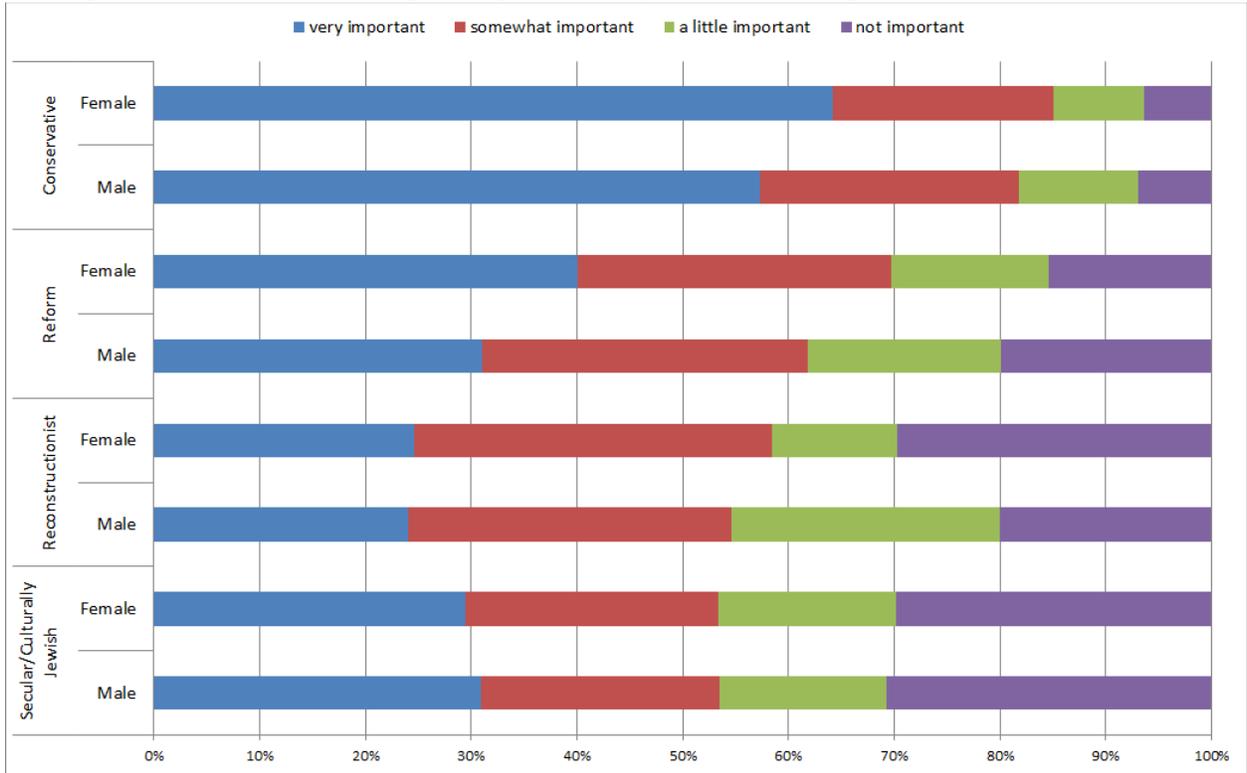
How important is each of the following to you personally in your life? Being Jewish



