

**Gender Variation  
in the Careers of Conservative Rabbis:  
A Survey of Rabbis Ordained Since 1985**

**Prof. Steven M. Cohen and Judith Schor**

**July 14, 2004**

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**Gender Variation**  
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## OVERVIEW

In the Spring of 2004, almost 20 years after the first female rabbi was ordained by the Conservative movement, the Rabbinical Assembly, with the support of the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York, embarked on a study of the career paths of male and female Conservative rabbis. This is the report of that study.

The key findings demonstrate significant variations in the career paths and experiences of men and women. Specifically, men, more than women:

- work full-time,
- work in congregations,
- lead the congregations where they are employed, and
- lead congregations far larger in size than those led by women rabbis.

Not surprisingly given all these variations, Conservative male rabbis earn more than their female counterparts, both in salary and benefits, both overall, and with controls for the type of work they perform.

These findings emerge from a largely mail-back survey of all 156 Conservative female rabbis living in the United States, and a sample of men (155) selected to match the distribution of women by year of ordination, starting in 1985, the first year in which Conservative rabbis were ordained. Of the 311 potential respondents, 75% (233) responded to the survey, largely administered by mail.

Several factors help explain the above-mentioned gender-linked variations in type of work and in levels of compensation. In particular, for women, and not for men, parenting responsibilities seem to lead many to work only part-time as a rabbi. They also serve to lead women (but not men) away from pulpit positions. These patterns may well reflect differing approaches among men and women to work-life balance.

As noted, the differences in work patterns (hours, pulpit work, etc.) fail to totally account for differences in compensation. When statistically controlling for job-related factors, gender-related gaps remain. That is, in seemingly comparable jobs for Conservative rabbis (e.g., assistant rabbis, or solo rabbis of congregations of a specific size),

men earn more than women.

Other critical factors possibly hampering women's advancement may be related to women's less satisfying early career experiences as rabbis. More than male rabbis, female Conservative rabbis ...

- complain of hurtful gender-related remarks in their work-life,
- report less satisfying relationships with rabbinical supervisors in their first jobs,
- cite more unfair treatment in the interview process for their most recent positions,
- report less time (earlier termination or departure) in their first jobs,
- report more frequent termination of their contracts or loss of their positions,
- express lower levels of professional satisfaction, and
- express less satisfaction with RA-sponsored efforts to assure gender equity.

Four contextual variables – long-term socialization, the larger culture, gender bias, and historical lag – combine to shape the careers and rewards (financial and psychic) of men and women rabbis.

The results of successful efforts to diminish gender-related differences in rabbinical careers would be seen in more women rabbis receiving comparable compensation to their male colleagues, more women working in senior positions, and fewer women reporting negative experiences in the workplace.

## BACKGROUND

In 1985, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America ordained its first women rabbis. This historic change in policy both reflected and promoted broadening tendencies toward gender equality in the Conservative movement. By 2004, as many as 177 women rabbis were dues-paying members of the Rabbinical Assembly, the movement's rabbinic professional association, constituting approximately 11% of the Rabbinical Assembly's total membership of 1550 rabbis at the time of the survey.

The entry of women into the once exclusively male profession of the Conservative rabbinate raises several immediate questions about gender-based variations in career patterns. Given all the differences and disparities in the work world, and the rest of life for that matter, we would expect these Conservative rabbis to display somewhat divergent career patterns related to gender.

The reasoning is straightforward. In the larger society, in almost all sectors, men continue to out-perform women in terms of occupational prestige and compensation. Gender gaps in compensation extend to seemingly meritocratic high-prestige professions, as a few easily accessible examples readily illustrate. In the American professoriate, women earn about 6-8% less than comparably placed men (c.f., Nettles, Perna, Bradburn & Zimble, 2000; Perna, 2000; Toutkoushian, 1998). Among holders of doctorates in science and engineering, one study reports that women earn 23% less than men (Babco and Bell, 2003.). Female fundraisers at U.S. non-profit organizations earn a median annual salary of \$25,000 less than that of men (Association of Fundraising Professionals, 2002).

In another relevant sphere, similar patterns emerge in the Protestant clergy where, among denominations that ordain women ministers, men dominate the spiritual leadership of the larger churches. Moreover, again, men earn more than their female counterparts in terms of both pay and benefits (McDuff 2001; Deckman, Crawford, Olson and Gree, 2003). (The studies also point to lower rates of professional satisfaction and marriage among women clergy, patterns we shall encounter in this study of rabbis, as well.)

Closer to home, the Jewish communal world is marked by significant differences in the status attainment of men and women (Bronznick 2002). A recent study explored why no woman has ever served as the executive director of the 19 largest Jewish Federations in North America, reflecting the under-representation of women in more prestigious positions throughout the Federation system (Cohen, Bronznick, Goldenhar, Israel, and Kelner, 2004). In another domain – Jewish Community Centers – recent research has demonstrated significant gender gaps in compensation (Schor and Cohen, 2002) male JCC executives earn about \$10,000 more than their female counterparts, even after controlling for size of JCC, seniority, and

educational credentials.

Most broadly, the most prestigious, influential, and desirable positions in several Jewish communal hierarchies have been the exclusive or nearly exclusive preserve of men. The evidence points to widespread gender-related gaps in compensation for putatively equivalent positions.

To what can we attribute differences in the career accomplishments of men and women that are both so widespread and so persistent? Scholars and other observers point to a variety of reasons for these gender gaps in prestige, rank and compensation. Among the factors they cite most often are:

- overt and subtle patterns of *gender bias* – those in a position to nurture, advance, promote and hire prefer male to female aspirants;
- differential *socialization* of men and women – boys and girls, and men and women evoke different reactions and expectations from their parents, teachers, friends, spouses, co-workers and supervisors, all of which produce differential aspirations;
- differing approaches to *work-life balance* – women more than men feel responsible or are held responsible for tending to child-rearing and other domestic obligations; and
- *historical lag* – notwithstanding recent changes in hiring (or, in this case, rabbinic ordination), years of differential treatment cannot be reversed overnight. The impact of historical lag may be especially pronounced with respect to the rabbinate, where thousands of years of tradition associate rabbinical religious leadership (and, before that, priestly leadership) with men and not with women.

Given the deep-rooted and widespread patterns in the larger society, in the Jewish communal world, and in the American clergy outside of Judaism, one would not be surprised to learn of significant gender-based variations in the career trajectories of Conservative rabbis. This expectation raises the following sorts of empirical questions:

Do, in fact, male and female Conservative rabbis work in different sorts of settings; more specifically, are men more likely (or women less likely) to serve in congregations?

Among those who do undertake pulpit work, are men more likely (or women less likely) to work in, and aspire to work in, larger congregations associated with higher prestige, greater desirability, larger compensation, and, perhaps, greater demands for time and effort?

To what extent do we find gender gaps in compensation, both with and without relevant statistical controls?

How can we explain these gender-based patterns, insofar as they might exist?

What are the consequences for the rabbis of these gender gaps, insofar as they exist?

The Rabbinical Assembly has long taken an interest in the advancement of its female members. Quickly following the admission of the first woman member in 1985, the first woman was appointed to a committee in 1987. The Rabbinical Assembly was the first of the international rabbinic organizations to appoint a woman to its professional staff and the current full-time staff is comprised of two men and three women. Women have served as members and/or chairs of several Rabbinical Assembly committees including placement, membership and budget, as well as serving on the policy-making Executive Council and Administrative Committees. At the annual Rabbinical Assembly Convention in 1995, a resolution on Equal Opportunity for Rabbis was passed.

In 2003, to address the questions described above as well as other related questions, the Rabbinical Assembly, with the support of the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York, commissioned this study of the careers of men and women rabbis, focusing exclusively upon those ordained as of 1985 or thereafter. Almost twenty years after the first women were ordained as Conservative rabbis, we have little systematic evidence concerning the career patterns of men and women rabbis in the Conservative movement. This study aims to provide the policy-relevant data to inform the Conservative rabbinate, the RA, the other arms of Conservative Judaism, and the wider public on these issues.

## METHODS

The results reported below derive from a sample survey of RA members living in the United States who joined the RA in 1985 or afterwards. We attempted to reach all 156 women members living in the United States and an almost equal number of U.S.-based men (155), selected so as to match the distribution of women by year of ordination (or more precisely, the year in which they joined the RA which generally corresponds to the year of ordination). In all, 233 rabbis responded, representing 75% of the total complement of 311 potential respondents (maximal figure; some rabbis were unreachable due to inaccurate addresses and telephone numbers). We administered the survey (see Appendix) largely by mail, although some rabbis were interviewed in person at the Rabbinical Assembly Annual Convention or responded to telephone interviews and faxes.

The nearly even gender balance in the sample closely approximates the gender balance in the larger pool of prospective respondents. Just as 60% of the employed RA members work in congregational settings, so too does 60% of the sample. In addition, the regional distribution of the respondents closely approximates the regional distribution of American-based rabbis ordained in 1985 or thereafter. The close correspondence between these characteristics in the sample with those in the universe speaks well to the representativeness of the sample.

Rabbi Julie Schonfeld served as project coordinator and liaison for the RA, also serving on a rabbinical advisory committee consisting of: Rabbi Debra Cantor, Newington, CT; Rabbi Amy Eilberg, Palo Alto, CA; Rabbi Jan Kaufman, New York, NY (ex officio); Rabbi Craig Scheff, Orangeburg, NY; Rabbi Elliot Schoenberg, New York, NY (ex officio); Rabbi Tony Shy, Port Washington, NY; and Rabbi Stewart Vogel, Woodland Hills, CA.

This panel served to suggest and review questions for the survey instrument and to provide conceptual insight into the issues under investigation. The committee reflected diversity in terms of gender, seniority, work setting and region. Rachel Gildiner provided valuable research assistance.

## THE FINDINGS

### More Men Work Full-Time and “Over-Time” Than Do Women

Men and women rabbis differ with respect to the number of hours per week they put into their jobs. (Table 1) Over a third (36%) of the women work “part-time” (less than forty hours per week) as a rabbi as contrasted with a miniscule number (3%) of the men. At the other extreme (those working “overtime,” that is, 60 hours per week or more), we find just under half (49%) of the men, and less than half as many (21%) of the women.

