

Journeys to Israel:

The impact of longer-term programs upon
Jewish Engagement & Israel Attachment

Learning from Taglit-Birthright Israel:
An Academic Symposium

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Brandeis University

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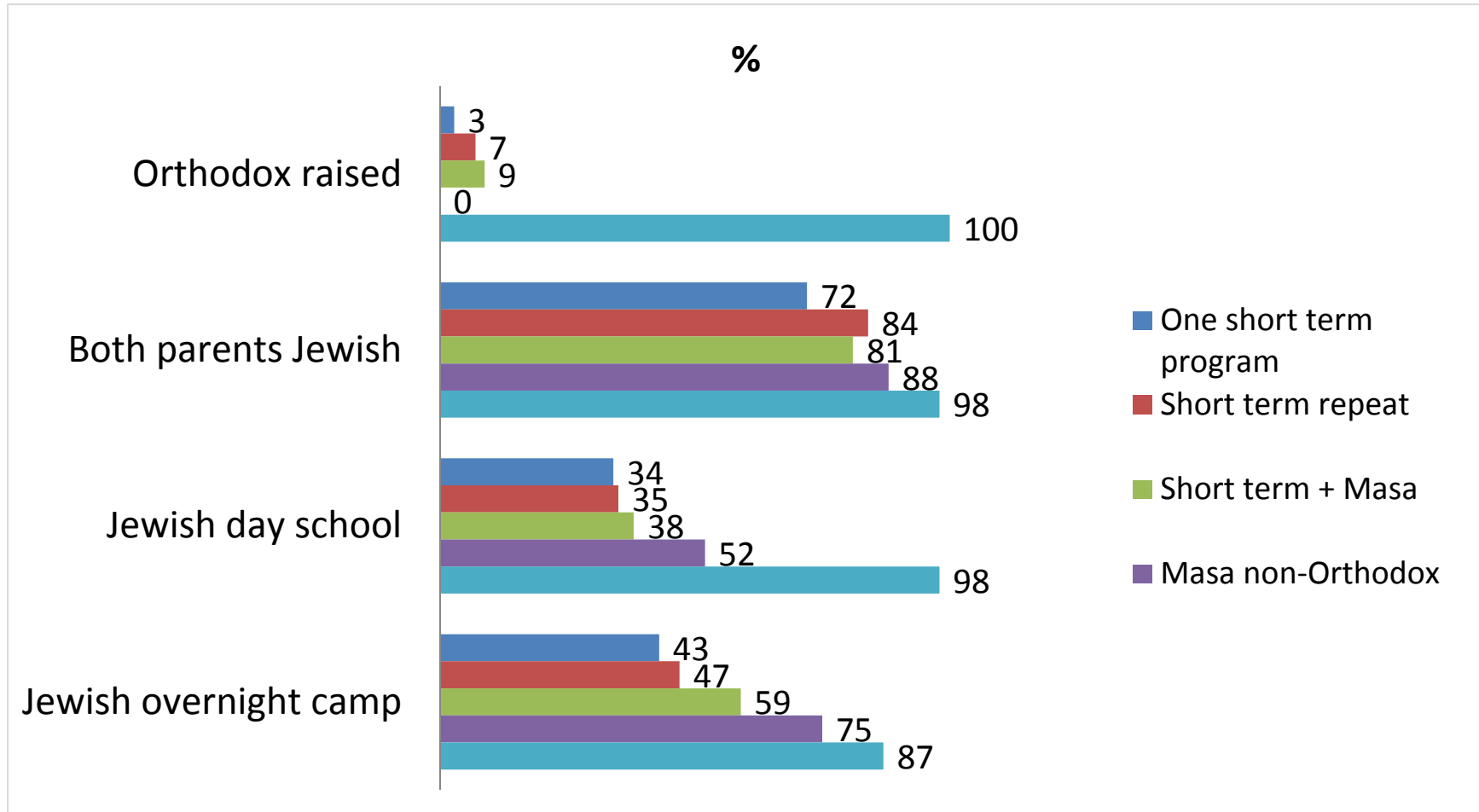
Key Research Questions

- To what extent, how, & for whom does Masa Israel participation affect Jewish involvement and Israel attachment?
- How do different experiences affect levels of Israel engagement, Jewish leadership, and Jewish involvement?
- What patterns are linked with different types of Israel program participation, short-term and long-term? That is, how do these 3 groups differ?
 - One-time participants on short-term Israel programs
 - Those who returned to Israel on short-term trips
 - Those who return on Masa Israel experiences

