

Journeys to Israel:

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

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Main findings

- Returning to Israel for any duration is linked with rises in ALL areas of Israel-related and Jewish engagement. The jump over non-returnees is even larger for Masa Israel experiences of 5-12 months in Israel
- Participation in Masa Israel experiences is linked with high levels of Israel-related activities, in-marriage, Jewish leadership and aliya
 - Short-term trip alumni who go on Masa Israel experiences out-score those who return on short-term trips. For Israel attachment, two short-term trips are “good;” but a short-term trip plus Masa Israel is even “better.”
 - Short-term program alumni who went on Masa Israel experiences are more active in Israel-related activities than alumni who returned to Israel for a short-term trip. To illustrate, take the % who engaged in Israel-related political activity...
 - For short-term program alumni who never returned: 17%.
 - For alumni who returned for a short-term program: 36%.
 - And for alumni who returned on Masa Israel: 50%.

- Of short-term alumni who return on Masa Israel experiences, 18% of those age 23+ now live in Israel – a rate of aliya that will likely rise
 - Of short-term alumni who went on Masa Israel experience 91% are in-married, as compared with 71% of those who returned on short-term programs, and 50% of those who have not returned
 - Masa Israel participants are almost 4 times as likely as short-term program alumni who never return to “give serious thought” to working as a Jewish professional.
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- The combination of a short-term program, by way of Birthright and then Masa Israel is a very effective pathway to move Jews of all levels of Jewish background to intensive Jewish leadership and Israel involvement
 - Of BRI alumni, 11% go on a Masa Israel experience. Of Masa Israel experience participants aged 23 and over, 58% were on Birthright.

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?
 1. One-time participants on short-term Israel programs
 2. Those who returned to Israel on short-term trips
 3. Those who return on Masa Israel experiences

Research methodology

Web-based survey of Masa Israel alumni, Masa-interested & Birthright Israel (BRI) alumni.

- September-October 2010 a Web-based survey e-mailed to 83,000 contacts with 1-3 reminders:
- Alumni of Masa Israel programs, who participated in 2005-10* (15,000 invited).
- Those who had sent an inquiry to Masa Israel for information, but did not eventually participate (5,000 invited).
- BRI alumni, who participated in 2006-2010 (63,000 invited).

* Masa Israel contact lists were complete from 2008/9 onwards, with partial contact lists for previous years.

Response rates: for all 13,525 responses

- Alumni of Masa Israel programs: 21% responded
- Inquired to Masa Israel but did not participate: 22% responded
- BRI alumni: 16% responded.

Comparability & representativeness:

- BRI alumni respondents in this study closely resemble those in previous studies with respect to denomination raised, Jewish education, parents' in-marriage, and evaluation of the trip.
- We weighted the respondents to correct for the slight "over-responsiveness" of Masa Israel alumni* relative to BRI alumni.

*"Masa Israel programs" in this study = spent 5+ months in Israel, not necessarily with a Masa Israel subsidy; of these, 85% received Masa Israel support.

A US-based analysis

We selected for analysis those who met either of two conditions:

1. Current US-residents (97% of the resulting analytic sample), or
2. Living in Israel, provided they or a parent were born in the US (3%).

N = 11,161 respondents

Masa Israel participants: Religious diversity & the Birthright contribution

- From 2004/5 through 2010/11, 55,000 participants on Masa Israel programs.
- We learn from the survey:
 - 34% of Masa Israel participants are Orthodox
 - Birthright expands both the number and religious diversity of Masa Israel participants
 - 58% of Masa Israel participants 23 or older come from Birthright
 - Just 9% of Birthright alumni who go on to Masa Israel experiences are Orthodox
 - Of BRI alumni, 11% participate on Masa Israel experiences, 11% in other programs, and 78% have not returned to Israel.

Comparison groups

Our analysis focuses on five distinct groups:

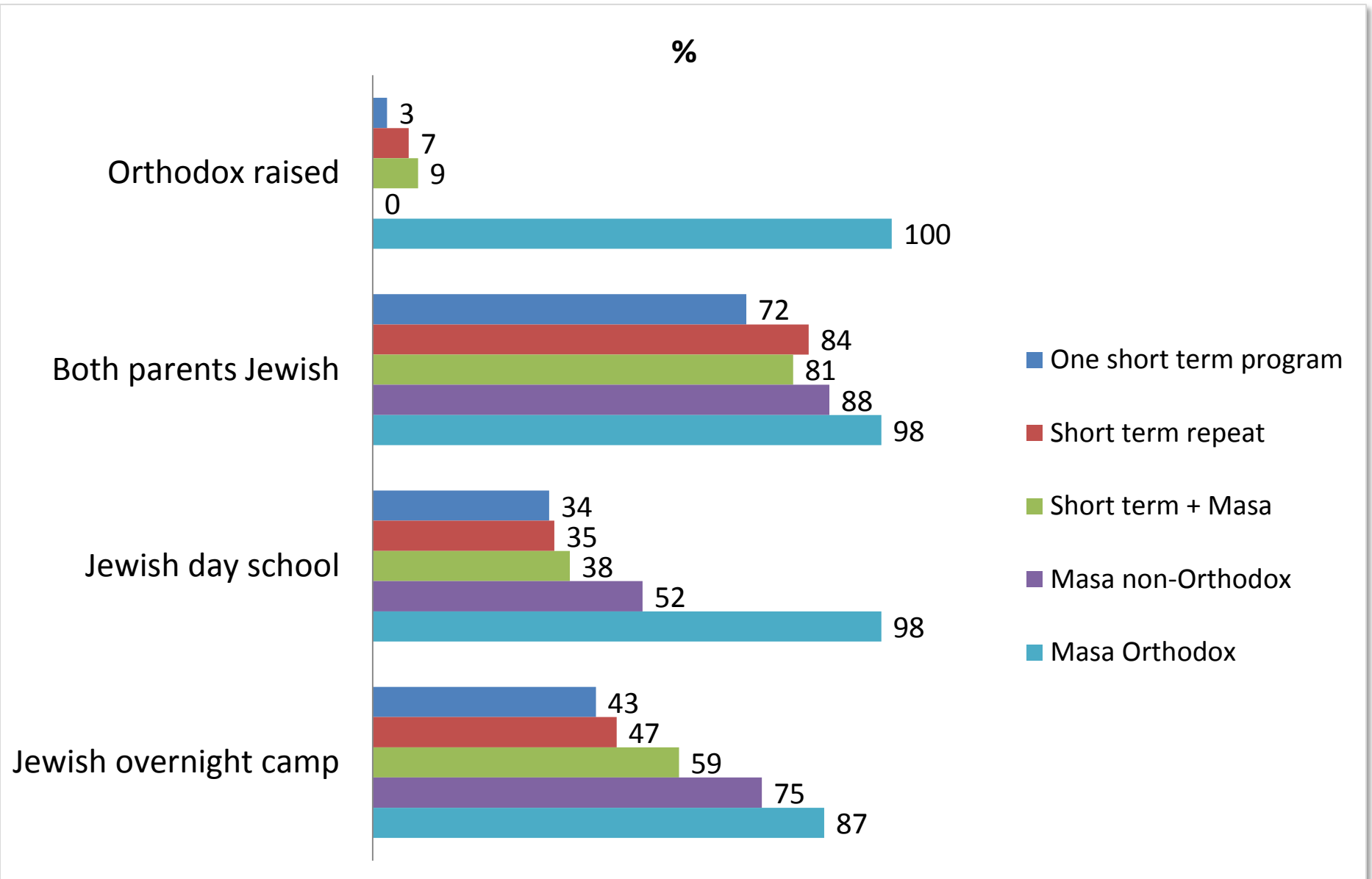
Total N = 11,161 American respondents (both unweighted and weighted)