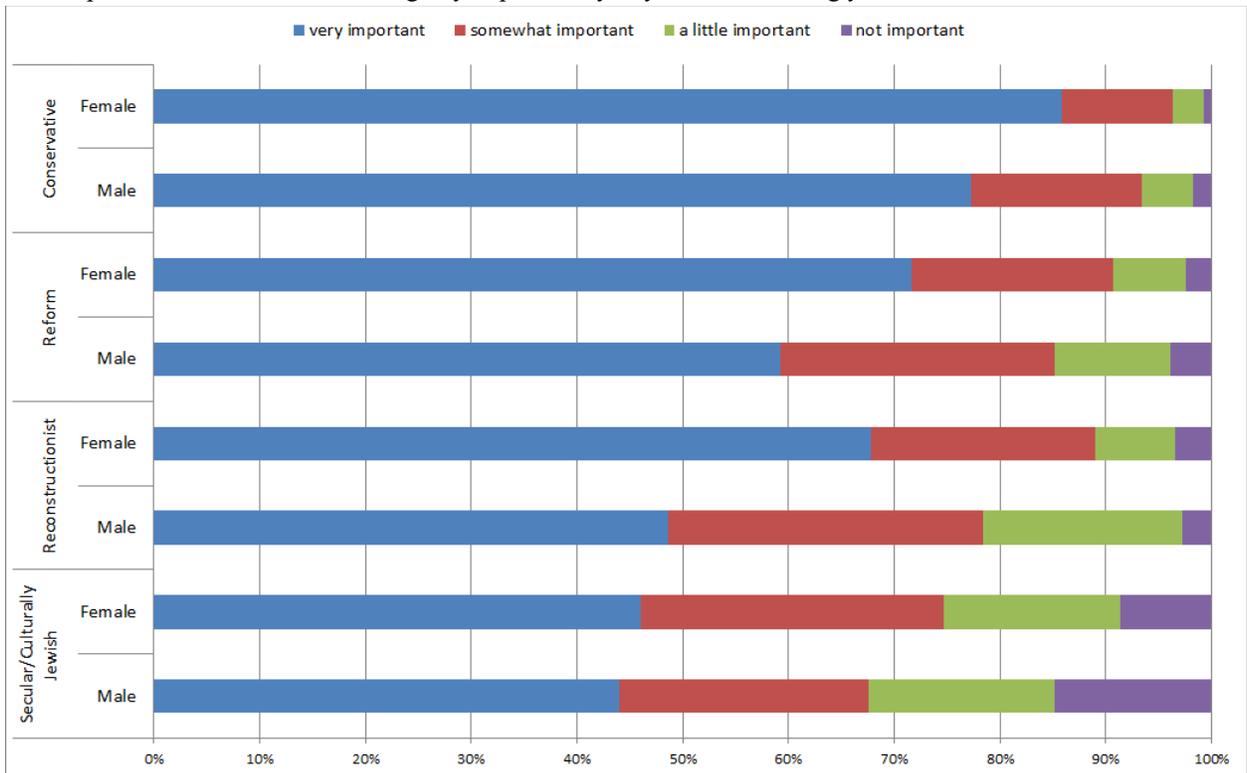
How important is each of the following to you personally in your life? Dating someone Jewish



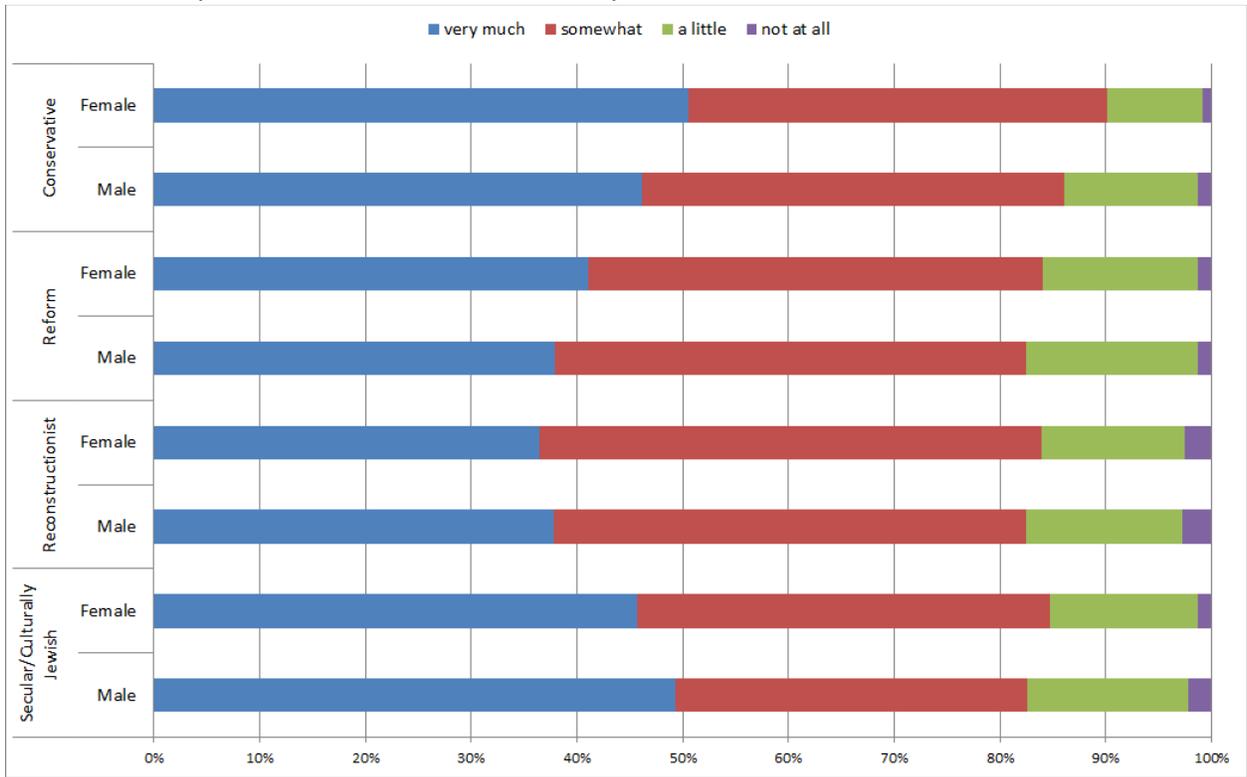
How important is each of the following to you personally in your life? Marrying someone Jewish