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Part-time (LT 40)</b>	3%	36%	19%
<b>Full-time (40-59)</b>	48%	43%	46%
<b>Overtime (60+)</b>	49%	21%	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Men Work Somewhat More Often in Congregations

Of those working full-time, men more than women rabbis work in congregations (74% vs. 63%). (Table 2) In contrast, women are more likely to work in day schools (15% of the women vs. 11% of the men), and in a variety of other positions, too idiosyncratic to classify.

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Congregation</b>	74%	63%	70%
<b>Day School</b>	11%	15%	12%
<b>Hillel</b>	1%	2%	1%
<b>JCC</b>	2%	3%	2%
<b>Federation</b>	2%	2%	2%
<b>Chaplain</b>	2%	0%	1%
<b>Other</b>	9%	16%	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*(Full-time rabbis only)

In focusing on working in congregations, the analysis makes no implicit judgment regarding the desirability of pulpit over non-pulpit work settings for rabbis. Historically, approximately 40% of Rabbinical Assembly members have served the Jewish community in non-pulpit positions. Nonetheless, it remains the case that pulpits, and especially large pulpits, are among the highest paying jobs in the profession and often carry the most prestige. The fact that women are less likely to hold pulpit positions, and that (as we shall see) they are absent from larger pulpits, raises the question of whether women enjoy equal access to sought-after employment opportunities and whether a “leaky-pipeline” inhibits women’s advancement in the Conservative rabbinate, as it does elsewhere.

Certainly, many men and women rabbis find pulpit work attractive. One female rabbi explained what she finds attractive about pulpit work, “the diversity of activities, the wide range of influence at every stage of Jewish life, the room for creative initiatives, spiritual, educational and administrative leadership, a platform for teaching and aspiring.” Another woman wrote, “It’s the ‘real’ work of the rabbinate—the most rewarding, exciting job there is.” A male rabbi echoed these sentiments by writing that it is an “...incredible privilege to have access to people with such intimacy. It’s exciting to work in a career that helps people address questions of meaning in their lives. I will never look back on my career and need to ask, ‘Did my work make a difference?’” On the other hand, another male rabbi wrote that he likes “very little” about pulpit work, “...the hours, the pressure, the scrutiny, the unpredictability, the exposure to demagogues and the lack of protection from leadership and strength of leadership make it very unpleasant.” And a female rabbi wrote, “Nothing, not even the opportunities to teach compensate for the lifestyle of the pulpit!”

### “Lead” Congregational Rabbis Versus Assistant Rabbis

Rabbis who are employed in congregations can be seen as serving in any of three capacities: 1) solo rabbi (the only rabbinical figure engaged as such); 2) senior rabbi (the most senior rabbi in a congregation that engages two or more rabbis); 3) associate or assistant rabbi (those who are supervised by the senior rabbi). No convenient term describes a category combining solo and senior rabbi. For this designa-

tion, we have chosen to speak of “lead” rabbi, referring to the leading rabbi in the congregation, whether or not he/she supervises other rabbis.

In point of fact, of those working in congregations full-time, men are slightly more likely than women to serve as “lead” rabbis (men: 68%; women 63%). This distinction, though, fails to capture the status differences between men and women rabbis, as such differences depend upon size of congregation, as much, if not more, than hierarchical position.

### Men Lead Larger Congregations, and Women Lead the Smallest Congregations

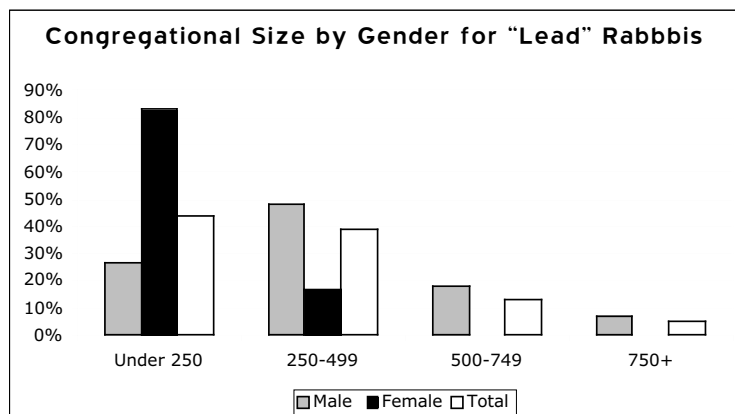
Of those working in the pulpit as lead rabbis (i.e., as the solo or senior rabbi), men work for larger congregations, far larger than their female counterparts. The Conservative Movement classifies congregations according to size as follows:

- “A” congregations: 250 families or fewer;
- “B” congregations: between 250 and 499 families;
- “C” congregations: between 500 and 750 families;
- “D” congregations: more than 750 families.

Congregations of 500 family units or more employ as many as 35% of the men as lead rabbis, as contrasted with 0% — none of the women in the sample. (Table 3) With respect to congregations with fewer than 250 families, the male-female comparison is equally vivid. Just 27% of the male pulpit lead rabbis work in such small congregations as contrasted with 83% of the women in full-time congregational work. (In fact, this classification obscures further gender variation – the congregations of under 250 families served by women rabbis are – on average – smaller than such congregations served by male rabbis.)

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Under 250</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>250-499</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>500-749</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>750+</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* “Size” refers to those working full-time as “lead” rabbis.



### GENDER VARIATIONS IN COMPENSATION

We asked the rabbi-respondents to estimate their annual incomes as rabbis, as well as their total compensation package (the total of their income plus the value of their benefits, including parsonage, where applicable).<sup>1</sup>

As noted above, male rabbis work longer hours; they work more often in congregations; and the congregations in which they work are larger. All these factors lead one to anticipate higher levels of compensation for men, and indeed such is the case, as men and women rabbis differ widely in their levels of compensation.

Among men, a third earn a “package” amounting to \$125,000 or more annually, as contrasted with just 9% of the women. (Tables 4-5) At the low end of the spectrum (under \$80,000), we find just 8% of the men and six times as many women (52%). Over \$40,000 separates the mean total compensation of male and female Conservative rabbis ordained since 1985 (i.e., \$119,000 versus \$77,000).

<sup>1</sup> A methodological note: Undoubtedly, these estimates are somewhat imprecise owing, in part, to considerable confusion rabbis experience with respect to the components of the package and how to value some of these components, particularly parsonage. With this said, given the focus on gender variations in this study, a particularly problematic form of imprecision would have men and women answering these questions differently, according to their gender. Fortunately, there is no reason to suspect that men and women systematically differ in the way in which they report and estimate the value of their compensation, even if rabbis in general can provide only very approximate estimates of their compensation. Hence, while specific answers may be approximations, the gender gaps ought to be quite reliable.



	Male	Female	Total
<b>Under \$80,000</b>	8%	52%	29%
<b>\$80,000-\$124,000</b>	60%	40%	50%
<b>\$125,000+</b>	33%	9%	21%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%

\* "Compensation package" refers to answers to the following question: "What is the total value of your annual compensation package, including income, parsonage if applicable, and benefits? An approximate figure is fine."

Sex	Package	Income*
Male	\$119,000	\$89,000
Female	\$77,000	\$61,000
Total	\$99,000	\$76,000

\* "Income" refers to answer to the following question: "Of that amount, how much do you earn just in income?"

Going beyond these global differences, we can examine the gender gaps in compensation comparing male and female rabbis in similar jobs. (Table 6) In so doing, we find that gaps persist. Of those working full-time in non-pulpit jobs, men earn \$27,000 more than women annually. For assistant rabbis, the gap in the total average package amounts to \$12,000. Among "lead" rabbis in small congregations, it stands at \$21,000 (in part because women in these congregations lead smaller congregations than men). Among those leading "B" congregations (250-499 family units), men report an average of \$10,000 more than women. No comparisons are possible for C and D congregations for the simple reason that no women in our sample lead such congregations.

In short, even when controlling for full-time work, pulpit work and size of congregation, male Conservative rabbis consistently earn more than their female counterparts, whether measured in terms of annual income or total compensation package.

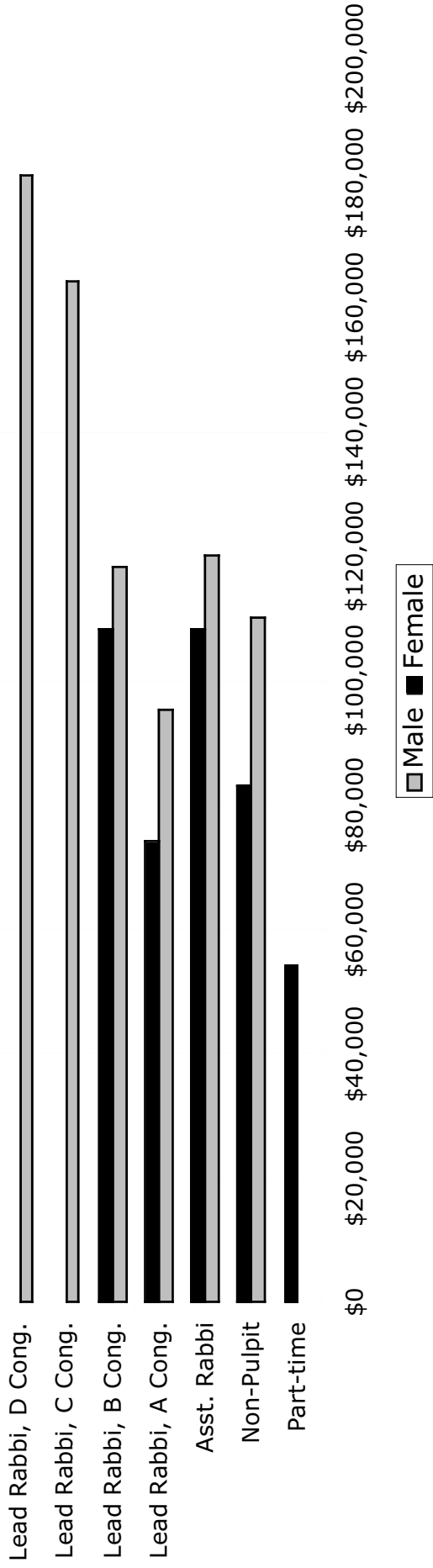
Rabbinic work setting, men & women	Package	Income
Female part-time	\$54,000	\$45,000
Male Non-pulpit	\$110,000	\$90,000
Female Non-pulpit	\$83,000	\$78,000
Male Asst. rabbi	\$120,000	\$98,000
Female Asst. rabbi	\$108,000	\$78,000
Male lead rabbi, A congregations	\$95,000	\$72,000
Female lead rabbi, A congregations	\$74,000	\$49,000
Male lead rabbi, B congregations	\$118,000	\$83,000
Female lead rabbi, B congregations	\$108,000	\$77,000
Male lead rabbi, C congregations	\$164,000	\$120,000
Male lead rabbi, D congregations	\$181,000	\$116,000
Total	\$99,000	\$76,000