1. “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)
2. “Short-term repeat”: Birthright alumni and other short term program participants returned for a 0-4 months (1005 respondents, 9% of total)
3. “Short-term + Masa”: Birthright alumni and other short term program participants who returned for 5 + months on a Masa Israel program (1003 respondents, 9%)
4. “Masa Israel only, non-Orthodox”: Raised other than Orthodox & never went on Birthright (1026, 9%)
5. “Masa Israel only & Orthodox”: Raised Orthodox & never went on Birthright (735 respondents, 7%)

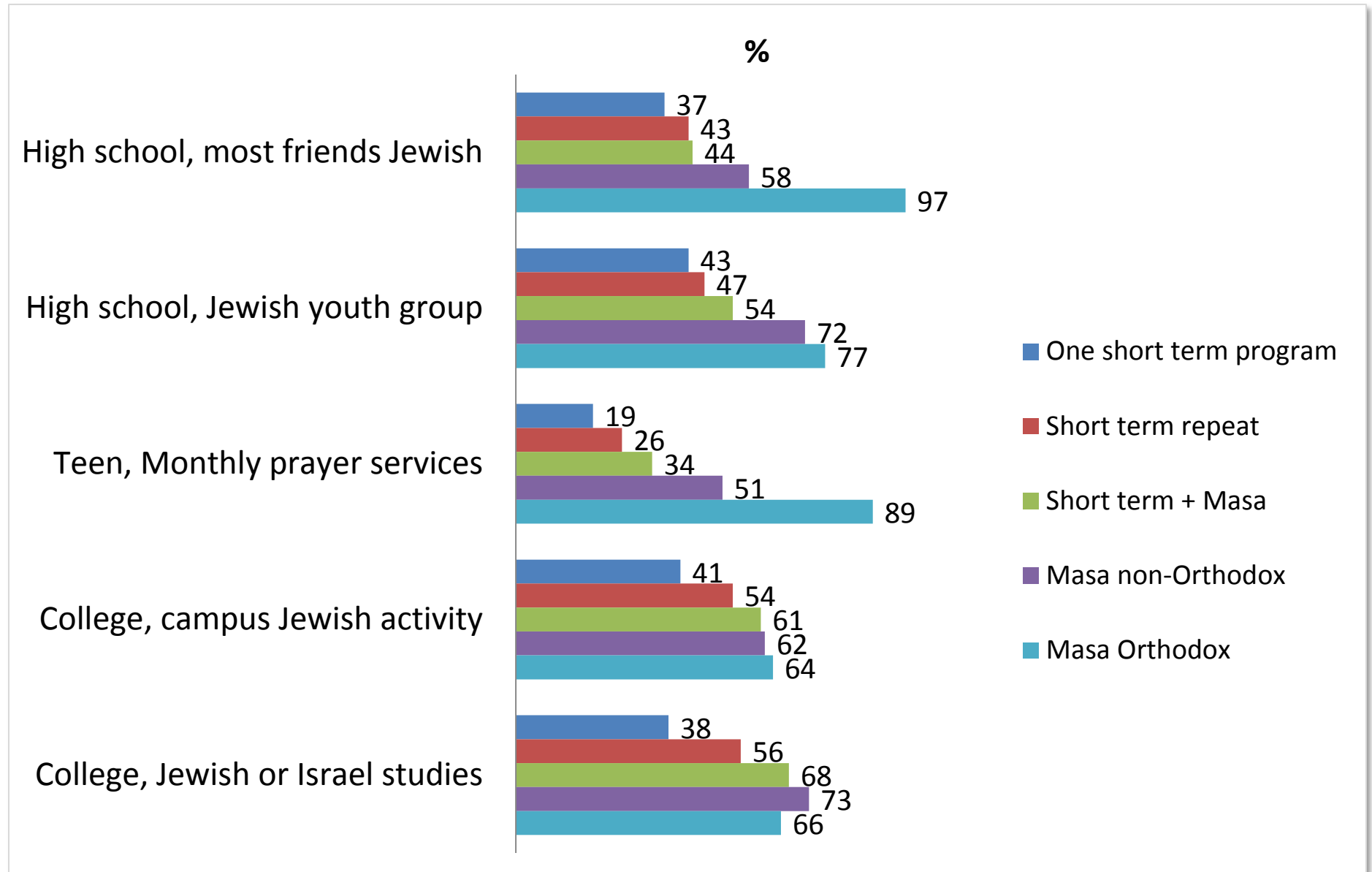
Jewish socialization

- Jewish socialization indicators used here: parents in-married, day school attendance, Jewish camp, Jewish youth group, Jewish friends, college experiences
- Three general groups
 1. **Short term participants who do not return**