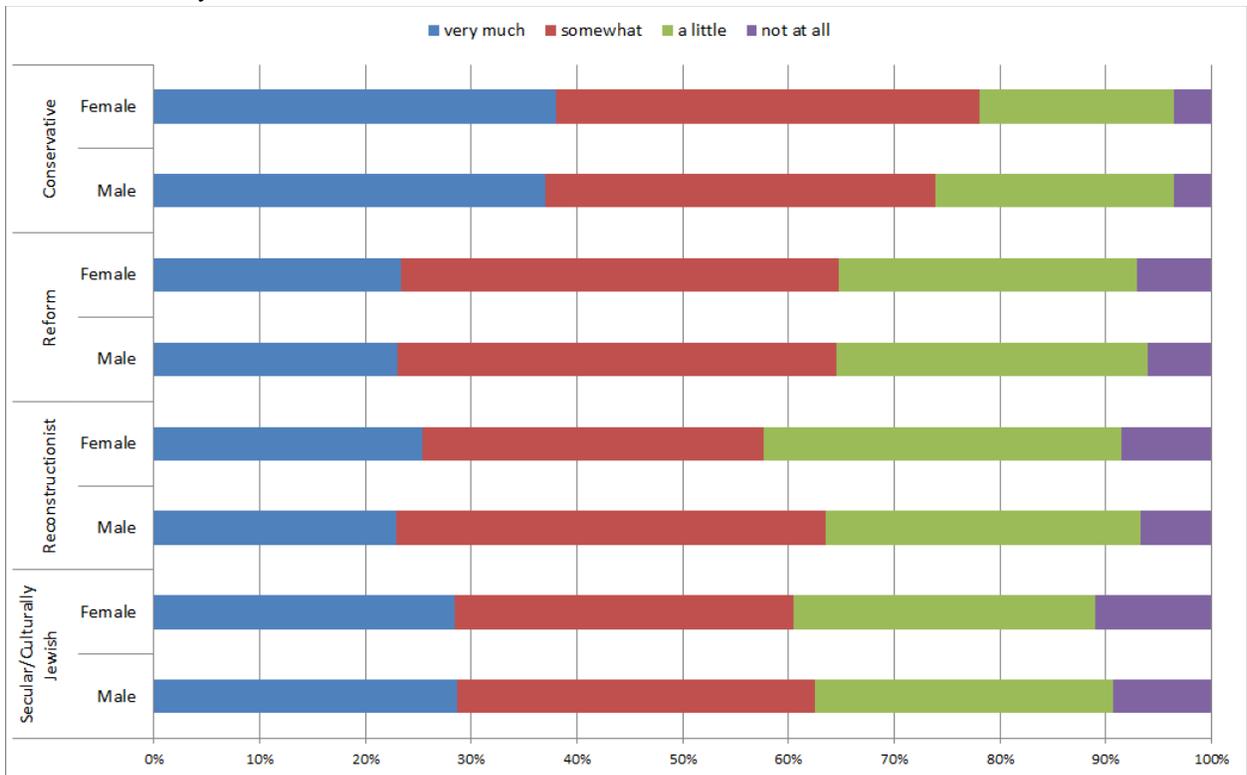
How important is each of the following to you personally in your life? Raising your children Jewish



