



THE “DRAW-A-RELIGIOUS JEW” TEST AND STUDENTS’ RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES

Matt Reingold
TanenbaumCHAT, Toronto
matt.reingold@gmail.com

Matt Reingold teaches Judaic Studies at TanenbaumCHAT. He received his PhD from York University as a Wexner Fellow and a Davidson Scholar. His areas of research revolve around arts-based learning in Jewish studies and Jewish comics and graphic novels. He has published articles in the *Journal of Jewish Education*, *Religious Education*, and the *Journal of Comics and Graphic Novels*.

ABSTRACT: A quantitative arts-based study was conducted with high school juniors and seniors at a community Jewish school in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. This group represented a diverse mixture of students who populate the school in relation to gender, involvement in school life, and religious denominations. Students were prompted to draw a religious Jew and the images were scored based on five different markers. Of the 35 drawings, only one female was drawn. Additionally, the majority of students drew *haredi* Orthodox Jews, despite none being present in the study group. The article concludes by addressing the problem of how students understand the word religious, and offers suggestions for how to reframe religious identity in a way that reflects pluralism and denominational diversity.

KEYWORDS: Jewish identity, arts-based research, secondary school research, *haredim*, gender studies, Jewish religious denominations, community day schools

Introduction

The following paper is grounded in the history of denominational Judaism and the idea that there is not a uniform way of understanding religious Jewish identity. This understanding of Jewish denominations is rooted in post-Enlightenment and post-emancipation 18th and 19th centuries' Jewish Europe where different approaches to religious meaning-making were constructed. In the wake of the seismic shift away from religion forming the lynchpin of society, Jewish communities began wrestling with how to operate as Jews and as members of Europe now that Jews were given emancipation and granted citizenship in central European countries like France and Germany (Ben-Sasson, 2007).

What began in Europe spread to North America by the late 1800s and Jewish denominations have continued to exist and develop to this day. As evidenced by the 2013 Pew Research Centre study "A Portrait of Jewish Americans," denominational identity persists, with Jewish Americans self-identifying as Reform (35%), Conservative (18%), and Orthodox Jews (10%), with others choosing alternative options or no denominational affiliation at all. Additionally, the borders between the groups is porous; the Pew study revealed that over the course of an individual's lifetime, the likelihood of switching denominations is greater than 50%.

These denominations, while having some commonalities, have many radical differences in relation to understanding what religion is, what its purpose is, and how best to practice it. These differences lead to different constructs of what a religious Jew is as each proscribes different ways to be religious. Despite the prevalence of these different constructs, research from other fields (Chambers, 1983) shows that diversity in practice does not necessarily lead to diversity in archetypes or stereotypes.

“While students were formally taught that the word religious means to practice a religion, it is important to assess whether a singular or more uniform understanding and application of the definition exists.”

The purpose of the this study was to understand how 16-18 year old Jewish students who come from diverse religious and denominational backgrounds, but study at the same community Jewish secondary school¹ in North America, express their understanding of the term “religious Jew” and whether there exists a dominant archetypal construct of the term, despite formal instruction that teaches a contrary narrative. While students were formally taught that the word religious means to practice a religion, it is important to assess whether a singular or more uniform understanding and application of the definition

exists. This is because the way students understand the term can reflect on their own self-identity as religious individuals and can lead to more informed learning and dialoguing about diverse forms of religious expression. To answer the question, an arts-based research study was conducted that asked students to draw a picture of a religious Jew. Subsequently, their images were quantitatively coded in order to best understand how the students express their understandings of what a religious Jew is and looks like.

Literature Review

In addition to an overview of Jewish denominational movements, three main areas of research revolving around stereotypes, children's artwork, and identity provide a theoretical framework for the study.

Art as a research tool. In 1983, D. W. Chambers presented a quantitative data-measuring tool that was used to understand how youth (kindergarten to grade 5) conceptualized and stereotyped scientists. Calling it the "Draw-A-Scientist Test," Chambers asked over 4000 students to draw a scientist. Chambers believed that making use of initial or first thoughts is relevant in understanding the ways in which students think about scientists, and that the images that students draw are reflective of a particular construct that they have about scientists. After collecting images, he awarded points for different criteria contained in the images in order to quantitatively code the data. Points were given for the inclusion of: lab coats, eyeglasses, facial hair, scientific instruments, books, technology, formulas or scientific exclamations like "eureka!"

After analyzing the data, Chambers discovered that the older the child, the more uniform and stereotypical the image. These uniform drawings presented scientists as males with facial hair in lab coats. Chambers' (1983) study has been replicated with older students and with young adults and similar results were found (Finson, 2002). The significance of the study is that students, at very young ages, form stereotypes of scientists which are difficult to break, and that these stereotypes may negatively impact their career choices and their attitudes towards scientists. Additionally, the persistence of the stereotype of the male, bearded scientist in a white coat has not diminished over the past twenty years, despite the fact that increasingly large numbers of females are scientists and that many scientists do not wear lab coats or possess facial hair (Finson, 2002).