Relatively low levels of childhood Jewish education
 2. **Short term participants who return on short or long programs**
Medium levels of childhood Jewish education
 3. **Direct to Masa, do not participate on BRI**
High levels of childhood education. Orthodox and non-Orthodox who come to Israel as teens on a youth movement, synagogue or school sponsored trip and return on Masa Israel.

Childhood socialization



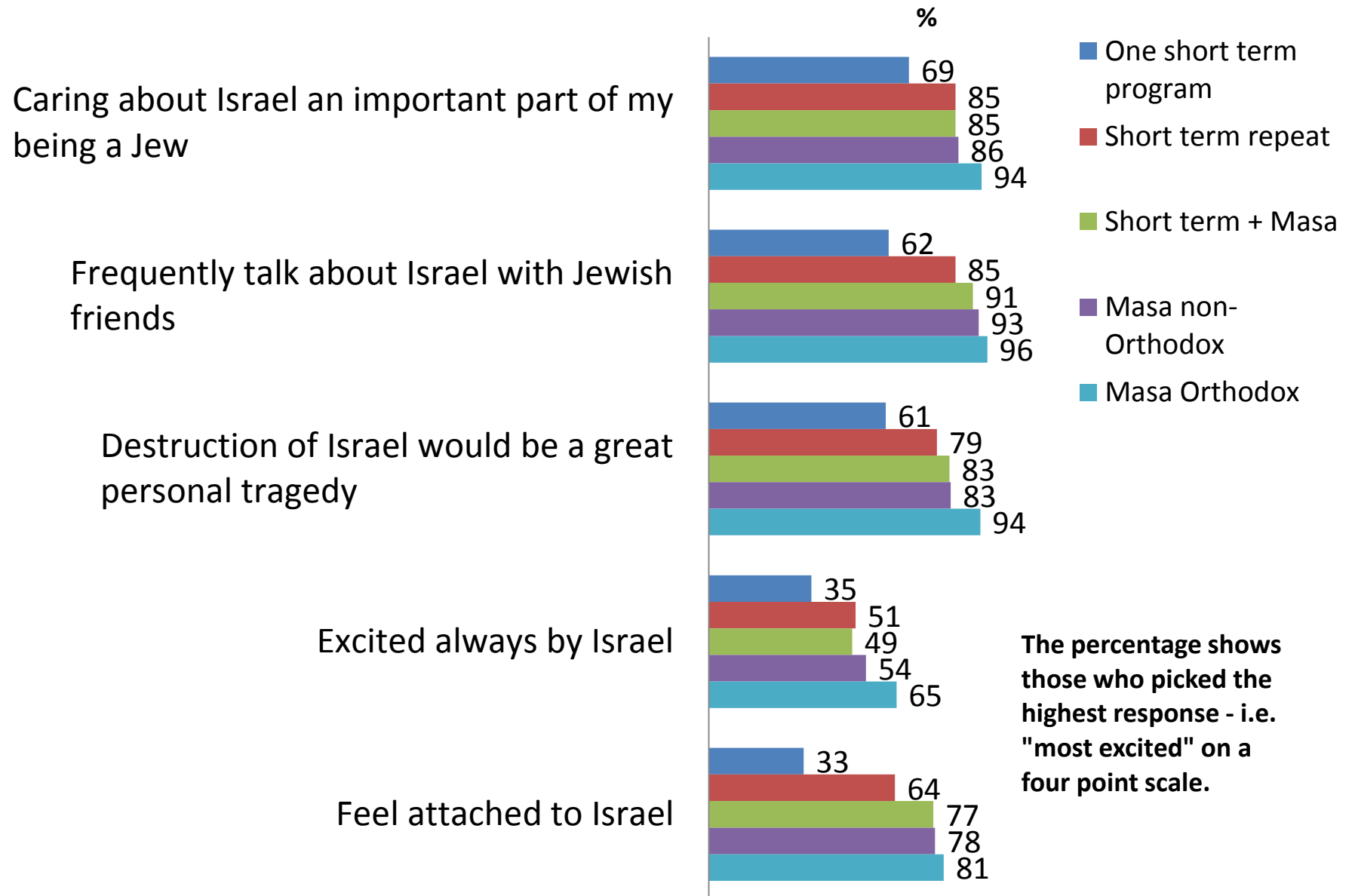
Teen & college years



Feelings of attachment to Israel

- Alumni of Masa Israel and short-term trip alumni who return to Israel feel far more attached to Israel than those who never return
- Short-term trip alumni who go on Masa Israel experiences out-score those who return on short-term trips
- In other words, for Israel attachment, two short-term trips are “good;” but short-term trip plus Masa Israel is even “better.”