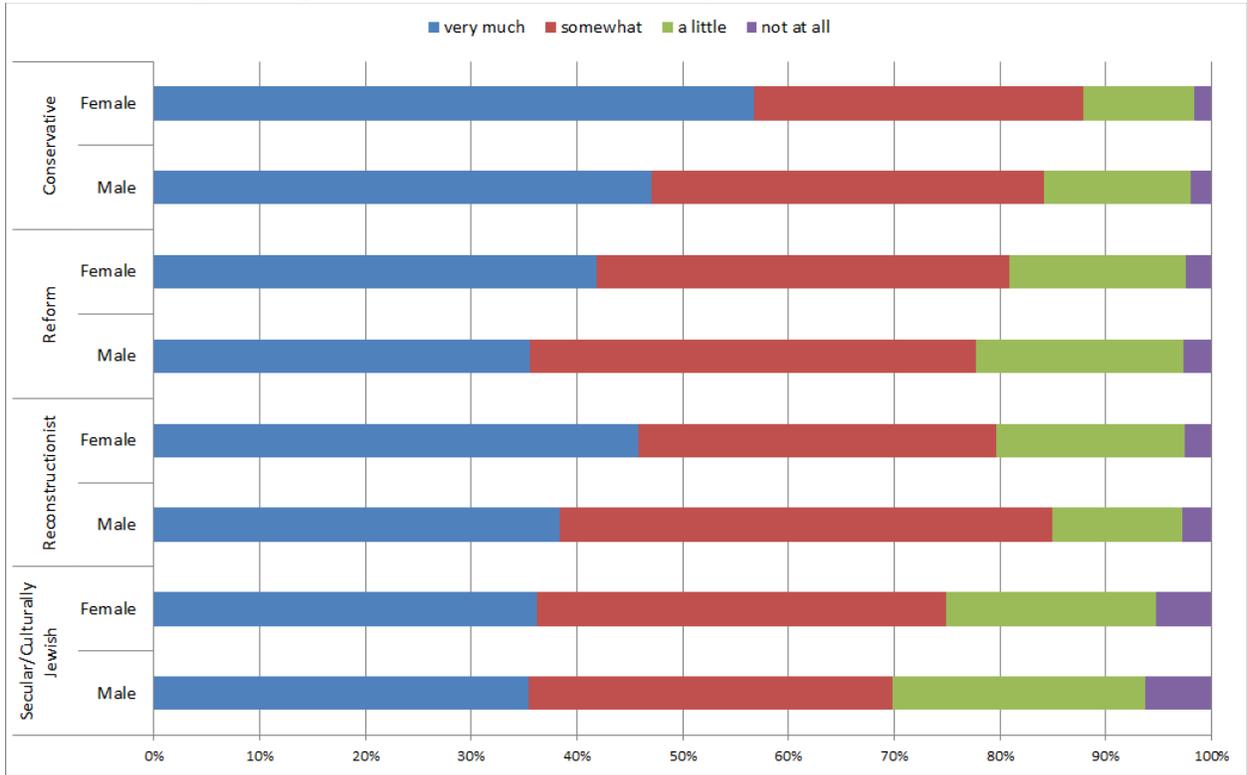
To what extent do you Feel a connection to Jewish history



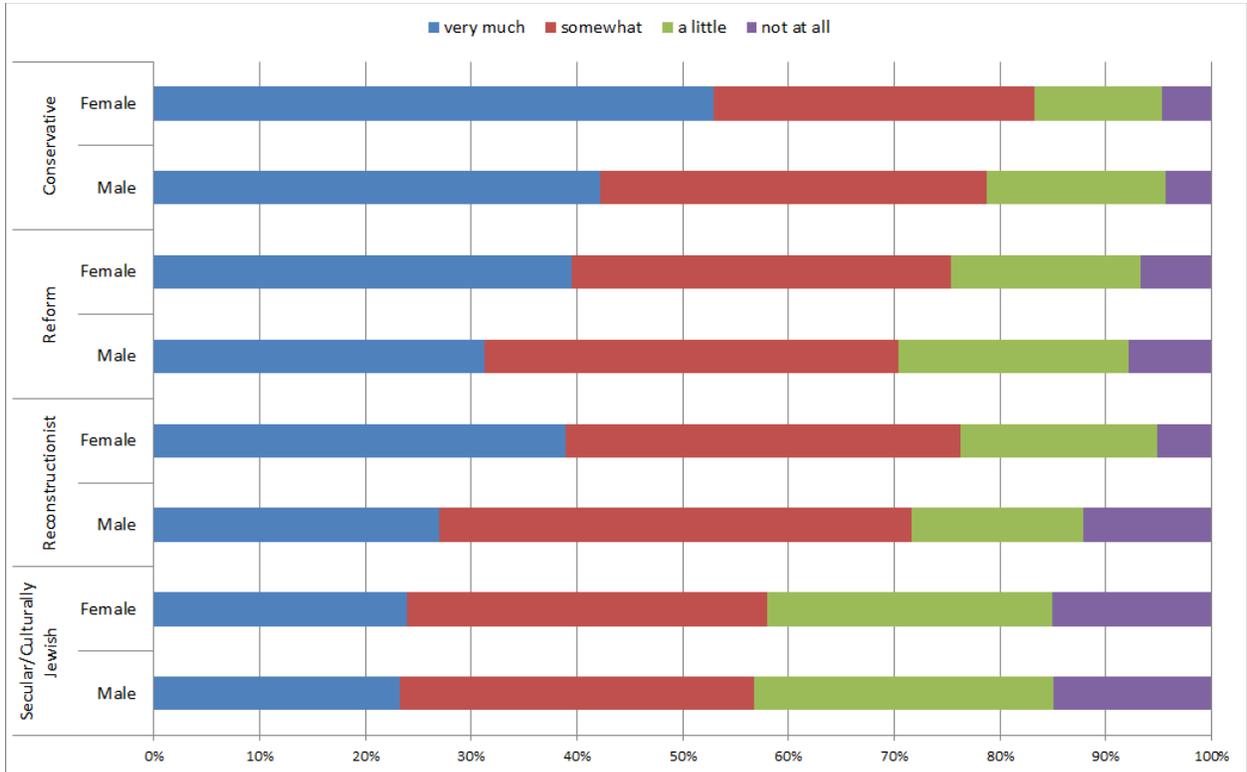
To what extent do you Feel a connection to Israel?