Additionally, Chambers' (1983) Draw-A-Scientist test has been used effectively to understand the ways in which people identify the roles and responsibilities of scientists. About the test, which, having been replicated numerous times in different settings, Rahm and Charbonneau (1997) write:

most [scientists]...would undoubtedly have a hard time recognizing themselves in any of these depictions. Yet the [studies] show that this stereotypical image is surprisingly consistent across race, gender, socioeconomic status, and persists through adulthood almost independently of one's educational and career path. (p. 775)

The authors note that stereotypes exist in relation to scientists despite increasingly large numbers of scientists who do not fit the stereotyped drawing. Of note, the authors conclude that stereotypes persist in relation to extreme underrepresentation of illustrated Asians despite the prominence of Asian scientists.

In a study about children's perceptions of the elderly as demonstrated through artwork and narrative conducted by Weber, Cooper, and Hesser (1996), the authors write: "Children's drawings of people can reveal a considerable amount of information about perceptions, concepts, and human dynamics as viewed through their eyes" (p. 115). However, it is important to acknowledge that while the drawings themselves might tell a lot about what the child sees or perceives, Chambers (1983) writes that a drawing, without any additional context, is more "useful in identifying, than in measuring, attitudes" (p. 265). By this Chambers means that the picture tells the researcher what the student thinks, but not why, or in what gradation or extreme.

The second area of research into stereotypes that is relevant to this study revolves around perceptions of religious people. Chia and Jih (1994) conducted a study in which students in both religious and public schools were shown pictures of people dressed in casual clothing and in religious clothing and were asked to select images based on word associations. The study showed that stereotypes are used to form understandings of entire religious communities and that these stereotypes can be either positive or negative depending on the cultural heritage of the perceiver. Additionally, the authors discovered that stereotyping can be a useful tool for managing complex experiences but, if used as a way to avoid individualizing people, it is "maladaptive and potentially dangerous" (p. 563).

Identity. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) write: "If identity is everywhere, it is nowhere. If it is fluid, how can we understand the ways in which self-understandings may harden, congeal, and crystallize? If it is constructed, how can we understand the sometimes coercive force of external identifications?" (p. 1). Despite their criticism of the term, the authors maintain that there are a series of core features of "identity." They write that identity is something that all people have or for which they are searching. Likewise, all groups also either have an identity or are searching for one. Moreover, it is possible to have an identity without even knowing about it and therefore it is something that needs to be discovered or

revealed. Identity is understood as a “fundamental condition of social being” (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 7) and is used to attain deep or foundational understandings.

Butler (2006) argues that identity or performativity “is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration” (p. xiv). Through this repeated series of actions, thoughts, and behaviours, identity is itself nurtured, developed, crystalized, and challenged.

Jewish denominations. Prior to the development of denominational Judaism, the traditional approach to practicing Judaism, now called Orthodox Judaism, involved subscribing to a traditional way of life that was rooted in observing Jewish law as understood from the Torah and Talmud. These Jews, because of their exclusion from society prior to emancipation, rarely had cause for wanting to integrate into society, nor did they have the opportunity to abandon their Judaism because of the nature of religious European society (Katzburg, Wurzburger, & Rakman, 2007).

The first of the new religious movements to emerge was Reform Judaism. This denomination began as a direct response to emancipation and changes in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. Reform Judaism began as a way to balance traditional Judaism with reforms in order to find a way to live a Jewish life that is adjusted for existence in the modern world. A core component of Reform ideology is the notion that certain religious practices were outdated and in need of modernization in order to remain relevant. Early Reform communities wanted to move away from a fully traditional lifestyle and, instead, integrate secular ideas and practices into their Jewish worship. This included changing clothing norms, changing the language of prayer services from Hebrew to the vernacular language, providing greater equality for women in religious services, and introducing musical instruments into synagogues. Later changes included abandoning dietary restrictions and all other forms of Jewish ritual. In recent decades, there has been a return to ritual, at the choice of the individual, as part of a person’s personal Jewish religious belief system (Kaplan, 2007).

The second denomination that emerged post-emancipation is Conservative Judaism. Conservative Judaism broke away from Reform Judaism following the former’s decision to change the language of prayer from Hebrew to the vernacular. Conservative Judaism is characterized by a commitment to tradition with openness to moderate changes that can be justified by applying classical Jewish texts to contemporary problems. As a result, the Conservative movement has not abandoned traditional Jewish religious practices, but has tried to find ways within the law that permit innovation. Examples of this would include the movement’s willingness to ordain women and to officiate at same-sex marriages (Golinkin & Panitz, 2007).

Following the development of Reform and Conservative Judaism, an alternative form of Orthodox Judaism was established in Germany that is primarily connected with the writings of Samson Raphael Hirsch. This approach, called “neo-Orthodox” or “modern Orthodox,” tried to attract Jews who had left Orthodox Judaism due to an interest in being part of mainstream society. Hirsch argued that traditional Orthodox Judaism does not need to clash with European society and civilization, and that it is possible to remain a traditionally observant Jew while partaking in certain aspects of European life as the two can be synthesized together (cited in Samet, 2007).

Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism are all still active Jewish religious movements in North America. At times they actively work together, especially when combating shared issues like anti-Semitism, but at their core they possess radically different values and approaches to Jewish religious practice. While the less traditional groups tend to be open and accepting of the religious legitimacy of the more traditional groups, those groups which are more traditional tend not to be accepting of the religious practices of groups that are less traditional.

One additional religious Jewish group needs mentioning. This group, which represents approximately 2.5% of North American Jewry and approximately 5% of Israeli Jewry, is called *haredi* Orthodox. *Haredim* are labeled ultra-Orthodox due to their strict adherence to traditional Judaism in addition to deliberate distancing from secular culture in order to maintain and preserve their traditions. Unlike Jews of other denominations whose clothing does not typically look specifically Jewish, *haredim* dress differently than other Jews by choosing clothes that make them stand apart and as a result are more noticeable. These clothes include maintaining long beards and wearing black caftans and hats for men and long skirts and hats or wigs² for women. *Haredim* also often speak in Yiddish amongst themselves and have extremely limited contact with non-Orthodox Jews because they choose to live in isolated neighborhoods and interact primarily with other *haredim*. A dominant feature of the *haredi* mentality is that the cultures and values of historic Jewish communities were better and more correct, and as a result, *haredim* choose to remain committed to those values, even when they conflict with the world around them (Heilman & Skolnik, 2007).

Methodology

This study was conducted at a large metropolitan Jewish community school in Toronto, Ontario. It serves a population of over 1000 students. The school’s website reports: that 72% of graduates continue their Jewish education beyond high school by either spending a year in Israel learning about Judaism or enrolling in a university or college

Jewish Studies course; that graduates place a strong importance on marrying someone Jewish (and do so 96% of the time); that they are twice as likely as other Jews on Canadian university campuses to get involved in Jewish groups; and that 80% of graduates belong to a synagogue, with half reporting that they attend regularly (TanenbaumCHAT). Additionally, as has been demonstrated by another study conducted at the school (Reingold, 2016), the students are comfortable discussing God and in many instances, do profess a belief in God despite not always being sure about what God wants of them. Coupled with low Orthodox attendance, the statistics and data paint a portrait of a population highly engaged in Judaism.

Two different groups participated in this study in order to assess how they express their understandings of what a religious Jew is. The first study group was comprised of twenty male and female students from grades 11 and 12. These students are part of a group who were selected by a religiously diverse staff committee³ to be part of a peer leadership program. The students in the leadership program are responsible for creating the majority of the experiential Jewish educational programs in the school. This includes running all Jewish holiday programming and leading the mandatory grade 9 *Shabbaton*⁴ and the optional grade 10 and 11 *Shabbaton*. The students were selected based on a variety of factors including positive feedback from their teachers, an in-person interview, and an application form. An important factor in selecting the group of students was ensuring a diversity of skills and backgrounds. There was a deliberate and purposeful plan to include students from a range of religious communities, and great effort was made to draw on students who affiliated with different Jewish denominations and religious experiences. As a result, within this group there were students who self-identified as Reform, Conservative, and Modern/neo-Orthodox Jews.⁵ This group was chosen because, given their role in creating and implementing religiously diverse programming and their own religiously diverse makeup, it would be germane to consider how they understand what a religious Jew is.

The second group studied consisted of eleven grade 11 students from the same school. This second group consisted of a more homogenous group of fifteen students from a Jewish History class. Four students in this class were already part of the first group and were therefore discounted from the second study group, leaving eleven students in the second group. Of these, none self-identify as Orthodox Jews and the remaining self-identified as either Reform or Conservative Jews, but the majority were not active members of either of these communities. While these students did attend Jewish day school, most did not observe traditional Jewish rituals like Shabbat or holidays (with the exception of Passover, Hanukah, and the High Holidays⁶) or observe *kashrut*⁷ and most did not attend Jewish summer camps.

All students in Ontario are required by the Ministry of Education to complete one course in a fine-arts discipline over the course of their four years of secondary education.

Three different departments at the school where the study took place oversee the fine-arts program: visual arts, drama, and music. Some students who are more artistically inclined will choose to take two fine arts courses concurrently; electives are offered in grades ten, eleven, and twelve for students to further specialize in the fine arts.

Prior to participating in the study, students in the second group spent one month learning about the history of denominational movements as part of the evolution of Central European Jewish history. They were taught about three Reform platforms which identified the core values of the movement – the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform, the 1937 Columbus Platform, and the 1999 Statement of Principles. They learned about Abraham Geiger and Zecharias Frankel, two influential early Reform and Conservative leaders. They also learned about Orthodox responses to modernity – Samson Raphael Hirsch and neo-Orthodoxy, and Moses Sofer and *haredi* Orthodoxy. Given the school's ideological orientation as a community school, there was an emphasis throughout the unit on the idea that all of the Jewish groups studied reflected legitimate expressions of religious Jewish life.