### **An Alternative Statistical Approach: Compensation Gaps Remain**

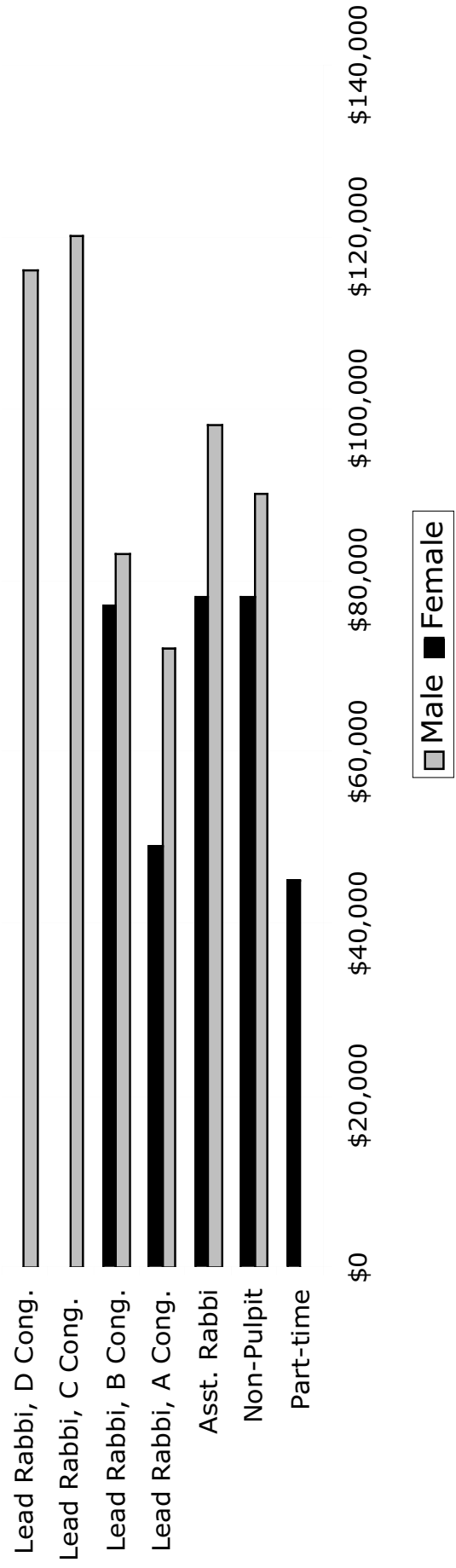
Another statistical approach lends further support to the inference that men and women rabbis, working full-time, in congregations, as "lead" rabbis, are differentially compensated.

To elaborate, our analysis discerned that size of congregation as well as reported number of hours worked (even among those who work full-time) influence lead rabbis' compensation. While size of congregation has little impact upon the salaries of assistant rabbis, it does influence the compensation of lead rabbis (those who are solo or the senior rabbis in their congregations). In point of fact, the "value" of each family unit to the income of each rabbis amounts to \$52, and the comparable value for the total package amounts to \$83. (These findings emerged from the results of a regression analysis in which income and compensation were regressed upon number of family units, for full-time rabbis, controlling for sex of rabbi).

## Compensation Package by Work Setting and Gender



## Compensation Income by Work Setting and Gender



We also learn that the gender gap in compensation for lead rabbis (\$44,000 in the value of the total package) can be explained in large part by size of congregation and reported number of hours worked in excess of forty hours per week. With these two factors taken into account, among full-time lead rabbis, men earn a compensation package whose value, on average, exceeds those of their female counterparts by \$21,000. The comparable gap for income alone (net of the value of associated benefits) drops from \$33,000 to \$18,000, once statistical controls for number of hours worked and size of congregation are introduced.

As far as we can tell, when controlling for work place, size of congregation, status and hours worked, the compensation packages in congregations of men rabbis still exceed those of women colleagues. The gaps range between \$10,000 and \$21,000, depending upon the position under scrutiny, a pattern reminiscent of those observed in several other professions in American society.

**Benefits: Gender Gaps in Comparable Work Situations**

The survey ascertained whether rabbis receive a variety of job-related benefits, among which are health insurance, health insurance for family members, pension, and professional development funds. (Table 7)

<b>Table 7. Percentage Receiving Selected Benefits by Gender*</b>			
	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total (All Rabbis)</b>
<b>Health Insurance</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>Family Health Insurance</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Pension</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>Prof'l Development</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Sabbatical</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Disability</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>M/ Paternity Leave</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>31%</b>

\* Gender refers to both full-time and part-time rabbis.

With the exception of maternity/paternity leave, men rabbis report receiving the specified benefits more widely than women. As with salary differentials, some of these gaps can be attributed to differences in working full-time, in work setting (pulpit or not), and in size of congregation (particularly for lead rabbis).

To investigate the differentials in benefits further, we constructed a measure of benefits counting the number reported by the rabbis. Among men, over half (52%) reported all four benefits, a proportion four times as great as that reported by the women (12%). Hardly any men (5%) reported no such benefits as contrasted with four times as many women (23%).

Even when controlling for full-time work and congregation versus non-congregational setting, or assistant versus lead rabbi status, men almost consistently report more frequent provision of benefits than their female counterparts. (Table 8)

The differences in financial compensation, then, are mirrored by gaps of the same order in the provision of benefits. These findings both underscore and validate one another, suggesting a systematic gap in the compensation afforded men versus women rabbis in the Conservative movement, a gap explainable only in part by the variations in the rabbinic work positions typically assumed by men and by women.

**Age and Family Characteristics: The Prevalence of Single Women**

In a world in which professionals balance commitments to work and family, and where the two genders approach such issues differently, we would not be at all surprised to learn that family status (being married, having children) differentially affects the career patterns of men and women rabbis. Moreover, neither would we be surprised to learn than men and women rabbis experience different sorts of relationships between their family responsibilities and their career choices. To investigate such issues, we turn to the data on age, marital status, and children, as they relate to patterns of rabbinical work among Conservative male and female rabbis.

Work setting, men & women	Health Insurance	Family Health Insurance	Pension	Prof'l Development	Sabbatical	Disability	M/paternity Leave
Part-time female	32%	21%	32%	37%	0%	32%	18%
Non-pulpit male	90%	70%	90%	89%	11%	79%	33%
Non-pulpit female	81%	53%	85%	67%	11%	67%	52%
Congregational assistant male	90%	59%	66%	90%	10%	66%	29%
Congregational assistant female	88%	13%	63%	100%	0%	31%	69%
Congregational lead male	76%	73%	75%	88%	36%	55%	16%
Congregational lead female	59%	20%	59%	61%	16%	48%	38%
<b>Total (All Rabbis)</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>31%</b>

With respect to age alone, we would not expect the family configurations of men and women to differ all that much. (Table 9) They report almost equivalent age distributions, with about a third of each group of rabbis younger than 35 years old, and not quite half age 40 and over. Their median age, for both men and women, is about 38 years old.

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Under 35</b>	31%	31%	31%
<b>35-39</b>	25%	21%	23%
<b>40+</b>	43%	48%	45%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

These highly similar age distributions make all the more surprising the large gender-related variations in family status. (Table 10) Among male rabbis, four in five (80%) report that they are married parents, as compared with about half as many of the women (42%). Women are more than three times as likely as the men (38% vs. 14%) to report they are unmarried (mostly never married, but also including some small numbers who are divorced, separated, and widowed). Given that women in society generally marry and give birth younger than men, and in light of the similar age distributions, the large number of unmarried women and women without children (58%) points to very unusual family patterns among female Conservative rabbis, albeit one with parallels in other female American clergy.

The lower levels of marriage among women rabbis constitute not just a personal issue (assuming, reasonably, that most would prefer to be married), but also a professional issue in that spouses may well enhance professional performance, advancement, and satisfaction.

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Unmarried</b>	14%	38%	26%
<b>Married no kids</b>	7%	20%	13%
<b>Married w kids</b>	80%	42%	61%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

One younger woman rabbi wrote that in changing from a pulpit to a non-pulpit positions she is “hoping that I will gain greater separation between my work and my personal time. I hope that, eventually, this will have a positive impact on my ability to have an active family life. I look forward to choosing whether I want to work (supplementally) on Shabbat and holy days. And, not insignificantly, I am hoping that I will have a better chance of finding (and keeping) a spouse.”

## THE IMPACT OF FAMILY ON WORK PATTERNS

Women and men differ widely in the ways in which they adapt their work patterns to their family circumstances. (Table 11) In particular, the presence or absence of children (far more than being married or single) is associated with different work characteristics among men and women.

	<b>M no kids</b>	<b>F no kids</b>	<b>M w/ Kids</b>	<b>F w/ Kids</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Part-time</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Not pulpit</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Cong.</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Among men without children, half (50%) work full-time in congregations and the other half (50%) are full-time in non-pulpit positions. Among comparable women, as many (60%) work full-time in congregations, and the rest divide almost equally between full-time non-pulpit positions and part-time work (19% and 21%). In contrast, male rabbis who have had children work even more frequently (78%) in full-time congregational jobs. Women with children display a far different pattern. A majority (54%) work part-time, and just 15% work full-time in congregations.