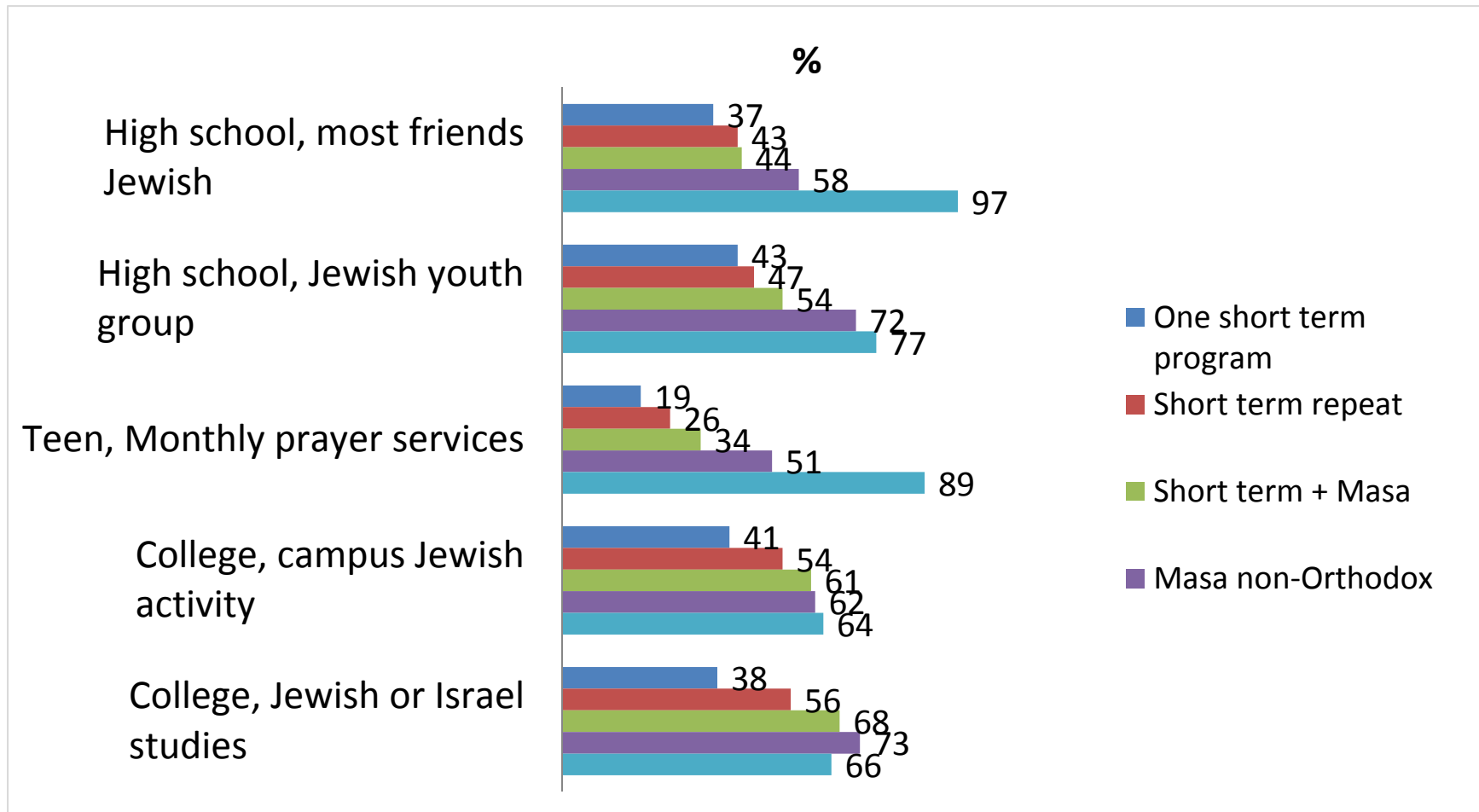
Comparison groups

- Our analysis focuses on five distinct groups:
- Total N = 11,161 American respondents (both unweighted and weighted)
- “One short-term program”: Birthright alumni and other short term program participants who did not return to Israel (7392 respondents or 66% of the total)
- “Short-term repeat”: Birthright alumni and other short term program participants returned for a 0-4 months (1005 respondents, 9% of total)
- “Short-term + Masa”: Birthright alumni and other short term program participants who returned for 5 + months on a Masa Israel program (1003 respondents, 9%)
- “Masa Israel only, non-Orthodox”: Raised other than Orthodox & never went on Birthright (1026, 9%)
- “Masa Israel only & Orthodox”: Raised Orthodox & never went on Birthright (735 respondents, 7%)