The data collection tool of the research study was a modification of Chambers' (1983) draw-a-scientist test. I wanted to identify and assess the stereotypes and biases that students had. The arts were chosen based on a belief that the arts facilitate a thought process that allows students to concretize their abstract thoughts and make real their perceptions. Each participant was provided with one piece of paper and a set of markers and crayons.⁸ They were prompted, both verbally and in writing, to “draw a religious Jew.” I answered as few questions as possible and redirected the participants back to the prompt. Examples of the types of questions asked that necessitated a response was whether the students were supposed to “draw an Orthodox Jew,” or whether they were “allowed to draw a woman.” To questions like these and others, I made comments such as “if that is how you understand the prompt” or “is that what the prompt says?” I chose to remain as passive as possible so as to minimize the bias in the respondents' illustrations and to best allow them to draw a picture of what they most associated with religious Jews.⁹

“The arts were chosen based on a belief that the arts facilitate a thought process that allows students to concretize their abstract thoughts and make real their perceptions.”

Like Chambers (1983), upon collecting the images I coded them with a quantitative score based on the inclusion of certain visual markers. Drawings received one point each for containing a depiction of:

1. Male
2. Suit or skirt or formal attire
3. Facial hair
4. Head covering (including hat, kerchief, *kippah*¹⁰, etc.)
5. *Tzitzit* (ritual fringes worn on a shirt) or *peyot* (side curls)

Each drawing could receive a maximum score of five if all markers were present and a minimum score of zero if no markers were present. These specific markers were chosen because they were by far the most prominent artistic choices and covered the widest range of what was included in the images drawn. Like Chambers, there needed to be some subjective criteria, but the list of five is inclusive of the vast majority of the types of depictions that were present.

Results

Study group #1. The drawing results from this group were overwhelmingly of ultra-Orthodox *haredi* men (see Table 1, and Figures 1 & 2). Seventeen of the twenty drawings were men and seventeen of the twenty depictions were wearing head-coverings. Fourteen of the drawings included facial hair and ten included a suit or a skirt. Of the five markers, the most traditionally religious are side curls or *tzitzit*. While these are not limited only to Orthodox Jews, these markers are more prevalent in Orthodox Jewish communities when compared to Reform or Conservative Jewish communities and thirteen of the images contained one of these two markers.

It is important to identify that not all of the seventeen men drawn were ultra-Orthodox *haredim*, nor did those drawn wearing a head-covering necessarily mean that the person is wearing a *kippah*. For instance, there is one image of a female wearing a kerchief on her

Table 1

Group #1 Results

| Identifying marker | Quantity (out of 20) | Percentage |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Male | 17 | 85% |
| Suit/Skirt | 10 | 50% |
| Facial Hair | 14 | 70% |
| Head covering | 17 | 85% |
| Side curls or <i>tzitzit</i> | 13 | 65% |

head as a form of religious headgear (see Figure 3). However, the vast majority of the images include stereotypical constructs of *haredi* Orthodox Jews. Sixteen of the twenty illustrations were of *haredi* Orthodox Jews – male or female, with the majority wearing head-coverings and other religious paraphernalia and in many cases flanked by religious artifacts like Torah scrolls or placed in synagogues.



Figures 1 & 2. Depictions of *haredi* men

In addition to the prevalence of ultra-Orthodox *haredi* Jews, the other most noticeable feature of this group of images is the students' association between gender and religious identity. Seventeen of the images drawn were male, and, of the three non-males, only one was of a female (see Figure 3), as the other two were of stick figures whose gender could not be discerned. There is one image of a *haredi* man with six children, but even in this family portrait there is no maternal figure (see Figure 4). There is a strong correlation

between how this mixed-gendered group of students associated maleness with religiousness as even the females' initial associations with religious Jews do not include women.