The arrival of children is associated with very different adjustments in work patterns for men and women rabbis. Women rabbis who become mothers, in effect, seem to largely abandon full-time pulpit positions for part-time work when children arrive. Comparable men, in contrast, enlarge their employment in congregations, moving to positions that, on average provide higher levels of compensation than non-pulpit positions.

The responsibilities of parenting, then, provoke quite contrasting career responses among men and women. Men move to positions that are generally higher-paying, and women reduce their professional engagement in line with their expanded (or new) roles as parents. (Table 12)

	<b>M no kids</b>	<b>F no kids</b>	<b>M w/ Kids</b>	<b>F w/ Kids</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Under 40</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>40-49</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>50-59</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>60+</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

One woman rabbi described what she likes about her non-pulpit position: “I love my schedule. I leave my home for work around 9 or 9:30. I’m home from 3:30 to 7 and only work a few evenings. For a mom with young kids I have it made!” Another female rabbi wrote, “I would never subject myself to a pulpit position as a woman with a family until the fundamental concepts of pulpit work are transformed.” She appreciates many aspects of her non-pulpit position including, “flexible hours, good family time, maternity and family leave flexibility...” and the ability to “...practice the Jewish life/learning we preach and teach.” Another woman said that she is “not interested in a pulpit position, largely for family reasons.”

The advent of children also seems to differentially affect the size of congregations where male and female rabbis work. For men, children are associated with a movement away from smaller congregations of under 250 families (from 27% to 18%). In contrast, for women, children are associated with a slight increase in employment at small congregations (46% to 50%).

In like fashion, we find similar results with respect to hours worked, in particular with respect to working full-time versus part-time, and with working “overtime” (60 hours or more per week), if employed full-time. Among men, children are associated with a slight increase in the proportion working long hours (from 46% to 50%). In sharp contrast, the comparable rates for women plummet from 31% for those without children to 10% for those who are mothers.

The presence of children is critical to understanding gender variations in rabbis’ work patterns. Men and women without children report somewhat similar patterns of employment, although these men do surpass their female

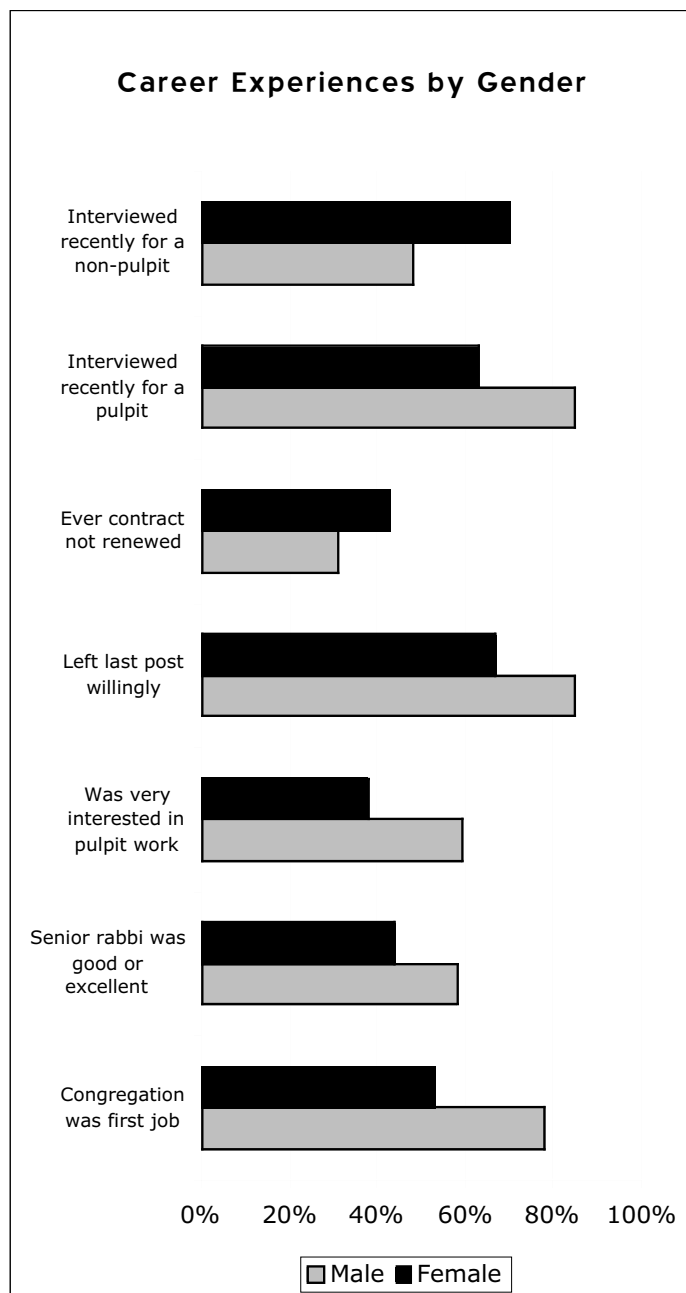
counterparts with respect to working full-time, working in larger congregations, and working over-time. In contrast, among those with children, men vastly exceed women with respect to working in congregations, working in larger congregations, working full-time, and working longer hours.

### LOOKING BACK: DIFFERENTIAL CAREER EXPERIENCES

The variations in the extent to which men and women rabbis opt for congregational work derive from several considerations, among which may well be their prior experiences with congregational work, as well as their inclinations and decisions made during (or before) rabbinical school. In this regard, we note that men, far more than women, took their first jobs in congregations (78% vs. 53%), reflecting men's greater interest in pulpit work that would extend throughout their careers. The subsequent experiences of men and women in pulpit work seem to verify the men's initial greater inclination to head for the pulpit. For example, of those who did take their first jobs in congregations, men reported more favorable experiences with their senior rabbis. While 59% of the men rated their rabbinic supervisor as good or excellent, only 44% of the women were equally impressed with their experiences. Not surprisingly, just after completing their first job (be it in the pulpit or elsewhere), men reported greater interest in pursuing pulpit work ("very interested:" 59% for the men vs. 38% among the women).

Several pieces of evidence point to men having experienced more stable and rewarding early careers than did their female counterparts. (Table 13) Men managed to hold on to their first jobs longer than women (3.7 vs. 3.1 years, for both congregational and non-congregational posts). When asked if they left their last post willingly, 85% of the men responded affirmatively as compared with just 67% of the women. Just 26% of the men have ever experienced the failure of their agencies or congregations to renew their contract, as opposed to 41% of the women. Men consistently have enjoyed greater success in hiring and in retaining their positions, as well as, support from their senior colleagues.

	M	F	Total (All Rabbis)
Congregation was first job	78%	53%	66%
Senior rabbi was good or excellent	58%	44%	51%
Was very interested in pulpit work	59%	38%	49%
Years in first job	3.7	3.1	3.4
Left last post willingly	85%	67%	76%
Ever contract not renewed	31%	43%	36%
Interviewed recently for a pulpit	85%	63%	74%
Interviewed recently for non-pulpit	48%	70%	59%



In seeking work in their most recent job searches, men continue to show a greater preference for pulpit work. Fully 85% of the men, and just 63% of the women, interviewed for congregational posts. In contrast, 70% of the women interviewed for non-congregational jobs as opposed to just 48% of the men.

## PERCEPTIONS OF BIAS: WOMEN'S TESTIMONY

In many respects, Conservative women rabbis perceive patterns of discrimination and bias connected with their gender. (Table 14)

	Male	Female	Total (All Rabbis)
<b>Less desirable compared to men</b>	8%	38%	22%
<b>Less desirable compared to women</b>	4%	13%	8%

When asked to compare the desirability of their current positions with those held by men and by women, hardly any men saw their own jobs as less desirable than that held by others. In contrast, over a third of the women (38%) view their positions as inferior to those held by comparable men.

Responses to other questions point to perceptions of bias among women, especially those who work in congregations. (Table 15) Among the current congregational rabbis, responses to four questions point to significant concerns among women. Fully 82% of the men reported having had access to a sufficient number of interviews in their last job search as compared with 56% of the women. By similar margins (89% vs. 71%) men more frequently report they feel they were treated fairly in the job search. Hardly any men believe their gender or age played a negative role in their job searches, as compared with over a third of the women in each case. One woman wrote that she appreciated non-pulpit positions because there are “less politics and less discrimination based on age and gender.”

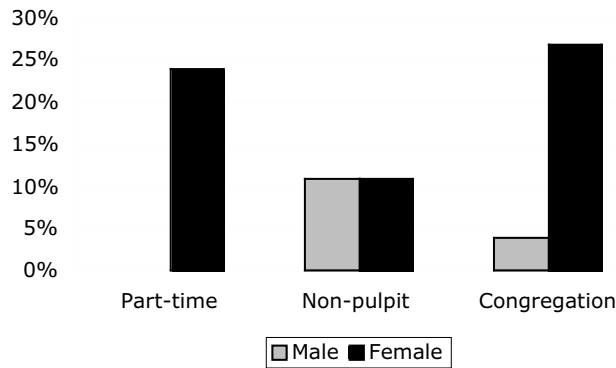
	Part-time F	Non-pulpit M	Non-pulpit F	Cong. M	Cong. F	Total (All Rabbis)
<b>Sufficient number of interviews</b>	56%	81%	67%	82%	56%	71%
<b>Treated fairly</b>	70%	84%	84%	89%	71%	81%
<b>Gender played a negative role</b>	24%	0%	8%	4%	38%	13%
<b>Age played a negative role</b>	19%	13%	4%	9%	33%	15%

Women widely report what some might consider an uncomfortable atmosphere in their work environments. (Table 16) Reports of hurtful remarks are more frequent among those working in congregational settings than among rabbis in other sorts of work settings. Hardly any men report hurtful remarks connected with their age or gender. In contrast, for women, 27% of those now in congregational settings report having heard “several” or “many” hurtful remarks connected with their age, with as many as 58% reporting likewise for gender-related remarks. Majorities of both congregational and non-congregational women rabbis (56% and 54%) believe that their gender has hurt their careers.