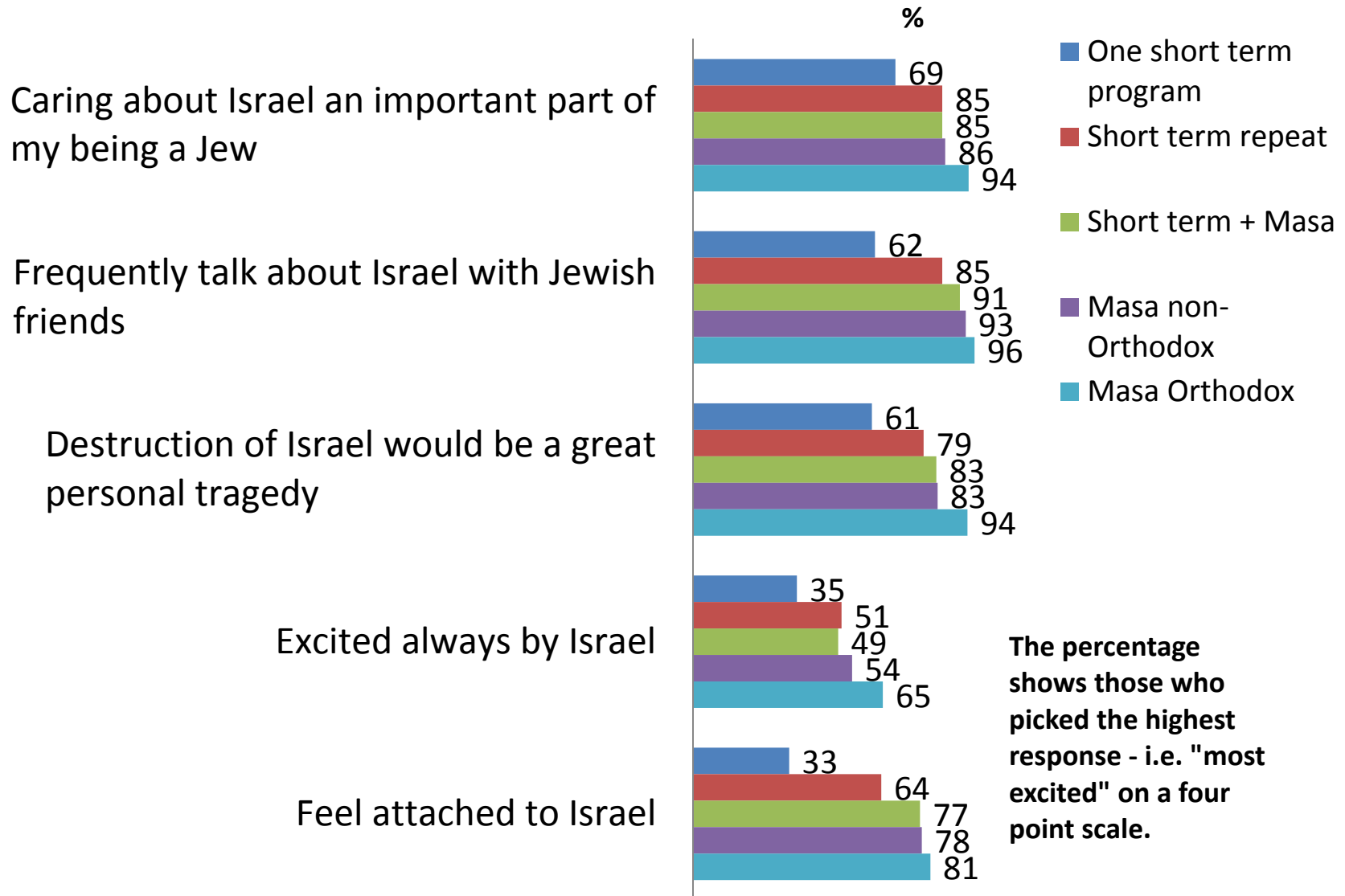
Childhood socialization



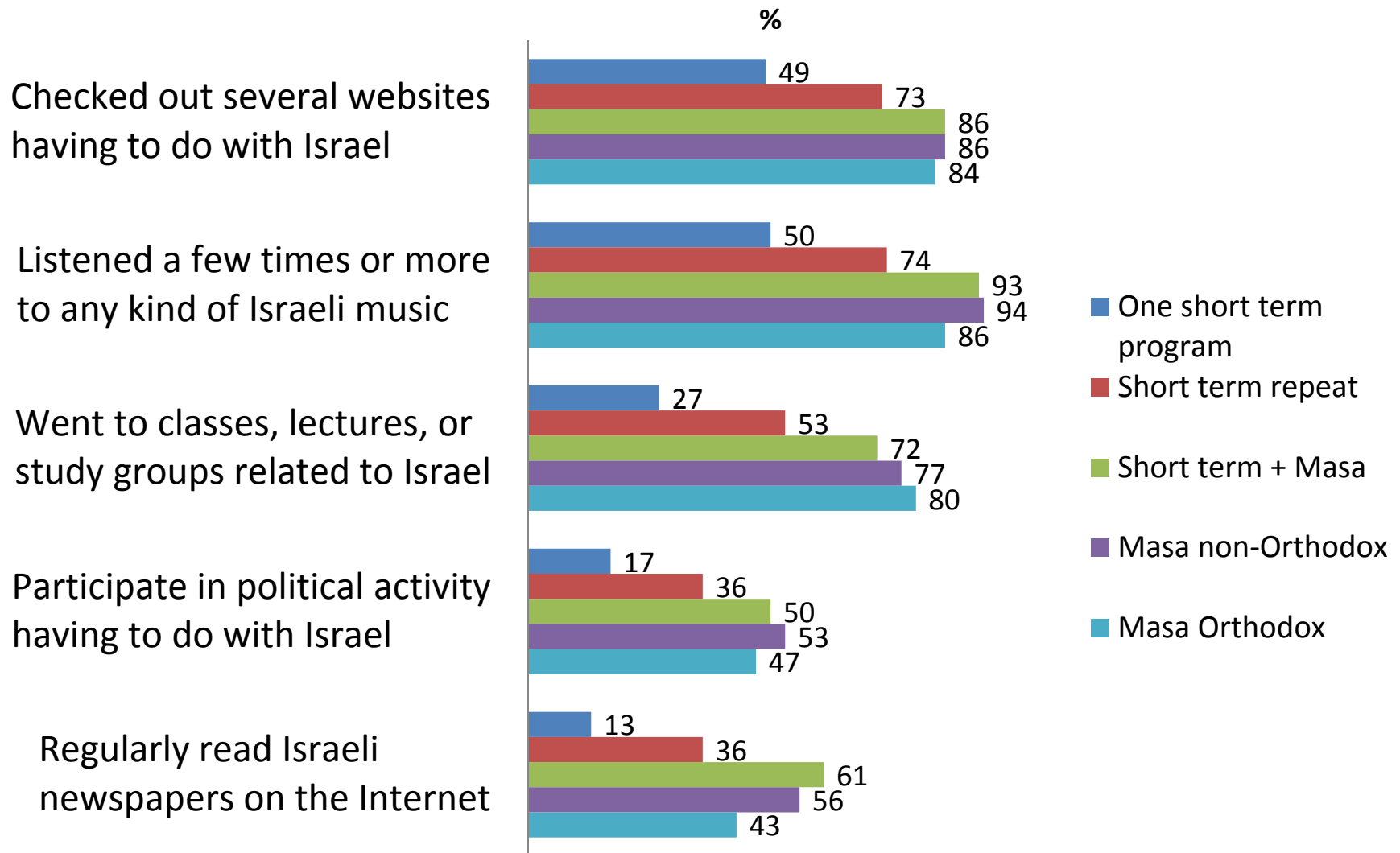
Teen & college years