To what extent do you Feel part of a worldwide Jewish community?

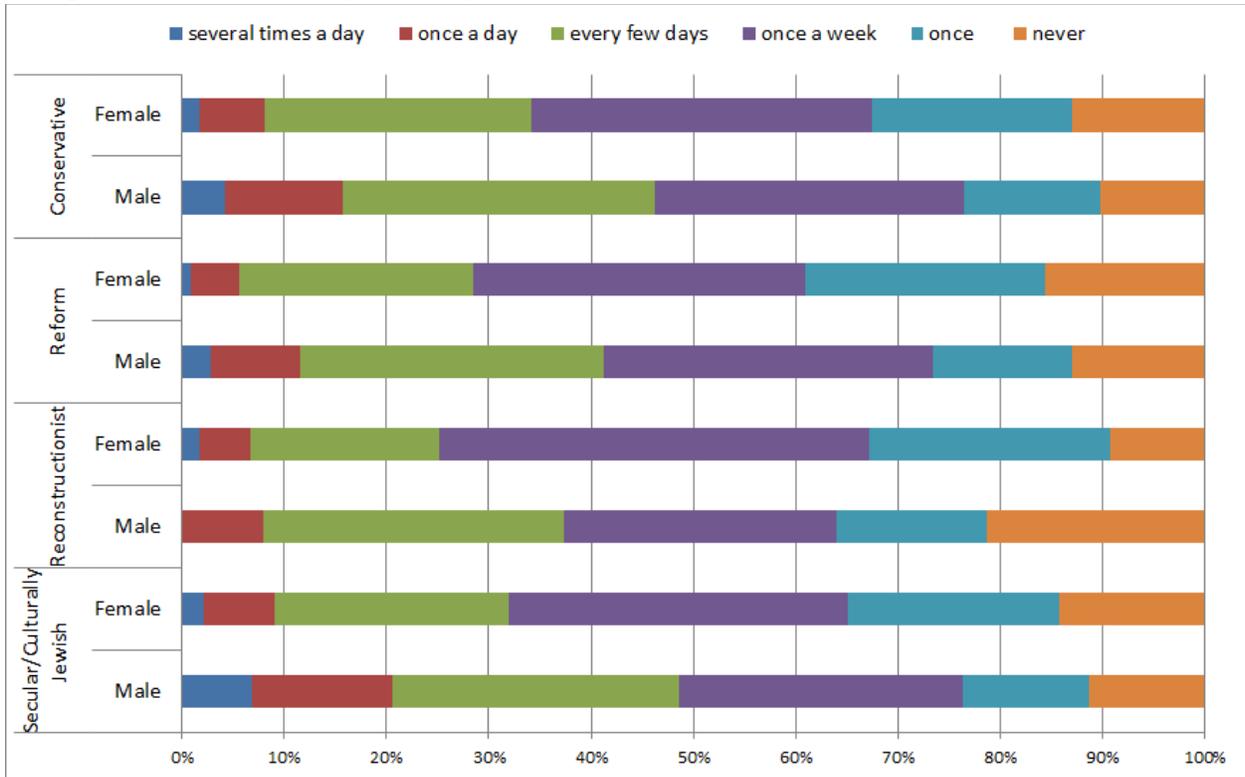


To what extent do you Feel a connection to your local Jewish community?