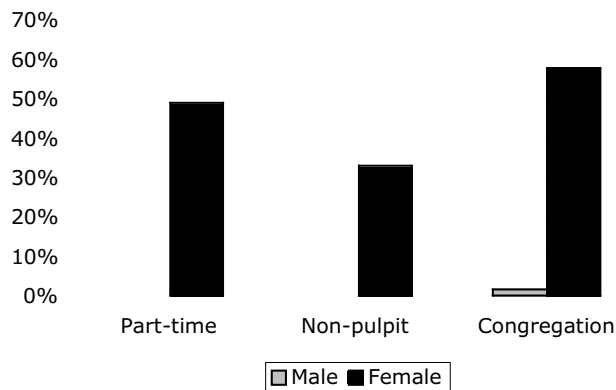
**Table 16. Perceived Gender and Age-Related Issues by Rabbinic Work Setting, Men & Women**

	Part-time F	Non-pulpit M	Non-pulpit F	Cong. M	Cong. F	Total (All Rabbis)
Heard several or many remarks on age	24%	11%	11%	4%	27%	14%
Heard several or many remarks on gender	49%	0%	33%	2%	58%	25%
Gender has hurt	46%	0%	56%	1%	54%	26%

**Has Heard Several/Many Remarks on Age by Work Setting**



**Has Heard Several/Many Remarks on Gender by Work Setting**



**PERSONAL SATISFACTION: HIGHER FOR BOTH MEN AND WOMEN RABBIS**

Rabbis reported relatively high levels of satisfaction in their personal and professional lives. (Table 17)

**Table 17. Personal Satisfaction Measures by Rabbinic Work Setting, Men & Women**

	Part-time F	Non-pulpit M	Non-pulpit F	Cong. M	Cong. F	Total (All Rabbis)
Family	100%	100%	100%	82%	84%	90%
Friends	100%	81%	92%	73%	63%	79%
People	100%	100%	100%	94%	93%	96%
Community	90%	90%	85%	84%	72%	84%

One male rabbi wrote, "I do what I really love, namely, teach Torah." The following two comments by women rabbis in the pulpit suggest that they also gain a good deal of satisfaction from their work: "I love it- it's who I am" and "It's the 'real' work of the rabbinate- the most rewarding, exciting job there is.

**PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION: LOWER FOR CONGREGATIONAL RABBIS, HIGHER FOR MEN**

Beyond issues of personal satisfaction, we also asked about lay leaders, compensation and hours worked, matters relating to professional satisfaction. (Table 18) Those rabbis working outside the pulpit tended to report higher levels of satisfaction than their congregational colleagues. On all measures of professional satisfaction, both among pulpit and non-pulpit rabbis, men reported higher scores than did women.

**Table 18. Professional Satisfaction Measures by Rabbinic Work Setting, Men & Women**

	Part-time F	Non-pulpit M	Non-pulpit F	Cong. M	Cong. F	Total (All Rabbis)
Lay leaders	97%	96%	88%	81%	67%	84%
Compensation	64%	76%	58%	78%	60%	69%
Hours worked	79%	75%	72%	60%	62%	67%



## LOOKING FORWARD: PROSPECTS FOR MOVING ON

Consistent with their relative levels of job stability in the past, men report higher levels of predicted stability in their jobs than women, particularly in congregational contexts. (Table 19) When rabbis who were working in congregational jobs were asked if they will continue as a rabbi some years from now, 81% of the congregational men responded affirmatively as compared with 58% of the women. Congregationally based women were almost twice as likely as men to say they will leave their current posts in a few years (42% vs. 21%).

	Part-time F	Non-pulpit M	Non-pulpit F	Cong. M	Cong. F	Total (All Rabbis)
<b>Will continue as a rabbi</b>	63%	86%	89%	81%	58%	75%
<b>Will change positions</b>	35%	24%	15%	21%	42%	27%

Where are these rabbis likely to go, if they do in fact move on, say in five or ten years? Men more than women expressed interest in staying in (or moving into) congregational work. (Table 20) The men were also far more ready to express interest in eventually serving as the senior rabbi of a large congregation.

Thus, among those now in full-time congregational work, 78% of the men as compared with 53% of the women expressed a definite preference for remaining with congregations. Among these, 37% of the men and just 9% of all women would be interested in becoming the senior rabbi of a large congregation.

	Part-time F	Full-time Non-pulpit M	Full-time Non-pulpit F	Full-time Cong. M	Full-time Cong. F	Total
<b>No interest in pulpit work</b>	55%	48%	44%	13%	19%	30%
<b>Maybe pulpit work</b>	30%	38%	26%	10%	28%	22%
<b>Def other pulpit work</b>	13%	3%	19%	41%	44%	29%
<b>Sr. rabbi, large cong.</b>	3%	10%	11%	37%	9%	19%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

We find proportionately even greater gender variation when we restrict the analysis to people with children. (Table 21) Among these 30% of the men and just 4% of the women seek one day to assume the senior post at a large congregation.

Given the relatively small number of women in congregational work, the even smaller proportion in larger congregations, the history of career instability, the perceptions of gender bias, and the low levels of interest of women in con-

	M no kids	F no kids	M w/ kids	F w/ kids	Total
<b>Other</b>	23%	31%	19%	28%	25%
<b>Day school</b>	9%	10%	8%	17%	11%
<b>JCC</b>	18%	21%	9%	23%	16%
<b>Small cong.</b>	18%	21%	28%	23%	24%
<b>Large cong. not senior</b>	9%	8%	5%	6%	6%
<b>Senior rabbi, large cong.</b>	23%	10%	30%	4%	18%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

gregational work (particularly the most senior posts), Conservative congregations are experiencing a major challenge in creating gender diversity in their spiritual leadership.

### THE RA AND GENDER EQUITY: DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSES OF MEN AND WOMEN

Men and women rabbis differed in their reactions to the Rabbinical Assembly and its efforts to assure equity for men and women in the Conservative rabbinate. (Table 22) When asked for their impressions, most respondents were mixed or unsure of their responses. But, of those who could express a clear preference, more of the men responded favorably than unfavorably (31% versus 9%), while for women rabbis the results were reversed (15% vs. 25%).

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Favorable</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Unfavorable</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

When asked where the RA should concentrate its efforts in this area (as between helping women rabbis directly or in training lay-led search committees), the men heavily preferred focusing on the search committees (59% vs. 16%), while, the women respondents somewhat more than the men tilted toward helping women rabbis, even as a clear majority still preferred working with search committees (52% for focusing on search committees and 27% for working with women rabbis. (Table 23)

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Help Women Rabbis</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Train Search Committees</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### CONCLUSION: NOT JUST A MATTER OF EQUITY

Men and women rabbis in the Conservative movement exhibit very different career paths, differences that can be explained in part, but only in part, by matters of family status and approaches to work-life balance. Men work longer hours; of those working full time, men are more likely to work in congregations rather than in the many other settings where rabbis serve (e.g., education). Of those working in congregations, men are much more likely to hold posts as senior or solo rabbis in larger congregations, where they benefit from higher pay, more benefits, and more professional visibility in conventional terms. While women with children work fewer hours than men, our study could not determine whether some of the women working fewer hours did so not of their own choosing, but because they could not attain the higher paying jobs which demand more hours, but remain instead in less challenging professional roles. That no (or hardly any) women hold the most senior posts in Conservative congregational life certainly affects the expectations and aspirations of female rabbis making rational choices about their careers and work life.

As noted, men are far better compensated than women. Even when we statistically take into account full-time versus part-time work, work setting (congregation versus other), status (lead or assistant rabbi), and size of congregation (for those working as solo or senior rabbis), significant compensation gaps remain. All things considered, male Conservative rabbis earn more than their female counterparts, even for putatively the same work.

It stands to reason that numerous early career experiences exert a cumulative impact upon the career choices and opportunities experienced by men and women rabbis. Among these are poor relations with rabbinical supervisors, contract non-renewals, poor relations with lay leaders, and hostile work environments, all of which singly and cumulatively operate to discourage professional aspirations on the part of rabbis, and since women experience these events more than men, we may presume that women's aspirations are more adversely affected.

With all this said, one may be tempted to view the gender variations in Conservative rabbinical careers primarily as a matter of gender-equity. That is, good-thinking

people can be motivated to correct the imbalance in access to desirable and sought-after positions, if only to assure fairness and meritocracy in the advancement of men and women rabbis.

While such a perspective is surely compelling on its own, we should also note another motivation for policymakers to address the under-participation of women rabbis in conventional leadership roles in the Conservative movement. Both the movement and American Judaism may well suffer qualitatively due to the gender-based variations reported above. For whatever reasons, be it gender bias or socialization or historical lag, relatively fewer women than men are available to work full-time, to work in congregations, and to lead Conservative communities, particularly the larger congregations. Their under-participation in such realms deprives the Jewish community of full access to the best possible spiritual and educational leadership available. The under-representation of women in certain sectors of Conservative rabbinic leadership, coupled with their under-compensation, is not only a matter of equity and fairness. It also is a matter of securing the best possible leadership for American Jews.

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## APPENDIX A. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

### THE RA RABBINICAL CAREER STUDY

The Rabbinical Assembly is proud to sponsor this study of the career paths of rabbis ordained during the last 20 years. Under the direction of Prof. Steven M. Cohen of The Hebrew University, it will greatly enhance our understanding of how Conservative rabbis, both men and women, are advancing in their careers. Your answers to this survey will remain strictly confidential. Please take 10 minutes to complete this survey, and then mail it back to us in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope.

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT CORRESPONDS TO YOUR ANSWER.