Feelings of Israel Attachment



Activities related to Israel

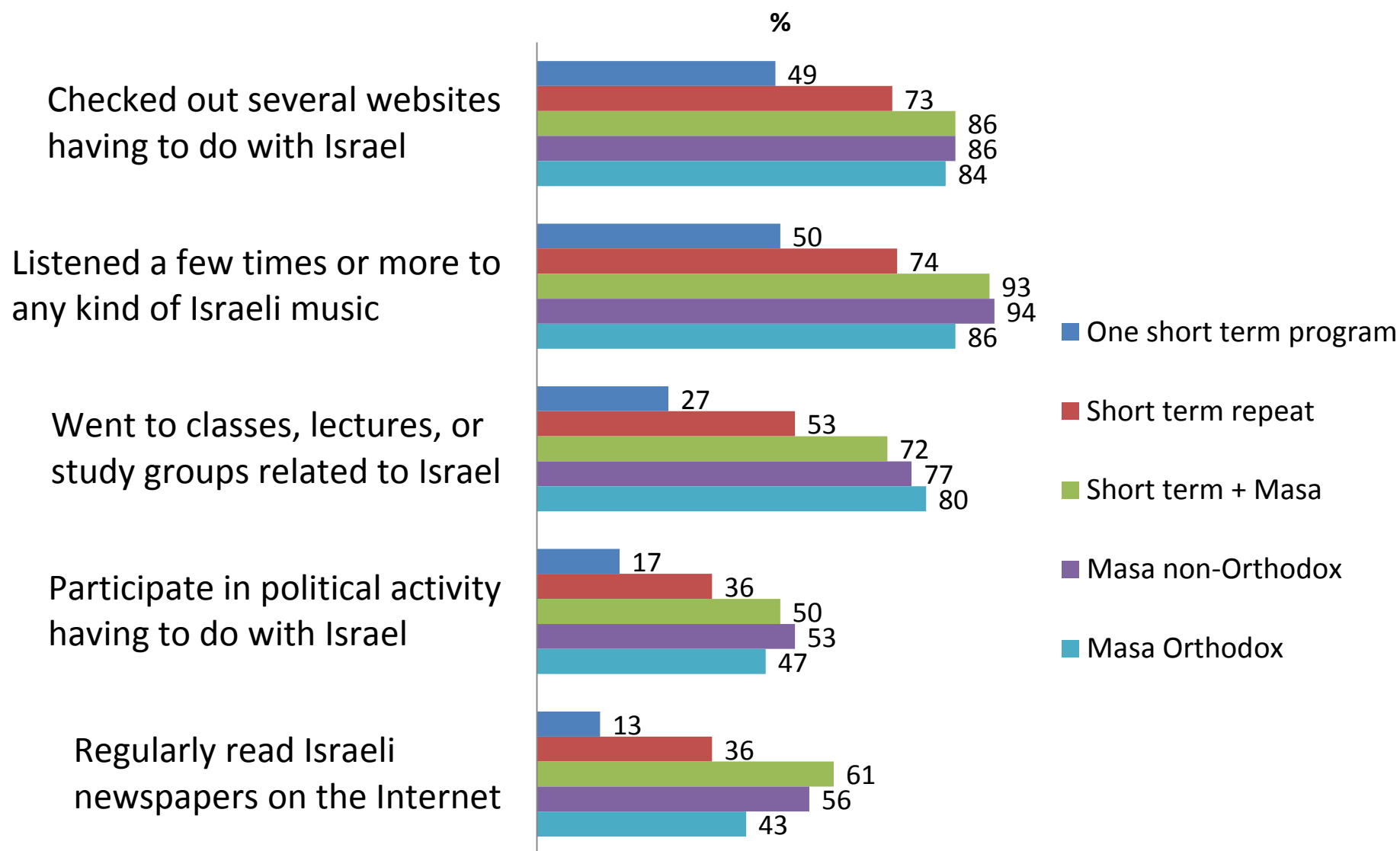
- For all, return Israel trips lead to dramatic jumps in Israel-related activity
- Short-term program alumni who went on Masa Israel experiences are more active in Israel-related activities than alumni who returned to Israel for a short-term trip
- To illustrate, take the % who engaged in Israel-related political activity...

For short-term program alumni who never returned: 17%.

For alumni who returned for a short-term program: 36%.

And for alumni who returned on Masa Israel: 50%.

Israel related actions in past year



Aliya

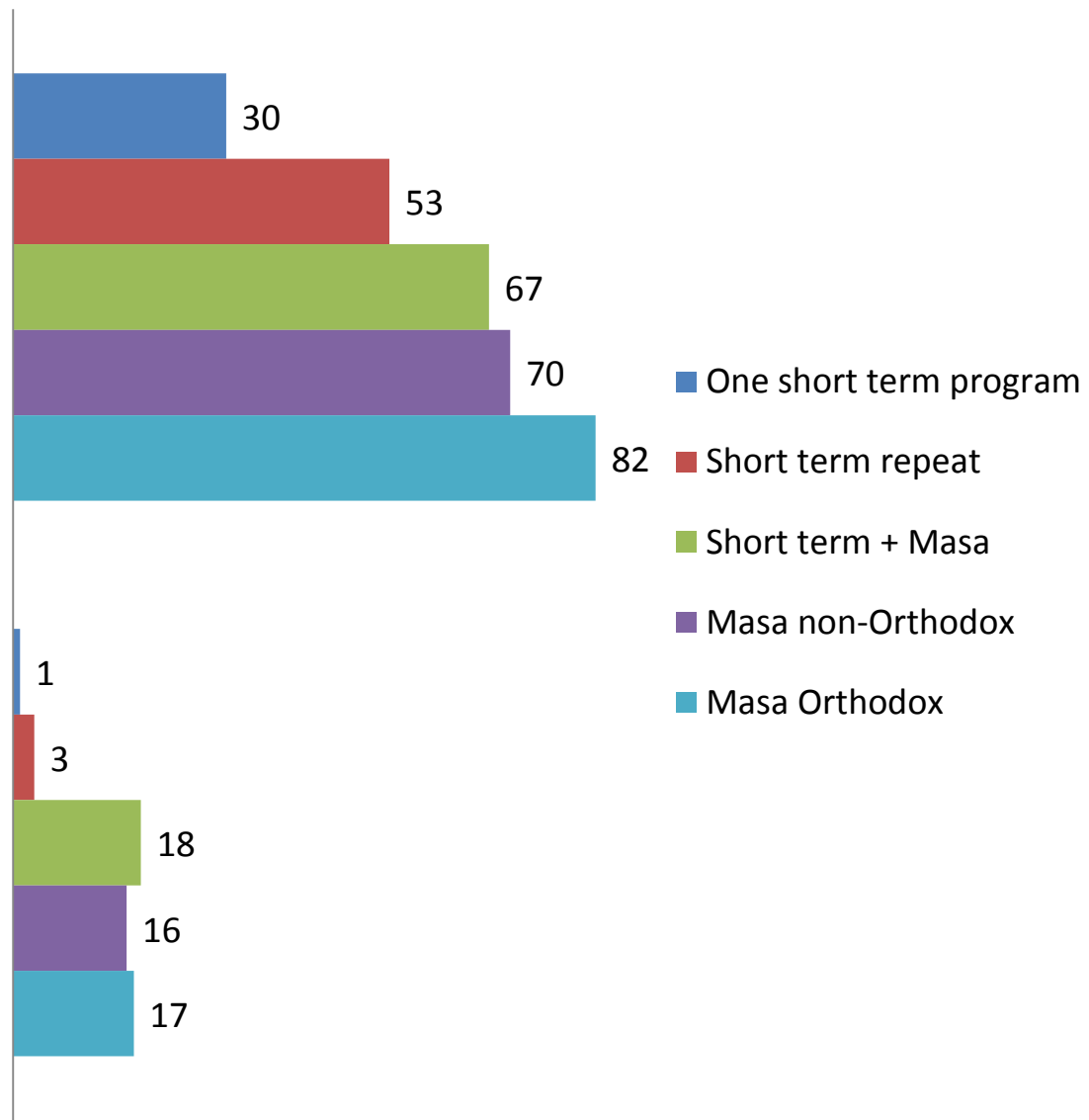
- Thoughts of making aliya are far more frequent among Masa Israel participants – be they Orthodox or not, BRI alumni or not – than among those who never went on Masa Israel
- Of short-term program alumni who went on a Masa, Israel program over one-in-six (18%) are living in Israel
- The implication: The short-term program + Masa Israel combination gives a powerful jolt to the idea of making aliya, if not the actuality of making aliya.