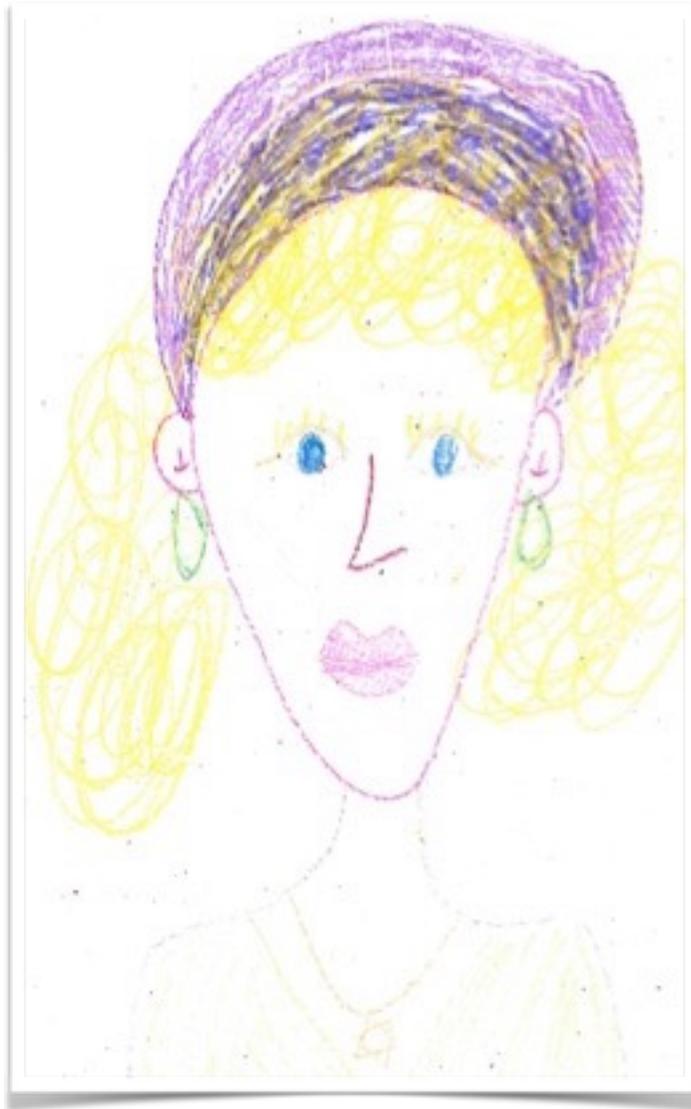


Figure 3. Only female drawn in Study Group #1

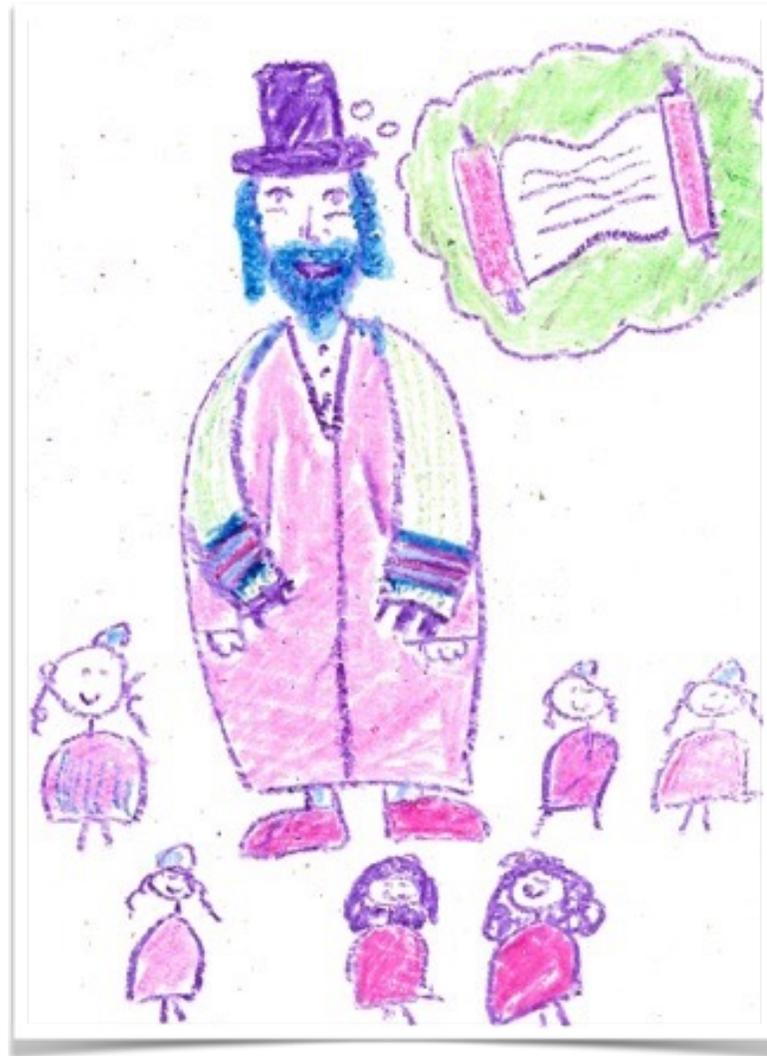


Figure 4. Family portrait of *haredi* man surrounded by his *haredi* children

Study group #2. Despite the emphasis in class on different religious expressions of identity and the fact that no one in the study group identified as Orthodox, this second group's drawings depicted even more ultra-Orthodox *haredi* Jews by proportion than the first study group.

Ten of the eleven religious Jews that were drawn were *haredi* ultra-Orthodox Jews (see Figures 5 & 6). The exception to this is a depiction of a male wearing a kippah daydreaming about volleyball (see Figure 7). Additionally, not a single female was drawn, despite a majority of the artists being female. While there were less men drawn with facial hair or with head-coverings (by percentage) by the second group when compared to the first group, the second group, by percentage, drew far more illustrations with side curls or tzitzit,

which suggests that these illustrations were of a more traditional nature as the scoring indicator that is the most traditional are side curls and tzitzit.