1. How satisfied are you with each of the following, as it relates to your being a rabbi?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
a. Your relationship with your family	1	2	3	4	5
b. Your relationship with your friends	1	2	3	4	5
c. Your lay leaders	1	2	3	4	5
d. The people you serve	1	2	3	4	5
e. Your senior rabbi, if you have one	1	2	3	4	5
f. Your compensation	1	2	3	4	5
g. The number of hours you devote to your work	1	2	3	4	5
h. Your access to communal resources, such as schools or other Jewish institutions	1	2	3	4	5
i. If you're unmarried, your prospects of finding a mate	1	2	3	4	5

2. On average, about how many hours per week do you spend on professional duties?

Under 20 hours	20-29 hours	30-39 hours	40-49 hours	50-59 hours	60-69 hours	70+ hours
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. In thinking about your being a rabbi and your personal life, which serves more to define who you are and gives you your sense of identity? (Circle number)

<b>Much more your being a rabbi</b>	<b>Somewhat more your being a rabbi</b>	<b>Both being a rabbi and personal life equally</b>	<b>Somewhat more your personal life</b>	<b>Much more your personal life</b>
1	2	3	4	5

4. In the next 3 years, do you intend to be working as a rabbi, in any position?

<b>Definitely yes</b>	<b>Probably yes</b>	<b>Probably not</b>	<b>Definitely not</b>
1	2	3	4

5. Are you thinking of changing positions within the next three years?

<b>yes</b>	<b>Maybe, not sure</b>	<b>No (skip to question 7)</b>
1	2	3

6. (If Yes or Maybe) Which ONE of the following issues is the most important in causing you to think about changing positions (or changing careers)?

<b>Professional advancement</b>	<b>Compensation</b>	<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	<b>Your spouse's needs</b>	<b>Your children's needs</b>	<b>Other</b>
1	2	3	4	5	6

7. Thinking ahead 5-10 years from now, in which ONE setting in rabbis work would you be most interested in working? Are there any other settings in which you think you might also be possibly interested in working? (Circle number)

	Most interested (choose only one)	Possibly interested
a. A day school	1	2
b. A Hillel	1	2
c. A JCC	1	2
d. A Federation	1	2
e. The Chaplaincy	1	2
f. A small or medium sized congregation	1	2
g. A large congregation as the senior rabbi	1	2
h. A large congregation as other than the senior rabbi	1	2
i. A center or project for special purpose such as women's issues, healing, Jewish education, social services, etc.	1	2
j. Other	1	2

THE NEXT SET OF QUESTIONS REFERS TO YOUR CURRENT POSITION AS A RABBI. IF YOU HAVE MORE THAN ONE POSITION, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING WITH RESPECT TO YOUR MAJOR POSITION.

8. In what year did you start work at your current congregation or agency? \_\_\_\_\_

9. For whom do you currently work? (If more than one employer, choose one.)

Congregation	Day School	Hillel	JCC	Federation	Chaplaincy	Other, please specify
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. [If you work in a congregation please answer. If not, skip this question.]

About how many family units belong to your congregation? \_\_\_\_\_

11. [Everybody please answer] Do you work at one principal job as a rabbi, or do you work at two or more positions that each provides a significant portion of your income?

One position	Two or more positions
1	2

12. What is/are your job title(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

13. What is/are your agency's or congregation's zip code(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you currently receive each of the job benefits listed below? (Circle number)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
a. Health insurance for yourself	1	2	3
b. Health insurance for your family, if applicable	1	2	3
c. Pension contributions by your employer	1	2	3
d. Allowance for attending conventions or professional development	1	2	3
e. A paid sabbatical	1	2	3
f. Disability leave	1	2	3
g. Paid maternity or family leave	1	2	3

15. Do you currently have an employment contract? (Circle number)

- 1 Yes      2 No (skip to question 20)

16. Do you expect that you will want to continue with your current agency or congregation at the time when your current contract concludes?

- 1 Yes      2 Maybe, not sure      3 No

17. Do you expect that your current agency or congregation will want to retain you at the time when your current contract concludes? (Circle number)

- 1 Yes      2 Maybe, not sure      3 No

18. Since ordination, how many contracts for your employment have been renewed? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Since ordination, how many contracts for your employment have not been renewed? \_\_\_\_\_

20. **[Everyone answer]** With respect to your current contract or terms of employment, which of the following characterizations would you say is most suitable:

- 1 You secured the terms you thought you deserved
- 2 You settled for less than you thought you deserved
- 3 You negotiated the best terms you could and were satisfied with it
- 4 Not sure

21. In how many positions, including your current one, have you served as a paid, ordained rabbi? \_\_\_\_\_

22. In what year were you ordained? \_\_\_\_\_

23. From which school did you receive your ordination? (Circle number)

JTS	Ziegler	Machon Schechter	Seminario Rabbinico	Budapest	YU	HUC-JIR	RRC	Other
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

If you are currently employed in your first rabbinic position since ordination, please skip to question 30. Otherwise, continue with question 24 below.

24. With respect to your first position since ordination, for whom did you work?

Congregation	Day School	Hillel	JCC	Federation	Chaplaincy	Other
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

25. For how many years did you work at this agency or congregation? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Did you have a senior rabbi working with you in this position? (Circle number)

- 1 Yes      2 No (skip to question 28)

27. How would you rate his/her performance as a senior rabbi to you?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure
1	2	3	4	5

28. At the end of your first job, to what extent were you interested in working in a pulpit? Were you ... (Circle number)

Very interested in a pulpit	Somewhat interested	Not interested	Not sure
1	2	3	4

29. Thinking back to your first job as a rabbi, would you say that you left the position willingly or were you compelled to leave? (Circle number)

You left willingly	You were compelled to leave	Not sure
1	2	3



If you skipped questions 24-29 above, resume answering here. All others continue with the questions below, too.

30. When you were last interviewing for a job as a rabbi did you interview for...

	Yes	No
a. Pulpit positions	1	2
b. Other positions (not pulpit)	1	2

31. In your last search for a job, do you feel that you had a sufficient number of opportunities to be interviewed for jobs you sought? (Circle number)

1 Yes                      2 No                      3 Not sure

32. During that period of interviews, did you feel that you were treated fairly in the interviewing process? (Circle number)

1 Yes                      2 No                      3 Not sure

33. In the treatment you received in the interviewing process, do you think **your gender** played a positive, negative, or neutral role? (Circle number)

1 Positive                  2 Negative                  3 Neutral                  4 Not sure

34. In the treatment you received in the interviewing process, do you think **your age** played a positive, negative, or neutral role? (Circle number)

1 Positive                  2 Negative                  3 Neutral                  4 Not sure

35. Over the course of your rabbinic career, about how often have you encountered actions or remarks by lay people that you found hurtful, in a way that was connected to your **age**? (Circle number)

Never	Hardly ever	A few times	Several times	Many times
1	2	3	4	5

36. Over the course of your rabbinic career, about how often have you encountered actions or remarks by lay people that you found hurtful, in a way that was connected to your **gender**? (Circle number)

Never	Hardly ever	A few times	Several times	Many times
1	2	3	4	5

37. Compared with other **male rabbis** who were ordained about the same time as you were, do you regard your current position as...

More desirable	Less desirable	About equally desirable	Not sure
1	2	3	4

38. Compared with other **female rabbis** who were ordained at about the same time as you were, do you regard your current position as ...

More desirable	Less desirable	About equally desirable	Not sure
1	2	3	4

39. Do you think your gender has helped or hurt your financial compensation?

- 1 Helped                      2 Hurt                      3 Neither                      4 Not sure

40. With respect to efforts to ensure equal treatment of male and female rabbis in the Conservative rabbinate, what is your impression of the efforts of the RA? Is it...

- 1 Favorable                      2 Mixed                      3 Unfavorable                      4 Not sure

41. Below are listed two directions the RA could pursue to advance equitable treatment of women in the rabbinate. Which of them would you prefer the RA to pursue?

- 1 Help women rabbis effectively pursue high status jobs  
 2 Train search committees in matters of gender diversity and equity  
 3 Not sure

**YOUR BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS**

42. Are you...                      1 Male                      2 Female

43. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

44. What is your marital status?

Married	Never married	Divorced or separated	Widowed
1	2	3	4

45. How many children, if any, do you have living at home? \_\_\_\_\_

46. What is the total value of your annual compensation package, including income, parsonage if applicable, and benefits? An approximate figure is fine. \$ \_\_\_\_\_,000

47. Of that amount, how much do you earn just in income? \$ \_\_\_\_\_,000

Finally, we have two “short-answer” questions about your career preferences.

48. What do/would you find attractive about working in a pulpit position?

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49. What do/would you find attractive about working in other than a pulpit position?

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**THANK YOU! PLEASE RETURN THIS SURVEY TO PROF. STEVEN M. COHEN IN THE ENCLOSED  
SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE.**

**APPENDIX B: RESOLUTION ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR RABBIS**  
(Adopted at the Rabbinical Assembly Convention 1995)

WHEREAS the convention celebrates the tenth anniversary of the ordination of women as rabbis in our movement and applauds the accomplishments of our women colleagues, and

WHEREAS there exist in our movement fully egalitarian congregations, defined as those in which women and men participate equally in all ritual areas of synagogue life, including reading Torah, taking aliyot, being counted in the minyan, and acting as *sh'libei tzibbur*, and

WHEREAS a small percentage of these fully egalitarian congregations have been reluctant to consider women as candidates for a rabbinic position, and

WHEREAS The Rabbinical Assembly has taken important steps in ensuring that women rabbis are treated fairly by: 1) endorsing a policy calling for equal pay for men and women in comparable positions; 2) producing and disseminating educational material for congregations on the status of women rabbis; 3) monitoring placement practices to ensure that no pattern of gender discrimination takes place in those pulpits;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The Rabbinical Assembly commend the Joint Placement Commission for its efforts so far to provide equal access of employment to all qualified candidates for pulpits without regard to gender, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in cases of possible gender discrimination in said congregations, the Director of the Joint Placement Commission will be empowered to address this issue with the congregations in question, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that when patterns of gender discrimination persist, the Joint Placement Commission shall take appropriate action, which may include not publishing the name of the congregation on the Placement List or not submitting names of candidates or their resumes to said congregation by the Joint Placement Commission.

**Rabbinical Assembly**  
**Policy Memorandum**  
**on the**  
**Gender Variation Study**

**July 2004**

## **APPENDIX C: POLICY MEMORANDUM ON GENDER VARIATION STUDY**

**JULY 2004**

In 2002, the Rabbinical Assembly applied for and received a grant from the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York to conduct a study comparing the careers of female Conservative rabbis to those of their male peers. The title of the grant proposal was: Women in the Rabbinate: Compensation, Career Advancement and Status. In addition to the grant, the Rabbinical Assembly raised additional funds and contributed funds for the study. Dr. Steven Cohen of the Hebrew University was engaged to conduct a study comparing benchmarks in the careers of male and female rabbis who joined the Rabbinical Assembly since 1985.