Aliya

%

Given serious thought to making aliya in past year

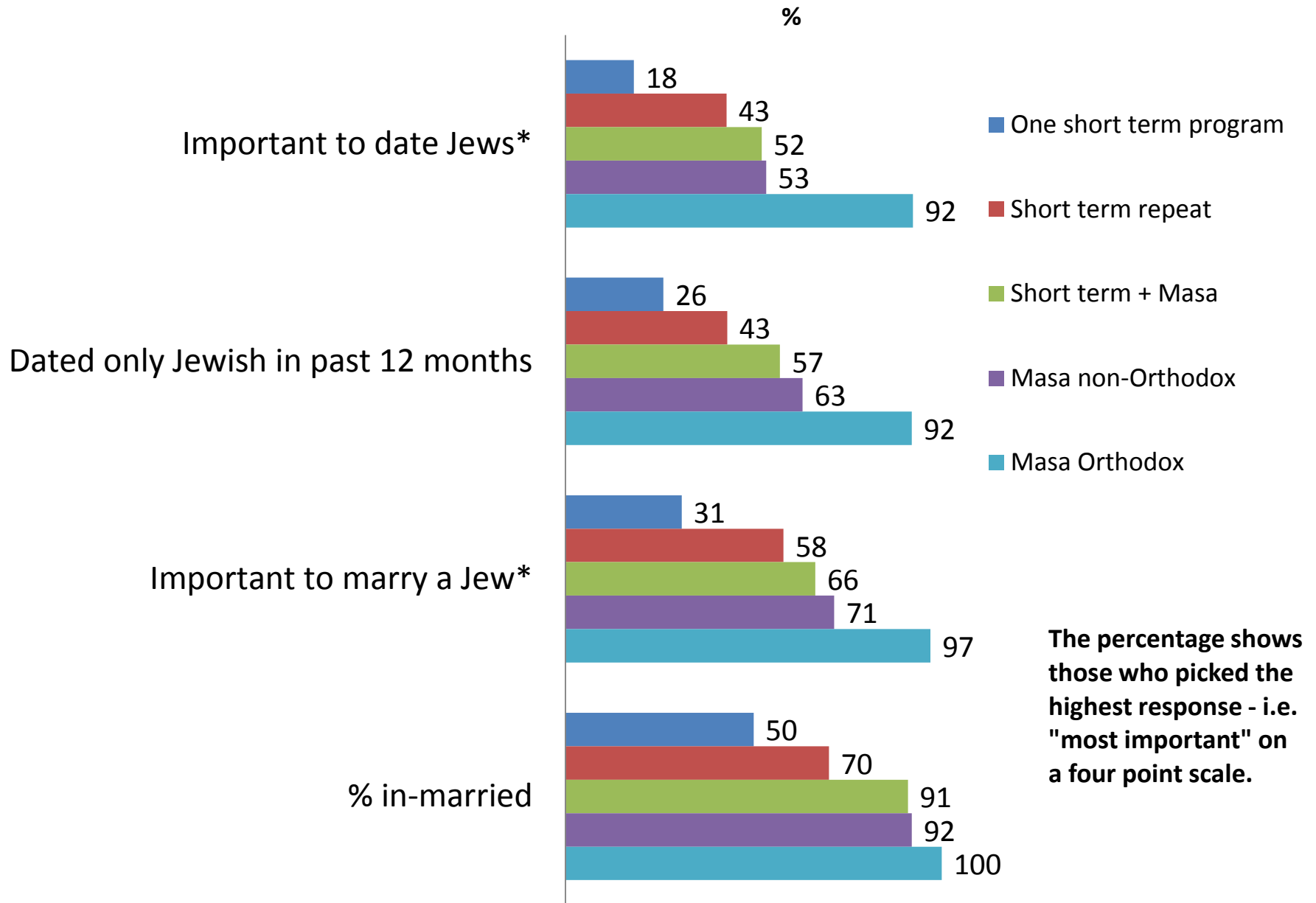
Aliya, live in Israel now (23 years or older)



Dating and Marriage

- Returning to Israel – even on a short-term trip – is strongly related with greater commitment to Jewish dating & marriage.
- Returning on Masa Israel is associated with even greater commitment to Jewish dating and marriage.
- Among short-term program alumni, the in-marriage rate reaches ...
 - **50%** among alumni who never returned to Israel,
 - **70%** *of those who returned on a short-term trip, and*
 - **91% (!)** of those who came on Masa.
- The in-marriage advantage is concentrated among the minority who return to Israel, be they for a short-term or, even better, for a Masa Israel trip.