Table 2

Group #2 Results

| Identifying marker | Quantity (out of 11) | Percentage |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Male | 11 | 100% |
| Suit/Skirt | 8 | 73% |
| Facial Hair | 5 | 45% |
| Head covering | 9 | 82% |
| Side curls or <u>tzitzit</u> | 10 | 91% |



Figures 5 & 6. Haredi men drawn by female student (l) and male student



Figure 7. Illustration of non-*haredi* religious Jew

first is that there was an overwhelming association with males, as opposed to females, being drawn as religious Jews. The second is that nearly all of the students had a stereotype of a religious Jew as one that is synonymous with *haredi* Orthodox Jews. That an archetype of *haredi* men exists would not be surprising if: the illustrators were all men; if the setting was a *haredi* school; or if the students had not been exposed to a variety of non-*haredi* or non-Orthodox religious Jewish traditions. However, these drawings were not made in any of those environments. Instead, they were made by equal representations of men and women, and by students who do not self-identify as ultra-Orthodox *haredim*. In Study Group #1's case, they were made by the students chosen to lead diverse and religiously pluralistic programming. In essence, students drew religious Jews who were not representative of them in any way in relation to religious practice or, for the females, in gender.

A challenge to the study is that it is possible to argue that the visible and public religious markers and signifiers of *haredim* make it easiest to produce depictions of these types of Jews; the *haredi* dress and visual cues are extremely noticeable, while the absence

Discussion

The students in this study represented the school-selected leaders of Jewish programming as well as a sampling of one class of grade 11 students. Despite comprising only 30 students, there was a tremendous range of Jewish backgrounds and religious experiences within the group. Additionally, within the group there were: student-athletes, members of both student and athletic councils, model UN delegates, actors, trivia-team and business team members, actors and musicians from the school play, and dancers and models from the fashion show. There were participants who attend daily Orthodox prayer services and students who never attended any religious prayer services.

There are two very important and consistent findings that emerged from both of the two groups studied. The

of specific and noticeable signifiers for Reform or Conservative or even neo-Orthodox Jews are less obvious or prevalent. As well, with regards to the gender issue, in *haredi* and in many Orthodox communities, men are seen as the figures of religion and are more often the more visible gender in public. Only men can be counted in a prayer quorum, lead prayers, or read from the Torah, for example. Additionally, only men can serve as rabbis and community leaders. Conversely, women are primarily associated with building and nurturing the home and raising children who follow Jewish law. These gender constructs and the visible clothing markers do not, however, mitigate the drawings that the students produced.

As noted above, the students involved in the study were not *haredi* and very few were Orthodox. Therefore, they did not personally subscribe to the binary gender positions of *haredi* and Orthodox Judaism. Most of the students in the study attended synagogues in which females are equal members of congregations and participate equally in services. As well, many of the students' congregations have female rabbis who serve as pulpit leaders. Additionally, as students of the community school, all of the participants in the study were either familiar with or had learned with female rabbis and religious figures in the school. Despite first-hand knowledge and relationships with female religious leaders and personal experiences leading and attending services, a gender association still exists.

Moreover, in response to this type of challenge, Chambers (1983), and others who replicated the scientist study (Rahm & Charbonneau 1997, Finson 2002), argue that the drawings *do* reflect a deeper understanding of what the artists believe. As with scientists who do not wear lab coats, while *haredi* signifiers are often very obvious, they are not the only visual cues that could have been illustrated, nor are they the only ways of identifying an individual as *haredi*. The strong prevalence of *haredi* visual cues reinforces the material and physical associations that students have with religious Jews. Furthermore, *haredi* women have equally noticeable signifiers, and therefore the visual cue challenge does not address the stark gender imbalance, especially given that students had strong familiarity with Jewish ritual.

Similar to the Chambers (1983) study, this study is built on the idea that first associations are important in understanding the way people conceptualize a construct. No one in the Chambers study argued that scientists *must* wear lab coats, nor that there *aren't* female scientists. Rather, the argument was that the pictures drawn do reflect deep-rooted beliefs about what scientists do and who a scientist is. Equally important is the finding that even when the diagnostic metric was changed from visual representation to verbal description, students' constructs of scientists remained rigid and fixed. I posit that the drawings – specifically the fact that almost all of the images were of ultra-Orthodox *haredi* men, reflect the ways in which students immediately understand what it means to be religious. A clear expression of religiosity was evident and that definition is not pluralistic or reflective of the diverse Jewish community that the students inhabit. Instead, it is reflective of

a community of which they are not a part. The danger of this is that, similar to the Chambers study, religiousness is something that the students do not immediately or obviously identify with and into which they do not see themselves fitting.

The two stereotypes that were demonstrated (male and ultra-Orthodox *haredi*) provide a very specific and narrow understanding of the word religious, which is exclusionary of the vast majority of the world's Jews, including the students themselves. That the students do not see themselves as their immediate association of religiosity – even after learning about alternate forms of Jewish practice and despite being responsible for modeling religious behavior for underclassmen, raises important questions about how students conceptualize their own religious Jewish identity, and where they see themselves in the larger tapestry of North American Jewish life. Additionally, since a group within the study was responsible for building and teaching religiously diverse programming, what does it say about their own concepts of a religious self if the religious individuals they drew would never have attended the religious services they were leading?