Feelings of Israel Attachment

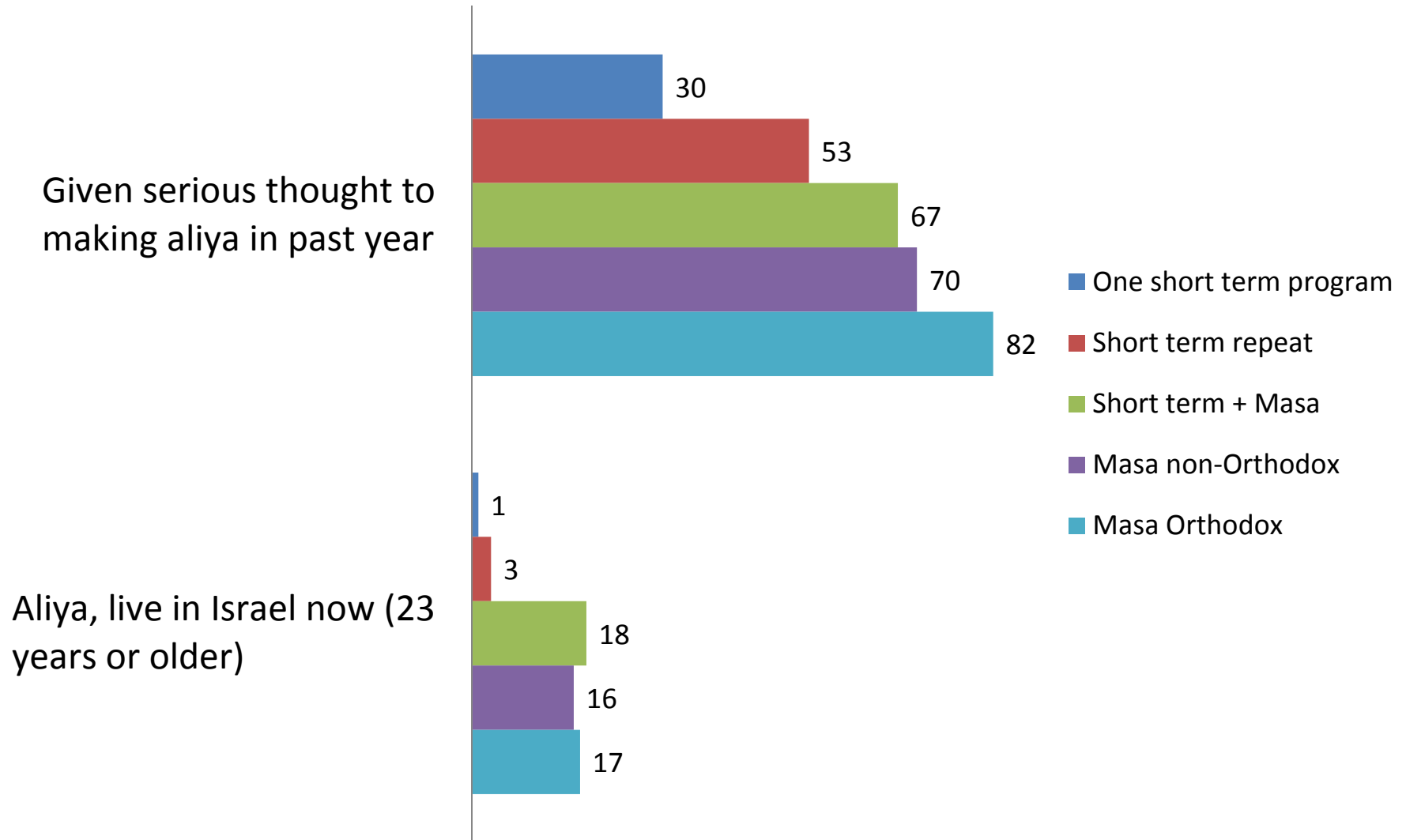


Israel related actions in past year

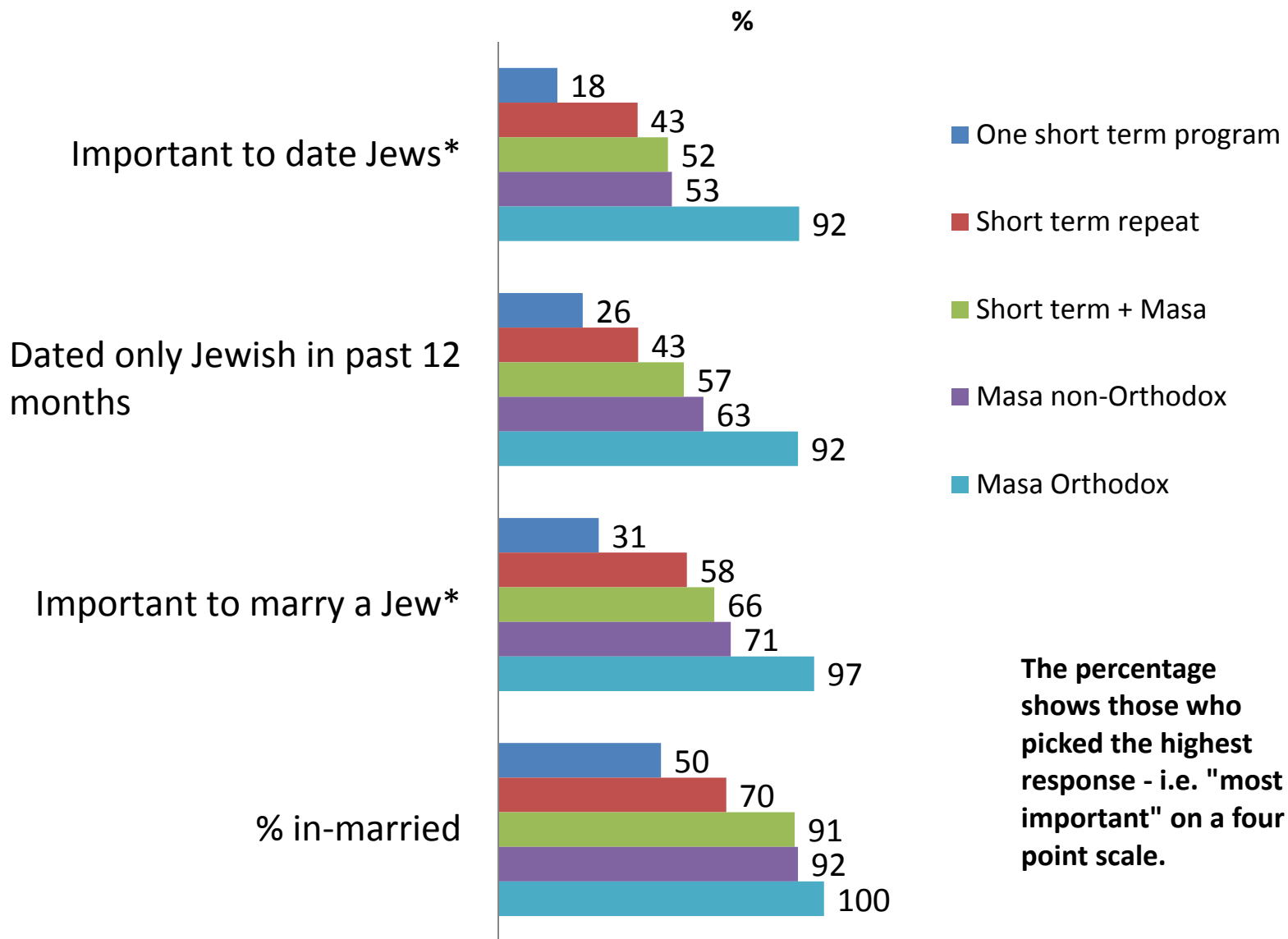