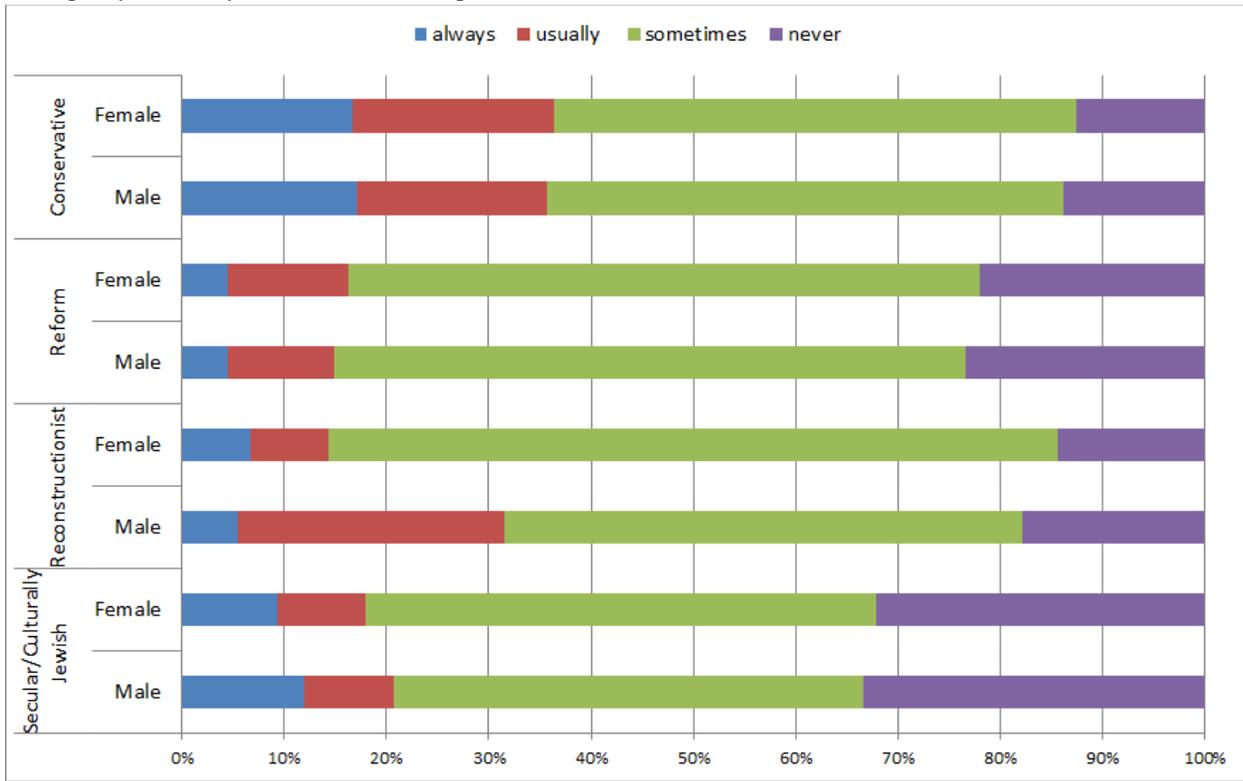


E. Behaviors

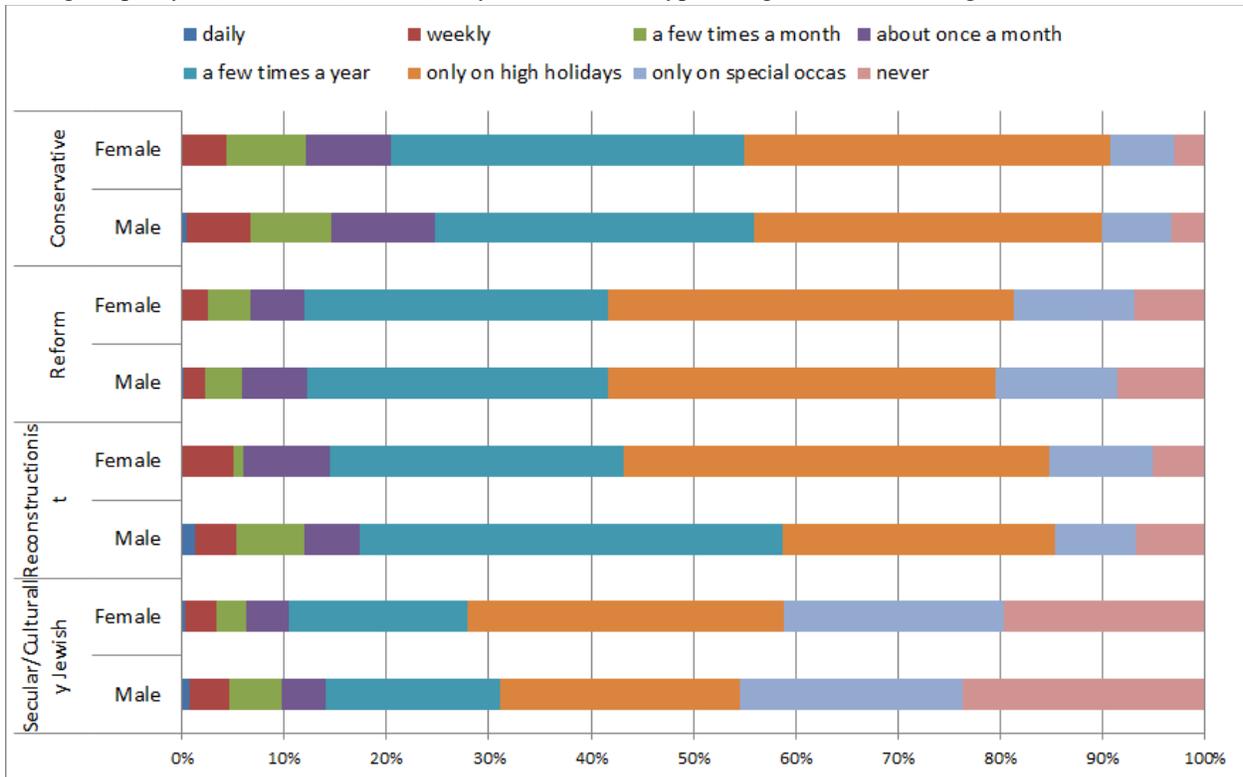
In the past month how often did you actively seek news about Israel?