As was noted by Chambers (1983) about his own test, the Draw-A-Scientist Test does not tell us why students think what they think. Similarly, the Draw-A-Religious-Jew test does not tell us why students see ultra-Orthodox *haredi* men as their definition of religious Jews, or why they do not see women, or themselves, their parents, or even their clergy, as their primary association with religious Jews. There are numerous potential reasons for why students might have drawn ultra-Orthodox *haredi* men and these could include who they see walking around in their neighborhoods *looking* Jewish, what many of their male Jewish studies teachers look like, or even who they see on television shows or movies doing Jewish things. An additional option, which requires further investigation, is the possibility that they do not see themselves, their peers, or their rabbis as religious, based on a common and shared external understanding of how they construct and define religiousness.

Identity, according to Butler (2006), is a concept that develops over time, through the repetition of behaviour and choices. What is evident in the students' drawings is that their own repeated personal exposure to pluralistic Jewish religious life has not become ingrained as a component of their own religious Jewish identities, at least not in relation to a dominant stereotype that is separate from their own lived experiences.

Conclusion

A central conclusion of Chambers' (1983) study and many of the subsequent studies (Rahm & Charbonneau 1997, Finson 2002) revolved around the idea that the results of the studies, while statistically valid and reliable, are not desirable. There is something disturbing to the researchers about receiving stacks of images of scientists who do not represent the

scientific field. More troubling, however, is the belief that these stereotypes lead to negative feelings and associations with scientists, and to career and life choices which lead students away from the sciences. The concerns raised by Chambers and others are equally relevant to the author of this study about religious Jews. Within a religious framework, it is concerning that students' perceptions of religious Jews are ultra-Orthodox *haredi* males. The reason for the concern is that if students do not see themselves and the Jewish community around them as part of a religious community, what will their Jewish future look like? Alternatively, even with students who do not self-identify as religious, at minimum their religious identities could be strengthened by viewing Jewish choices they make in a new light. Equally concerning is the question: where did all of the women go? That a student asked whether it was permitted to draw a female and that only one image, out of 35, presented a clear depiction of a female, is concerning. Lastly, while it is understandable that some *haredim* would be drawn, it is important to question what impact the students' educational and religious experiences have had on them when their initial impression of religious Jews are *haredim*. It behooves religious educators, synagogue clergy, and other Jewish community leaders to begin to consider how to challenge the dominant construct and to begin the process of facilitating different types of exercises that revolve around religious practice and identity-formation.

Following the Chambers (1983) study, multiple studies were conducted in order to try to counterbalance students' stereotypes of scientists. Finson (2002) notes: "research clearly demonstrates that the perceptions students hold of scientists can be positively impacted" (p. 342). Things that have been found the most effective in impacting student perceptions include: introducing students to positive and relatable role models on a consistent basis (as opposed to a single isolated experience); providing opportunities for meaningful engagement with scientists in real-world settings; and creating activities which involve prolonged investigation revolving around stereotype-busting (Finson, 2002??).

Additional studies are needed in order to better understand how to counter the stereotypes surrounding students' understanding of the term "religious." It would seem, following Finson (2002), that any attempt to change their perceptions would require regular interaction with religious females and with religious Jews of different denominational backgrounds, and a transparent explanation of their religious beliefs and practices would need to accompany these meetings. Additionally, when rituals are taught, they need to be placed in a religious framework irrespective of denomination. Prolonged exposure to non-

“...if students do not see themselves and the Jewish community around them as part of a religious community, what will their Jewish future look like?”

Orthodox individuals and reinforcement of students' religious choices as religious choices – even when they make other irreligious choices, could also help change the discourse and the way students consider religiosity and the religious people in their lives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is grateful to Shaul Kelner for his insightful recommendations about the paper and to his research assistant Sonya Ben-Ishai.

REFERENCES

- Ben-Sasson, H. H. (2007). History: Modern times to 1880. In M. Berenbaum & F. Skolnik (Eds.), *Encyclopedia Judaica*. (2nd ed., Vol. 9, pp. 228-241). Detroit, MI: MacMillan Reference.
- Butler, J. (2006). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Brubaker, R., & Cooper, F. (2000). Beyond "identity." *Theory and Society*, 29(1), 1-47.
- Chambers, D. W. (1983). Stereotypic images of the scientist: The draw-a-scientist test. *Science Education*, 67(2), 255-265.
- Chia, E. K. F., & Jih, C. S. (1994). The effects of stereotyping on impression formation: Cross-cultural perspectives on viewing religious persons. *The Journal of Psychology*, 128(5), 559-565.
- Conyer, B. (2009). How do teachers think about pluralism in a Jewish community school. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 30(2), 159-171.
- Finson, K. (2002). Drawing a scientist: What we do and do not know after fifty years of drawings. *School Science and Mathematics*, 102(7), 335-345.
- Golinkin, D., & Panitz, M. (2007). Conservative Judaism. In M. Berenbaum & F. Skolnik (Eds.), *Encyclopedia Judaica*. (2nd ed., Vol. 5, pp. 171-177). Detroit, MI: MacMillan Reference.
- Heilman, S., & Skolnik, F. (2007). Haredim. In M. Berenbaum & F. Skolnik (Eds.), *Encyclopedia Judaica*. (2nd ed., Vol. 8, pp. 348-352). Detroit, MI: MacMillan Reference.
- Kaplan, D. E. (2007). Reform Judaism. In M. Berenbaum & F. Skolnik (Eds.), *Encyclopedia Judaica*. (2nd ed., Vol. 17, pp. 165-183). Detroit, MI: MacMillan Reference.
- Katzburg, N., Wurzbarger, W., & Rackman, E. (2007). Orthodoxy. In M. Berenbaum & F. Skolnik (Eds.), *Encyclopedia Judaica*. (2nd ed., Vol. 15, pp. 493-500). Detroit, MI: MacMillan Reference.