Aliya

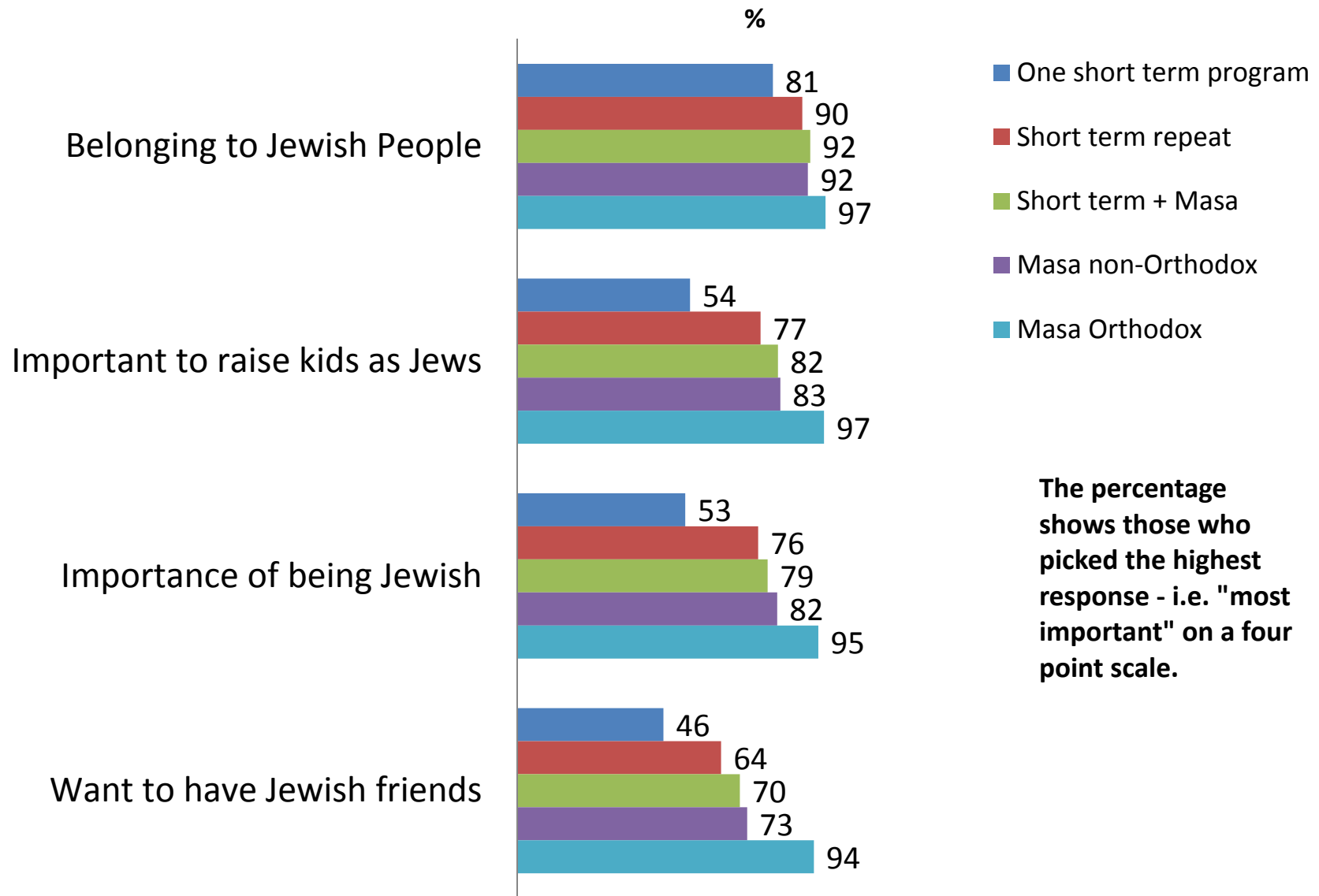
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Dating and Marriage