### **WHY DID WE CHOOSE AT THIS TIME TO EMBARK UPON SUCH A PROJECT?**

We commissioned this study for several reasons. One simple reason is that as we approach the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the first admission of women to the Rabbinical Assembly, we wanted to reflect on and analyze this major change in the Conservative rabbinate. In 2003, when we began the study, women in the rabbinical assembly numbered 177 members, or approximately 11% of our total membership. We believed that while this percentage was still a relatively small one by which to scientifically measure women's progress, it nonetheless represented the first real opportunity to examine the data on this issue.

Furthermore, we wondered whether the entry of women into the Conservative rabbinate nearly twenty years ago had changed the character of our rabbinate overall. We wanted to look at a "snapshot" of the entire group of rabbis who joined the Rabbinical Assembly since the first admission of women. Were the issues faced by these rabbis different from those of their predecessors? Do these rabbis approach the rabbinate in a qualitatively different way than their predecessors?

Lastly, and most importantly, we had anecdotal evidence indicating that advancement in the careers of women rabbis might be lagging behind that of their male counterparts. The supposition of a "leaky pipeline" in the career advancement of professional women has been widely studied and proven across numerous American professions. These studies include two significant studies of Jewish professional life, one of Federation executives and the other of JCC professionals, both co-authored by Dr. Steven M. Cohen, the same researcher commissioned to conduct our study. These studies and many others across the spectrum of American professional life suggest that the early victories that earned women access into the professions have not been matched with sustained progress.

That our female members flourish has been a goal and priority of the Rabbinical Assembly even before the admission of the first female member. The Rabbinical Assembly is committed to supporting and promoting the work of all members, as we believe that rabbinic leadership is both the foundation and the beacon of Jewish communal life.

While, as noted above, female rabbis are 11% of our overall membership, they are approximately 30% of our membership since 1985. As women form an ever-increasing percentage of the rabbinate, the success of women within this profession and the attitudes towards women rabbis affects the overall prestige of the rabbinate. Studies exist in other professions detailing the loss of prestige accorded to those professions attendant to the entrance of women into the professions (i.e., “pink collar professions”). It is in the interest of the Jewish community as a whole to see that such a diminution of status does not occur in the rabbinate as women become a larger and more visible segment.

In our own organization, we began electing women to positions of influence very soon after 1985. The first woman was appointed to a committee in 1987. It is rare after only two years of membership for a rabbi to be appointed to a committee but the Rabbinical Assembly thought it was important to have female members represented. Since then, women have been widely appointed to all major Rabbinical Assembly Committees including Placement, Law, Membership, Budget, and the Administrative Committee, which is appointed by the President and has ongoing governance and policy-related responsibilities.

In 1995, the Rabbinical Assembly passed a resolution at its annual convention empowering the Director of the Joint Placement Commission to address issues of possible gender discrimination within congregations (See Appendix B). The Rabbinical Assembly was the first of the international rabbinic organizations to hire a woman for its rabbinic staff and the rabbinic staff is currently comprised of two men and three women. A task force on women rabbis that explores issues of career development and advancement holds bi-annual conferences.

## **WHO DID WE SURVEY, WHAT DID WE ASK IN THE SURVEY AND WHAT DID WE LEARN?**

### **A. Who did we survey?**

As Dr. Cohen indicated in the report, we attempted to reach all 156 women members living in the United States and an almost equal number of U.S.-based men (155), selected so as to match the distribution of women by year of ordination (or more precisely, the year in which they joined the RA which generally corresponds to the year of ordination). In all, 233 rabbis responded, representing 75% of the total complement of 311 potential respondents. The survey questionnaire, which is attached to the report, was administered mostly by mail and also in person at our annual convention in Jerusalem, February 2004 and by fax. Several lengthy phone interviews were conducted prior to the writing of the survey questionnaire.

## **B. What did we ask in the survey?**

Rabbis were asked a total of 49 questions which mostly fell into the following categories:

- a. satisfaction with lifestyle, work-life balance and hours worked;
- b. career history, career aspirations and issues motivating career choices;
- c. employment contract, compensation and benefits;
- d. quality of workplace experience, encounters with negative remarks about age or gender; relationship to supervisors and mentors;
- e. perceptions about the desirability of the respondent's job;
- f. opinions of the Rabbinical Assembly's efforts to ensure equal treatment of men and women;
- g. vital statistics of age, gender, marital status and income;
- h. two short answer question about the relative attractiveness of pulpit and non-pulpit positions.

## **C. What did we learn?**

The results, excerpted here, contained several important findings:

1. On the whole, female rabbis serve in pulpits less frequently than their male counterparts. Most female rabbis serving in pulpits do so in smaller pulpits of 250 families or fewer. Even compared to the men serving in this small pulpit category, the women are serving in smaller pulpits than their male counterparts. No women in the survey sample serve as the lead rabbi in a congregation of more than 500 families, although the Rabbinical Assembly is aware of two female colleagues who are lead rabbis in congregations of roughly 500 families.
2. Men work longer hours than their female colleagues, with over twice as many men as women in the sample working over 60 hours per week (49% vs. 21%). By contrast, 36% of women in the sample work part-time, as compared to only 3% of their male counterparts. A roughly equal number of men and women work 40-59 hours per week (48% of the men vs. 43% of the women).
3. Men in the data sample earned more money than their female counterparts for the same work. When statistically controlling for job-related factors, men earn more than women whether measured in terms of annual income or total compensation package. This gender gap, while varying in degree, held true for every category of position surveyed. Specifically, there is a \$12,000 gap for full-time assistant rabbis, a \$21,000 gap for lead rabbis in "A" sized congregations (250 households or fewer), a \$10,000 gap in "B" sized congregations (250-500 households), and a \$27,000 gap for full-time non-pulpit rabbis. Men also reported receiving benefits such as health insurance, pension and sabbatical with greater frequency than women.



4. Men report more stable and rewarding early careers than their female counterparts. Men report longer terms in their first positions and lower incidence of termination or non-renewal of their employment agreements. Men held on to their first jobs longer than their female counterparts (3.7 v. 3.1 years). Men were more likely than women to have left their last post willingly (85% vs. 67%). Men were less likely than women to have experienced failure of their synagogue or agency to renew their contract (26% vs. 41%).

5. There were significant gender-related differences in family patterns among the rabbis in the sample. The age range of the sample was consistent across the genders with about a third of each group younger than 35, almost half forty and over, and a median age of 38. There the similarities end. Fully 80% of the men reported being married parents, in contrast to only 42% of the women. Nearly three times as many women as men are unmarried (38% vs. 14%).

6. The arrival of children has opposite effects on the careers of men and women, with men being more likely to move to congregations, and to larger congregations, whereas women move out of the congregation and into part-time work.

7. A greater number of men in the sample took their first jobs in the pulpit, reported positive experiences with their senior rabbis, expressed an interest in pursuing continued pulpit work, and interviewed for pulpits in their last job search. A higher percentage of men than women prefer congregational work and a much higher percentage express an interest in someday serving as senior rabbi of a large congregation, 37% compared to 9%. These numbers drop to 30% and 4% respectively when restricted to people with children.

8. Women experience bias on the part of congregational search committees when they seek interviews. Only 56% of women report having access to a sufficient number of interviews as opposed to 82% of the men. Only 71% of the women felt that they were treated fairly in the job search compared to 89% of the men. Hardly any men believe their gender or age played a negative role in their job search compared to over a third of the women.

9. Women widely report an uncomfortable atmosphere in their work environments, particularly the pulpit. Hardly any men report hurtful remarks connected with their age or gender. In contrast, 27% of women in congregational settings have heard “several” or “many” negative comments about their age, and 58% have heard “several” or “many” negative comments about their gender. Majorities of both congregational (56%) and non-congregational (54%) women rabbis believe that their gender has hurt their careers.

## WHAT DO THE STUDY RESULTS MEAN?

In analyzing the results of the study, it is important to remember that the pool of subjects was limited to people of comparable seniority in the rabbinate. That is to say, the gaps in pay and status demonstrated by men and women is reflected in rabbis who received the same education, graduated in the same period of time and have comparable experience in the rabbinate. To see the entire pool of women lagging so far behind that of their male colleagues indicates that institutional biases exist in congregations and Jewish institutions that employ Conservative rabbis. As the international membership organization of Conservative rabbis, we call upon these institutions to examine their hiring policies and their institutional culture in order to narrow and ultimately eliminate this gender gap.

Our data indicate that institutions, whether congregations or other institutions are paying women less money than their male counterparts for the same work. When statistically adjusting for all relevant factors, women earn less in comparable jobs, ranging from \$12,000 for assistant rabbis to \$27,000 for non-pulpit rabbis. Our data shows that comparable gaps pertain in terms of benefits. Our data also indicates that gender biases prevent women from getting adequate opportunities to interview for desirable positions and hinder their ability to thrive in the positions they attain. The dramatic differences between men's and women's experiences of negative remarks related to their age and gender in the workplace speak to an environment in which women rabbis struggle to overcome obstacles not presented to their male colleagues.

Whereas men almost never feel that their gender played a negative role in their careers (2% of men in congregations and 0% of men in non-pulpit positions), a majority of women in pulpit positions (58%) and over a third of women in non-pulpit work (38%) felt that it did. Whereas only 4% of men felt that their position was less desirable than positions held by women ordained at the same time they were, 38% of women felt that their position was less desirable than positions held by men ordained at the same time. In pulpits, women in the Rabbinical Assembly serve as lead rabbis in the smallest congregations in the movement, with 83% in the sample serving in congregations of less than 250 households. Even compared to men in this small pulpit category of 250 households or fewer, women serve in the smallest congregations. The absence of women from leadership in the largest, most visible institutions in the movement, whether they be congregations or organizations contributes to an environment in which gender biases about women's roles in religious leadership can be perpetuated.