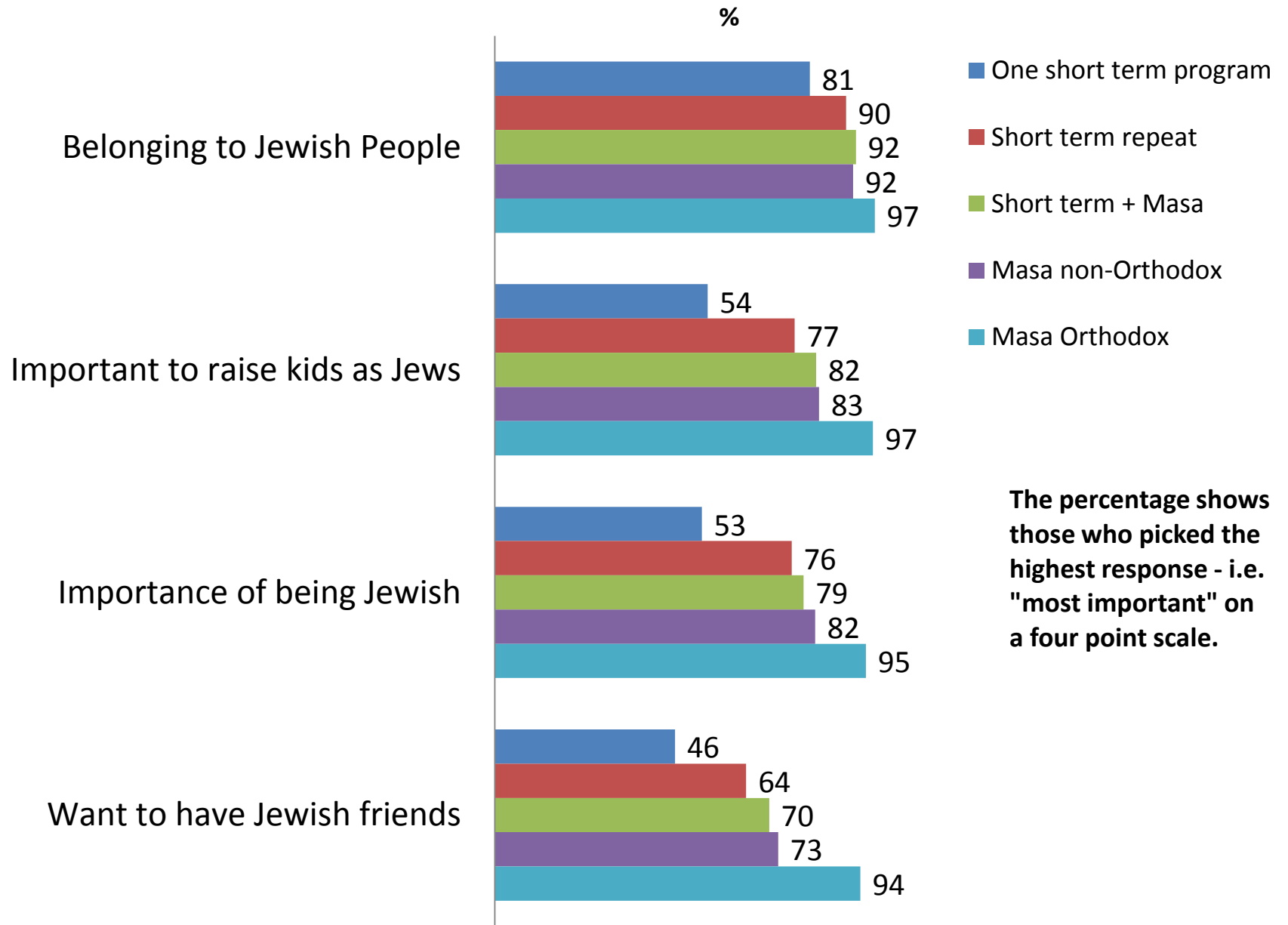
Dating and Marriage



Priority of being Jewish

With respect to the priority placed upon being Jewish we see a familiar pattern with Orthodox Masa Israel participants at the top, followed by non-Orthodox Masa Israel participants closely followed by short-term + Masa alumni, followed by short-term alumni who returned on short trips, with one time participants who never returned scoring lowest.