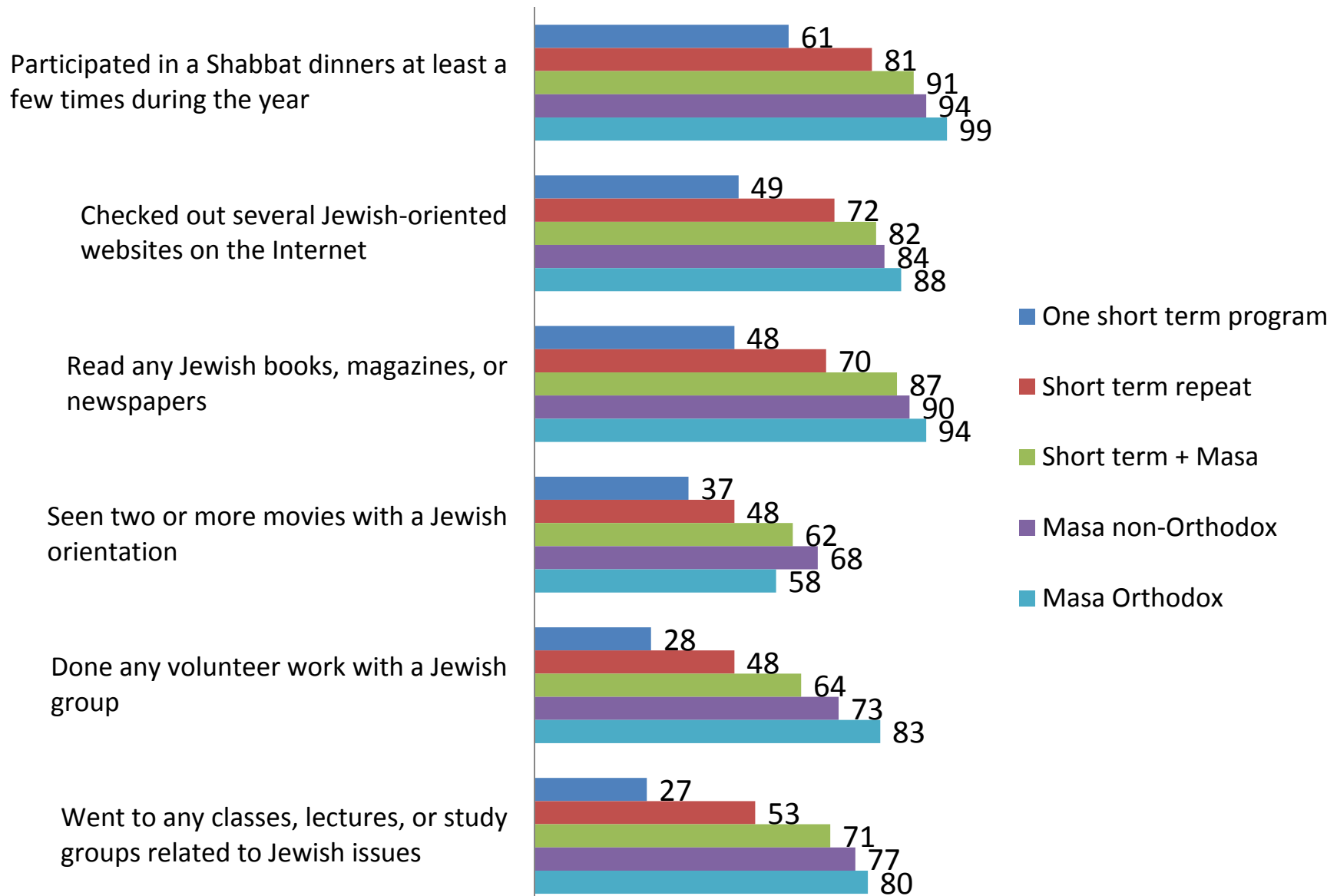


Priority of being Jewish

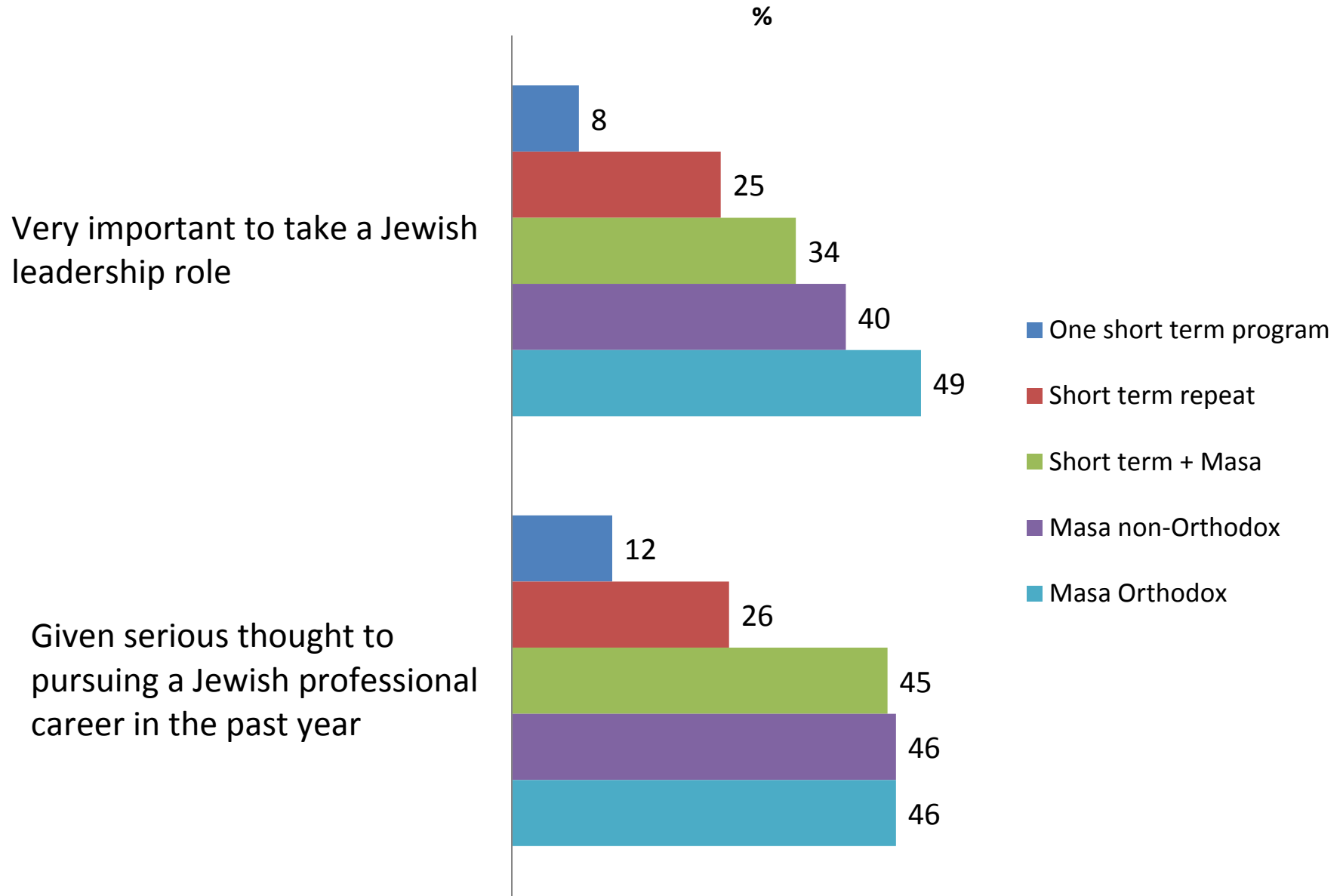


Jewish activities

%



Inclination to Jewish Leadership



Conclusions

- The apparent impact of Masa Israel is profound in ALL areas of Israel-related and Jewish engagement, with especially large effects upon Israel-related activities, in-marriage, Jewish leadership and aliya.
- The combination of short-term program + the return Israel trip work together to increase Israel attachment, Jewish involvement and Jewish leadership
 - Short-term programs are especially effective when they lead to a return trip to Israel, the impact of which is greater for those who return on Masa Israel programs.
 - After following the short term program + Masa Israel pathway, Jews with relatively low levels of Jewish socialization, resemble those with strong Jewish upbringings in terms of Jewish and Israel involvement.
- Short-term programs through Birthright are critical for recruiting Jews with Jewish backgrounds who then become candidates for a return trip.

Appendix: Analysis of the Birthright sub-sample

- On all available measures, we find that Birthright respondents in our sample resemble the larger population of Birthright alumni as reported in studies conducted by the Cohen Center, Brandeis University.
- The comparisons below with other studies of Birthright alumni are drawn with those Birthright alumni who responded to the Masa Israel sponsored survey who participated in Birthright from 2006 through 2008, broken down as follows:

In what year did you go on Birthright?			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
2006	940	22.9	22.9
2007	1007	24.6	24.6
2008	2149	52.5	52.5
Total	4096	100.0	100.0

As the tables below indicate, there are only minor differences between the Masa Israel and Birthright research respondents. The Birthright respondents to the Masa Israel sponsored research do represent the larger alumni population

Background factors

Denomination

	Masa Israel Sponsored Research	Birthright Sponsored Research			
	Participated 2006-8	Winter 2006-07	Summer 2007	Winter 2007-08	Summer 2008
Orthodox	6%	5%	4%	3%	3%
Conservative	26%	28%	27%	25%	22%
Reform	41%	41%	39%	43%	43%
Other/Just Jewish/Reconstructionist	27%	26%	31%	29%	32%

Appendix: Jewish Education

Birthright: Most Intense Type of Jewish Education Received by Cohort, grades 1-8.