- Pew Research Center. (2013). A Portrait of Jewish Americans. Retrieved from <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/>
- Rahm, J., & Charbonneau, P. (1997). Probing stereotypes through students' drawings of scientists. *American Journal of Physics*, 65(8), 774-778.
- Reingold, M. (2016) Exploring God: Using the arts as a way to engage secondary students in discussions about God. *Religious Education*, 111(2), 182-199.
- Samet, M.S. (2007). Neo-orthodoxy. In M. Berenbaum & F. Skolnik (Eds.), *Encyclopedia Judaica*. (2nd ed., Vol. 15, pp. 82-83). Detroit, MI: MacMillan Reference.
- TanenbaumCHAT. (n.d). Retrieved from: <http://www.tanenbaumchat.org>.
- Weber, J. A., Cooper, K, & Hesser, J. L. (1996). Children's drawings of the elderly: Young ideas abandon old age stereotypes. *Art Therapy*, 13(2), 114-117.

NOTES

¹ Brian Conyer (2009) defines community schools as ones that “do not officially affiliate with, identify with, or educate their students exclusively according to the values and behaviours associated with any of the historically established denominations” (p. 160). These schools do not promote one version of Jewish practice over another. He notes that Jewish community schools make up the third largest segment of Jewish Day School sectors and have the second fastest growth rate of all Jewish schools in North America. Conyer explains this proliferation with a series of reasons including the idea that through the inclusion of different segments of the Jewish community, the Jewish community school models the Jewish value of unity, and teaches students about the centrality of community within Judaism.

² Many Orthodox and all *haredi* women cover their hair with a hat, wig, or kerchief following marriage. The practice is cited in the Talmud and in Jewish legal codes in relation to modesty laws.

³ The author is a member of this committee.

⁴ A *Shabbaton* is a weekend retreat that occurs in conjunction with *Shabbat*, the Jewish Sabbath. From a pedagogical perspective, a *Shabbaton* is an opportunity to teach the students in an experiential setting about Shabbat. Within the school, it is also seen as a time for bonding and building friendships given that there are numerous elementary feeder schools that send students to the community high school. The school takes pride in offering a range of religious experiences on the *Shabbaton* so that students of different denominational backgrounds will feel comfortable.

⁵ No students who identify as traditional Orthodox or *haredi* were part of the program and these groups are not well-represented in the school as Orthodox and *haredi* students tend to attend local denominational schools that better represent their religious values.

⁶ While the Jewish calendar contains many holidays, three stand out as ones that all students in the school participate in regardless of denominational affiliation. These are: Passover, Hanukah, and the High Holidays, which include Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Within the North American Jewish landscape, these tend to be the most commonly observed given the significance of their ritual components or their attractiveness. For example, Passover and Rosh Hashanah involve large meals with unique food customs (unleavened bread on Passover and apples and honey on Rosh Hashanah) and many families celebrate Hanukah by publicly lighting a candelabrum and exchanging gifts.

⁷ Jewish dietary laws

⁸ There is a visually impaired student in the second group that participated in the study by writing a description of a religious Jew as opposed to drawing one. When analyzing the data from the written text, I refrained from interpreting the student's intentions and scored the paragraph based only on the written cues provided.

⁹ Rahm and Charbonneau (1997) acknowledge that there is criticism of the Chambers scientist test that is applicable in the context of this study. Two concerns are that students might have “multiple – maybe even conflicting – images of scientists” and that “restriction to a single drawing may lead to a recall of a ‘public’ stereotype, rather than one’s personal view of scientists” (p. 775). Despite these concerns, they posit that more elaborate data collection tools and coding schemes usually (but not always) correlate with the students’ initial drawings that were produced. While the prompt might lead some to associate the term “religious” to *haredi* or Orthodox Jews given that they are the most traditionally observant of Jewish law, and/or the ones who present the most visual markers of religious observance, this is not how the concept of religion or religious was taught in class.

¹⁰ A kippah is a religious head covering that most Orthodox men wear at all times and some Reform and Conservative women wear during prayer times.