In the past year have you Had/attended a special meal on Shabbat?

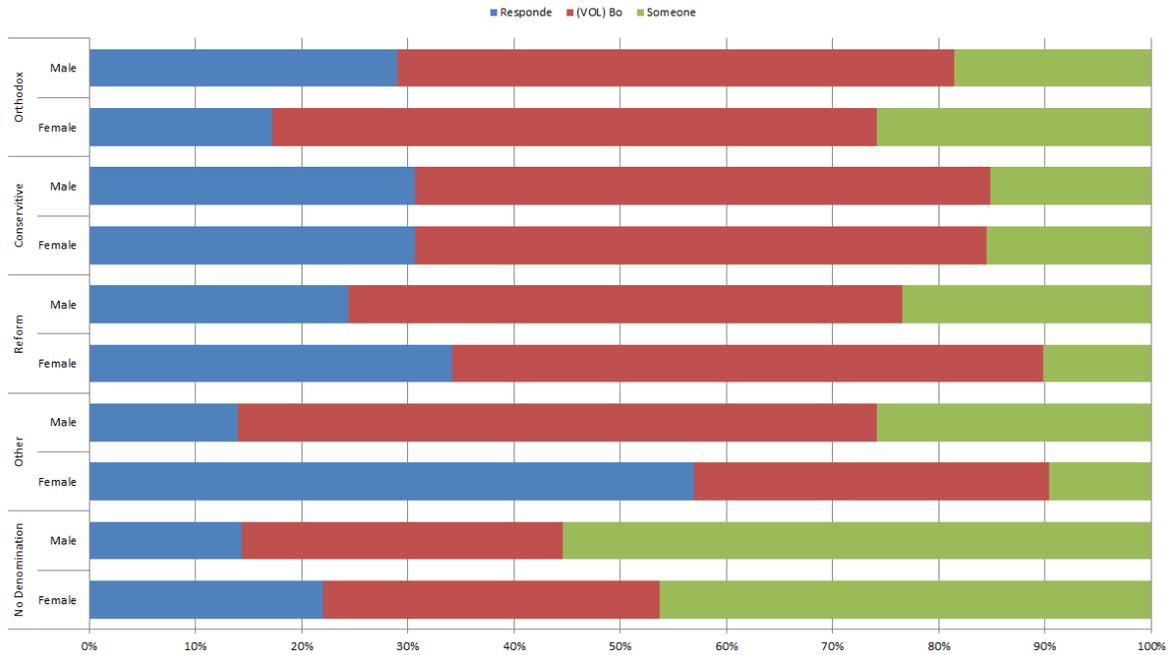


During the past year, how often, if at all, did you attend some type of organized Jewish religious service?