Masa Israel research question: Main type of Jewish schooling received between age 6 and 13.

	Masa Israel Sponsored Research	Birthright Sponsored Research			
	Participated 2006-8	Winter 2006-07	Summer 2007	Winter 2007-08	Summer 2008
None	18%	17%	20%	22%	22%
Once a week	23%	21%	20%	21%	21%
Several times a week	46%	40%	38%	41%	42%
Full time/Day School	13%	22%	22%	16%	15%

Parent In-Marriage

	Masa Israel Sponsored Research	Birthright Sponsored Research			
	Participated 2006-8	Winter 2006-07	Summer 2007	Winter 2007-08	Summer 2008
In-marriage (born or converted Jewish)	76%	82%	82%	77%	78%

Appendix: Trip experience

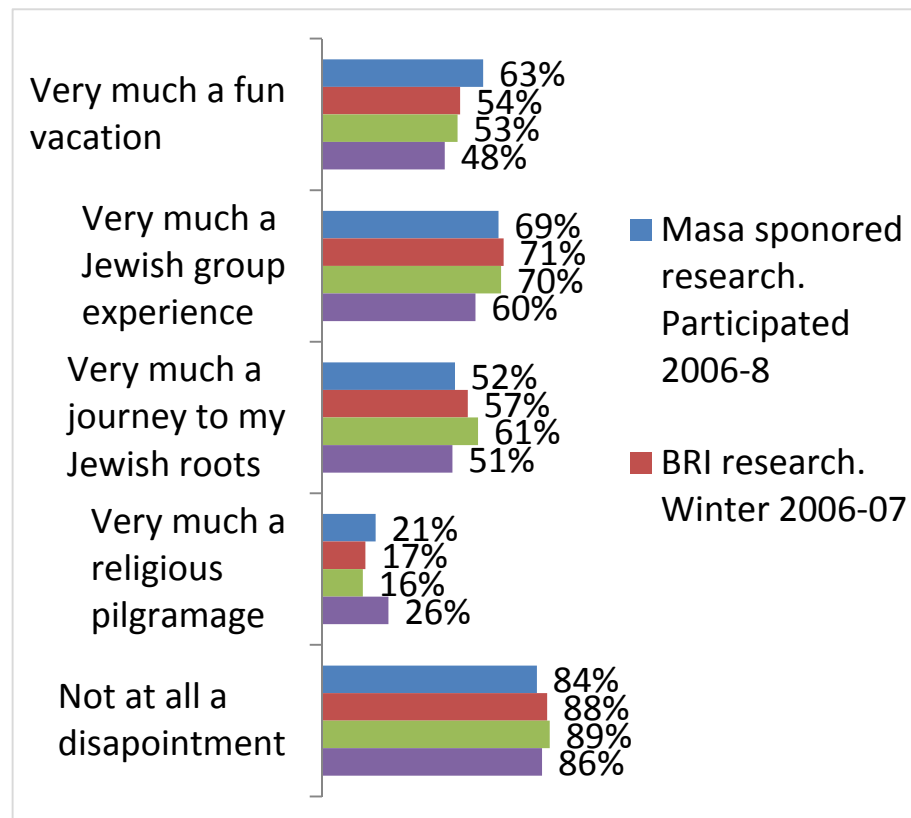
A life changing experience

- **BRI research**

In the winter 2007-08 survey, 50% of respondents reported that Taglit-Birthright Israel felt “very much” like a life-changing experience.

- **Masa Israel research**

44% reported that Taglit-Birthright Israel felt “very much” like a life-changing experience.



Appendix: Israel-related and Jewish identity items

Attachment to Israel

BRI research: Very much connected to Israel

Masa Israel research: How emotionally attached to Israel are you? (very attached)

	Birthright Sponsored Research				
	Masa Israel Sponsored Research				
	Participated 2006-8	Winter 2006-07	Summer 2007	Winter 2007-08	Summer 2008
Very attached	45%	57%	60%	48%	n/a

Confidence in describing current situation in Israel

Masa participants appear with higher scores at the weak (“not at all”) and strong (“very much”) ends. The difference is likely due to the lapse of time since the BRI trip for those participating in the Masa sponsored research. In comparison to a survey carried out immediately after the trip, it is reasonable to expect that BRI alumni will feel less confident two years later. In contrast, those who have greater confidence, have for the most part since returned to Israel and continued to intensify their engagement with Israel.

	Birthright Sponsored Research				
	Masa Israel Sponsored Research				
	Participated 2006-8	Winter 2006-07	Summer 2007	Winter 2007-08	Summer 2008
Not at all	11	4	6	5	n/a
A little bit	33	31	37	35	n/a
Somewhat	35	53	47	49	n/a
Very much	20	12	10	10	n/a

For the following, Orthodox are excluded

Importance of Jewish family

	Birthright Sponsored Research				
	Masa Israel Sponsored Research				
	Participated 2006-8	Winter 2006-07	Summer 2007	Winter 2007-08	Summer 2008
Very important to marry Jewish	37%	24%	33%	21%	n/a
Very important to raise children Jewish	60%	70%	71%	60%	n/a

Contribution of Israel Programs

Steven M. Cohen and Ezra Kopelowitz