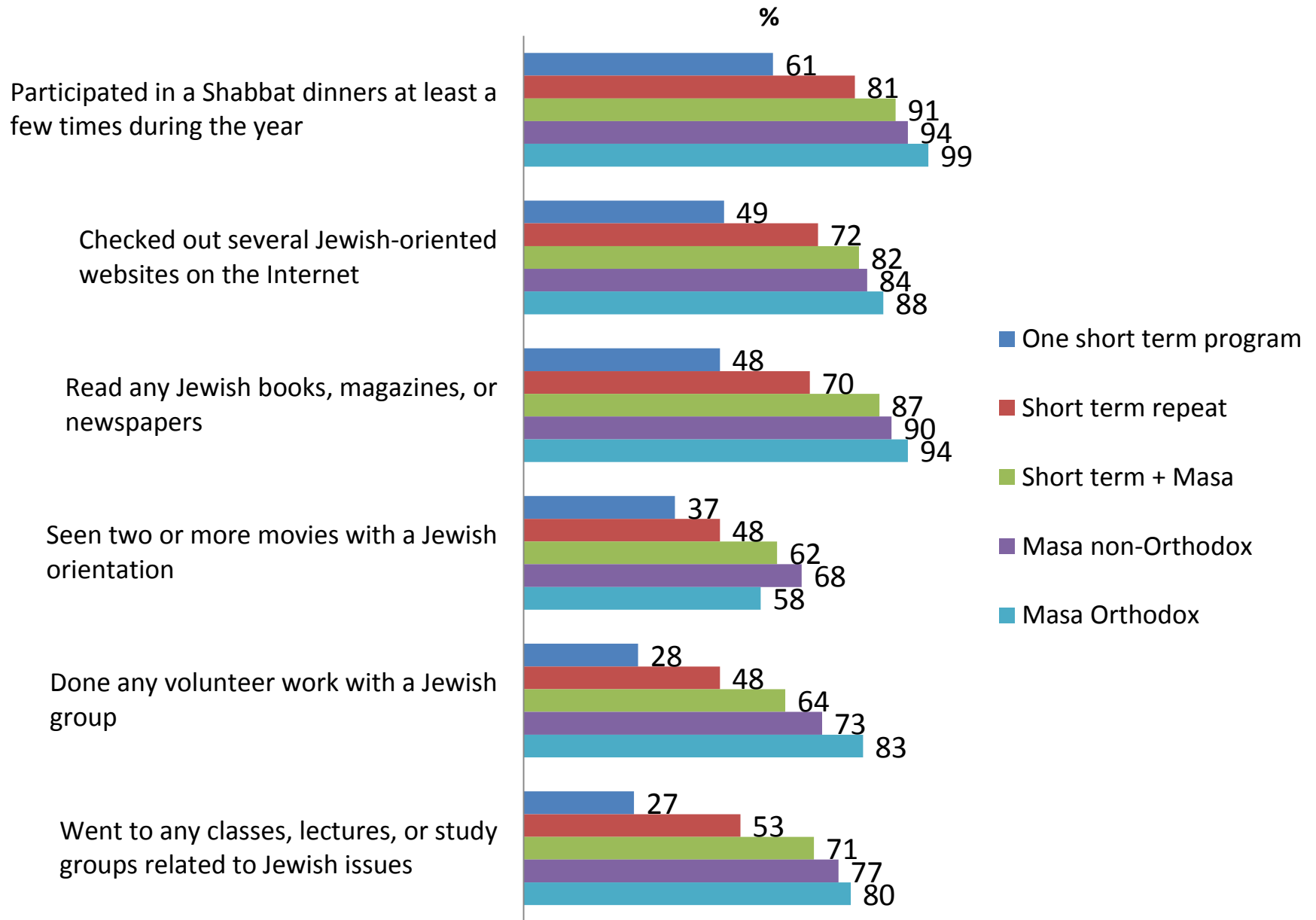
Priority of being Jewish



Jewish activities

- The same pattern repeats
- The impact of Masa Israel is especially pronounced with respect to volunteering for Jewish causes, taking Jewish classes, and reading Jewish subject matter.