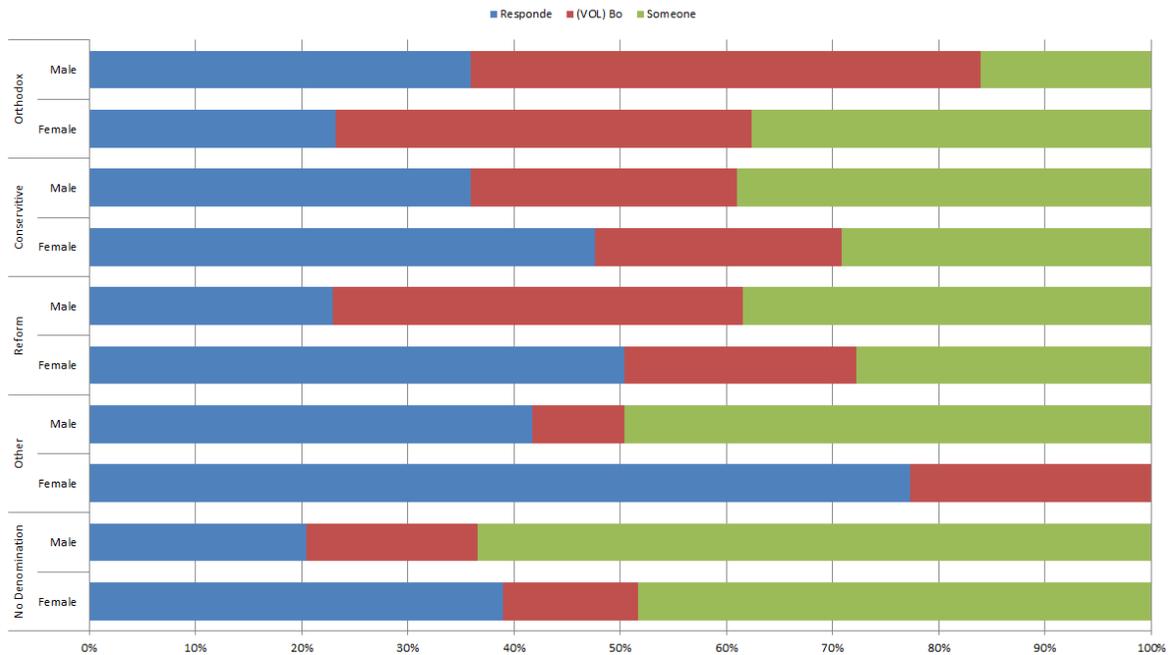


F. Membership from Pew 2013 study of Jewish Americans

Who in a household is a synagogue member



Who in a household is a member of a Jewish organization



G. Leadership

“In 1994, 25% of the Jewish board members were women, compared to 24% of board members of general American non-profit organizations. When boards which have all women members were omitted (such as Hadassah) together with boards which were almost exclusively men (such as Agudath Israel of America), 26% of the members of these “coed” boards were women. The equivalent figure for general American non-profit boards was 24%.

“Although women were underrepresented on the boards, the study found that once women were on the boards, that they did not differ greatly from men in terms of the power and influence that they wielded. This finding is mostly attributable to the full time volunteer women serving on these boards...The study showed that full-time women volunteers have wielded influence equal to or exceeding that of full-time employed men in terms of sitting on multiple board, holding officerships and feeling influential. The full-time volunteer women were able to devote significant time and they were more likely to serve on multiple boards than the full-time employed women. In contrast to the high attainment of the full-time volunteer women, the full-time employed women scored the lowest of any occupational group on these measures of power and influence.”

-The Roles of Women and Men on the Boards of Major American Jewish Organizations: A Research Report, Bethamie Horowitz, Pearl Beck, Charles Kadushin (1994).

Note: Shaul worked on this research project