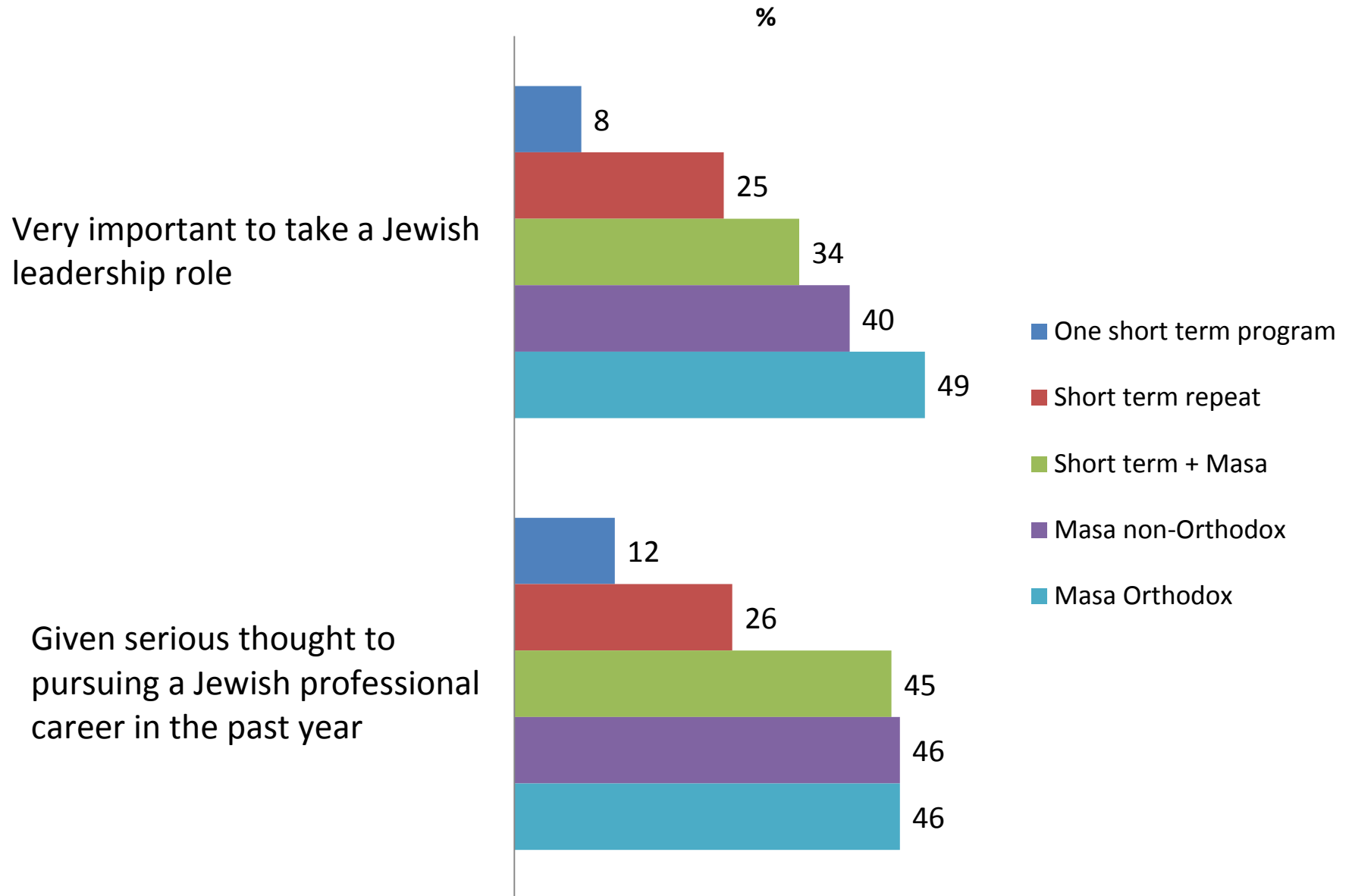
Jewish activities



Jewish affiliation and leadership

- Masa Israel participation is strongly related to Jewish leadership
- Short-term alumni who return on Masa Israel, even more than those who return on short-term programs, regard exercising leadership roles in Jewish or Israel related activities as important.
- Masa Israel participants are almost 4 times as likely as shorter term program alumni who never returned to “give serious thought” to working as a Jewish professional
- The differences among the five groups Israel program alumni are small with respect to Jewish communal affiliation, moderate with respect to multiple points of affiliation, and large with respect to serving as a Jewish leader
- For short-term program alumni, the % who function as a Jewish leader in at least two contexts rises from ...
 - 7% for those who never returned to Israel, to
 - 20% for those who returned on a short-term program, to
 - 28% for those alumni who went on a Masa Israel program

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%

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%

Trip experience

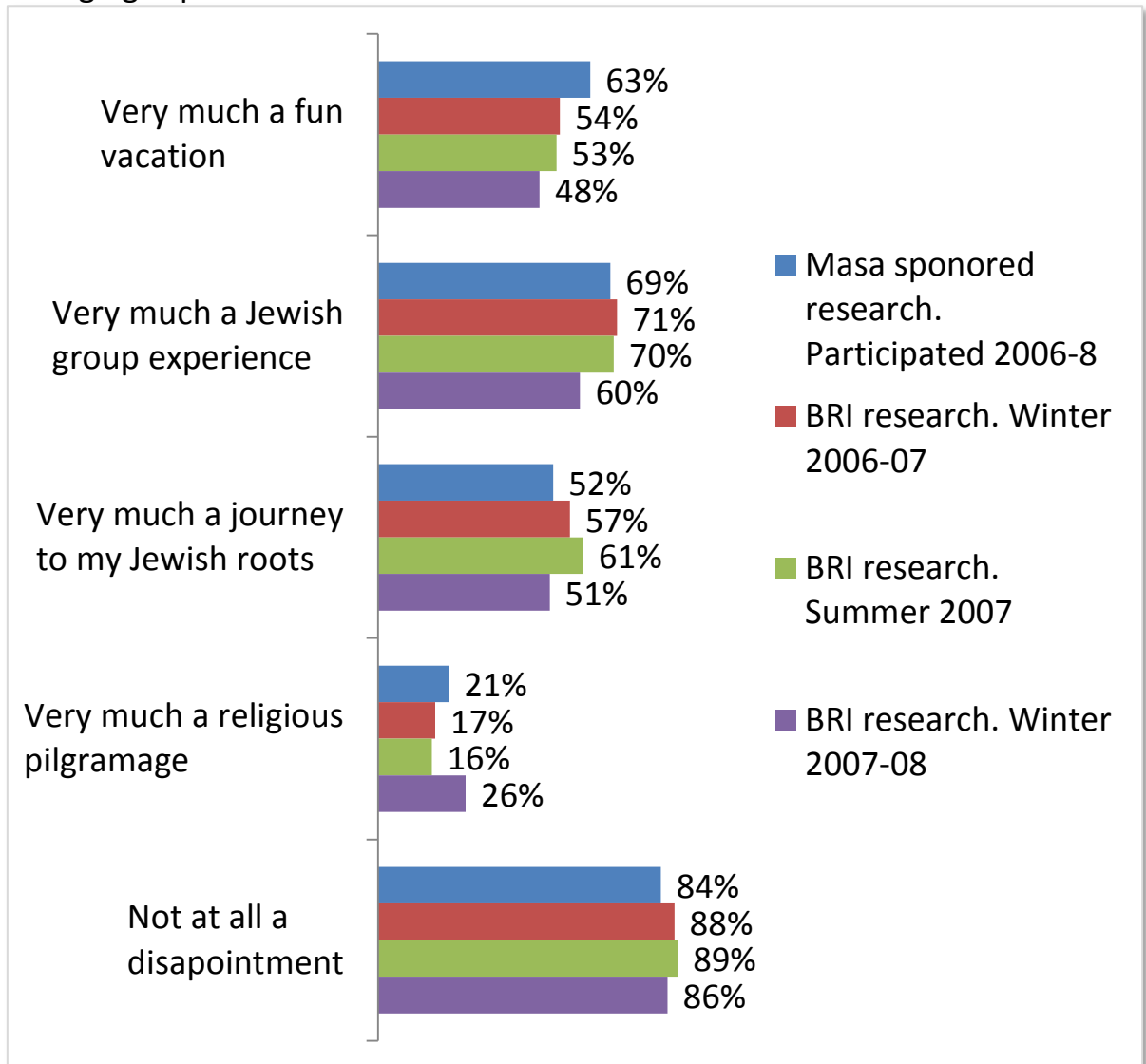
A life changing experience

- **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.



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)

	Masa Israel Sponsored Research	Birthright 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.

	Masa Israel Sponsored Research	Birthright 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

	Masa Israel Sponsored Research	Birthright 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