We are concerned not only for our members, but also for the institutions of our Movement and of the Jewish community. Only a few years after the landmark breakthrough of the admission of women into the Conservative rabbinate, we along with the rest of the Jewish community were thrust into a dialogue that has continued for over a decade about the vibrancy of the Jewish community, its sustainability and its future. Most

recently in the Conservative movement, we were alarmed to find in the 2000 population study, signs of aging and attrition in the institutions that so many have worked hard to build and sustain. It has become a *sine qua non* across North American professional life that the participation of women brings a broader perspective to workplaces and their professional ideals. This broader perspective helps professions to grow and meet the evolving demands of a rapidly changing society. Our movement cannot afford to squander the resources of our female rabbinic colleagues.

We are also concerned lest the persistent lagging attainments of women rabbis lead to a “two-tiered” system where the status of a woman rabbi is less than that of her male colleague. Since 1985, the Rabbinical Assembly, its staff and its leadership, have aggressively taken the position that a *Rabbi* is a *Rabbi* and that we do not make any distinctions based on gender. We need to take continued action to ensure that this position is a matter of fact and not merely an ideal.

Another important issue of concern to us is that women in the rabbinic workforce work fewer hours than their male colleagues with over a third of female rabbis (36%) working part-time. We know that the effects of child rearing on the careers of men and women differ widely, leading some women to adjust their work-life balance with the onset of childrearing. Social norms continue to place a larger percentage of domestic responsibility squarely on women’s shoulders. But it is important to note that the other data in the study regarding the obstacles women face in advancement lead us to suspect that these obstacles also contribute to the fewer numbers of full-time women in the rabbinic workforce. If institutional biases prevent women from getting equal pay for equal work and limit their chances for advancement, then women’s careers are less likely to justify their absence from the household, in economic as well as less tangible ways.

The root causes of the gender gap are numerous and difficult to untangle. What is clear from the data is that we see our female colleagues encountering more career obstacles than their male counterparts. Dr. Steven Cohen, our researcher, presents four underlying issues that he suggests contribute to the gender gap in rabbinic careers. Summarized briefly, these four issues are:

First, the issue of “gender bias,” the notion that those in a position to nurture, advance, promote and hire prefer male to female aspirants;

Second, the issue that men and women are “socialized” differently and evoke different reactions and expectations in both their personal and professional relationships;

Third, differing approaches to “work/life balance;” women feel more responsible or are held more responsible for domestic obligations;

Fourth, “historical lag,” felt most strongly in the entry of women into an all-male profession, the “maleness” of which is buttressed by thousands of years of religious and cultural tradition.

We see a complex interplay of these factors. On the one hand, we surmise that gender bias and historical lag contribute to institutional resistance to providing equal opportunity to qualified women, and institutional failure to provide them with comparable compensation. On the other hand, if we define advancement in terms of issues such as compensation, prestige and size of congregation, we find a significant percentage of women, particularly those with children, expressing and demonstrating that they do not choose to pursue opportunities that bring those rewards.

In other words, these gender disparities cannot be viewed one dimensionally. The 9% of our female colleagues who aspire to be senior rabbis of large congregations encounter gender-based obstacles to getting there, but 91% report that they don't have these aspirations. It is worth noting here that while the responsibility to assure an equal playing field for all of our rabbis is one that the Rabbinical Assembly has and embraces, it is hard to know what "equal" means when 91% of the women surveyed do not want the kind of job that the community views as a benchmark of success. What should equal access look like if the overwhelming majority of women don't want the benchmark position?

Here, our data leave us with important questions in understanding these complex phenomena. Why don't 91% of the women aspire to be senior rabbi of a large congregation? Socialization and work/life balance are only part of the picture. We view this statistic in light of the 58% of women in congregations who heard several or many remarks about their gender (in contrast to 2% of their male congregational colleagues) and the 56% of women who did not rate their rabbinic supervisor as good or excellent (as compared to 41% of the men).

We wonder if negative experiences in women's early careers and lack of opportunity are having a stifling influence on women's ambitions. Negative experiences based on gender not only limit a rabbi's success and their ability to secure employment in more competitive job searches, they also reshape rabbis' aspirations and color their view of certain workplace environments. Consequently, talk of such experiences "through the grapevine" affects the viewpoint of other female colleagues and alters their aspirations. Certainly, the dearth of female role models in such positions affects the viewpoint of female rabbinical students preparing for their careers. It is worth noting that the paucity of women in large congregations mirrors the small number of women in the leadership of Conservative institutions overall. These are issues about which the Rabbinical Assembly needs to conduct further study.

How do we begin to break the cycles of bias and under-compensation that are keeping us from maximizing the talents and abilities of our female rabbis?

## **WHAT CAN THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY DO TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE THE OBSTACLES WOMEN FACE?**

When asked whether the Rabbinical Assembly should concentrate its efforts on helping women rabbis directly or in training lay search committees, men focused on search committees (59% v. 16%) and women rabbis leaned towards helping women directly (52% vs. 27%). The Rabbinical Assembly has been doing both and will continue to do so. Our Placement Director, Rabbi Elliot Schoenberg has long been involved in counseling women rabbis during their search processes and working with committees to encourage them to consider female candidates. Since joining the Rabbinical Assembly staff in 2001, our Director of Rabbinic Development, Rabbi Julie Schonfeld is also heavily involved in these efforts.

Needless to say, the ultimate power to change lies within the institutions that engage rabbis to be their spiritual leaders. Whether in synagogues, schools, JCC's or other communal institutions, the real progress in the gender gap will be seen when hiring, promotion and compensation practices are gender neutral at the level of individual institutions. By undertaking this study and opening a dialogue about the gender gap in rabbinic compensation, the Rabbinical Assembly hopes to aid and speed this process of change.

Looking at the results of the report, we see two separate categories of follow-up: action items that the Rabbinical Assembly can undertake to help women rabbis succeed and discussion items that call out for exploration at the national level. Both categories are summarized below:

### **I. ACTION ITEMS FOR WOMEN'S RABBINIC SUCCESS**

Based on the study, we see several areas in which the Rabbinical Assembly can expand its existing efforts and undertake new initiatives in order to address the gender gap in rabbinic leadership. The ideas for action items listed below are many. In order to achieve our goals in this regard, we will first need to raise funds in order to embark on these programs, as they would represent a substantial commitment of staff and budget resources. Given the strength of the data that we have before us, and the great importance of the issue, we are optimistic about efforts to identify the necessary financial support in order to undertake these and/or other projects. The following ideas are the results of our initial brainstorming and we plan to reach out to our own members as well as policy experts to refine these ideas and to generate additional ones.

#### **A. Visibility for Women Rabbis. Beginning in Rabbinical School**

One of the areas in which significant efforts have been made is the provision of opportunities for women rabbis or those in rabbinical school to gain exposure to congregations. These efforts have been made under the auspices of the Conservative seminaries as well as through other constituent movement institutions. Increased visibility for women in the rabbinate through scholar-in-residence and other speaking engagements continues

to be an important vehicle for expanding the awareness of congregations and institutions about women rabbis. We need to raise additional funds to underwrite speaking engagements for women rabbis in communities that have not been adequately exposed to female colleagues.

#### **B. Leadership Training and Transition Support**

The study asked rabbis what direction the Rabbinical Assembly should pursue to ensure equitable treatment of men and women. The majority of women rabbis who answered the question favored helping women effectively pursue high status jobs. We suggest expanding our efforts in this regard. We would like to be able to offer a program of executive coaching to women planning a job search within twelve to twenty four months and for women in their first twelve months at a new job. The Rabbinical Assembly regularly offers a related program for colleagues through our Professional Growth and Learning Series, called *Eit Ratzon*. Enlisting the help of outside consultants, we would like to create a program specifically geared towards addressing the gender related challenges that women face when seeking career advancement.

#### **C. Monitoring the Status of Women**

We want to continue to maintain and develop this important body of data that we have accumulated. We will monitor the status of the profession on an annual basis to document where men and women work, the numbers of men and women applying to each category of job, and their experiences in the interview process. We also want to continue to track the salaries and benefits received by men and women (the Rabbinical Assembly conducts a regular salary survey), and develop a means for tracking and documenting the gender related experiences of men and women in the workplace.

#### **D. Sensitize Senior Rabbis to Gender Issues**

In the past, the Rabbinical Assembly has run a successful training institute for senior rabbis to train them in issues of mentorship and supervision, and to sensitize them to issues that arise when working with a junior colleague. We would like to create another version of this institute, tailored to working with women in the role of assistant or associate rabbi. The study specifically revealed that women are less likely to have a positive mentor relationship with their senior rabbi. We believe that this is an area in which we could effectively address the obstacles that women face in their early career experiences.

#### **E. Mentorship**

The Rabbinical Assembly has, over the years, experimented with a few models to provide mentorship for

recently ordained rabbis. Women entering the rabbinate need support from senior colleagues who are sensitive to and adept at dealing with the gender issues that women face. The Rabbinical Assembly would like to design a mentorship program that will meet the needs of women rabbis. In addition, we would like to work with the rabbinical schools of the movement to identify issues of mentoring and role-models in order to better help newly graduating rabbis handle the complex issues that arise in the workplace, particularly the pulpit.

#### **F. Job Security, Retention and Renewal**

Our study showed that congregations and institutions are more likely to fail to renew the contracts of women rabbis. Men stayed longer in their first positions, were more likely to have left their last post willingly and less likely to have ever experienced the failure of a synagogue or agency to renew their contracts. Here the Rabbinical Assembly can be especially helpful. We routinely work with our colleagues to help them navigate their contract negotiations and to work through issues that come up during the normal course of employment situations. We hope that through the vehicle of this study and report that we can reach out to women colleagues and help them evaluate their current employment situation and plan for the future.

#### **G. Deepen Our Understanding of the Part-Time Rabbinate**

Our study showed that a significant percentage of our female rabbis work part-time, Since our movement has invested in training these rabbis and our communities greatly benefit by maximal utilization of their talents, we want to expand our understanding of rabbis in part time roles. Our data show that over a third of our female colleagues (or said another way, 10% of our rabbis ordained since 1985) serve the community part-time. Professional development for part-time rabbis could also help them to advance their careers and to better serve the community if and when they choose to return to full-time work. Here again, we plan to turn to our own members and outside experts to help us craft the most useful strategy.

#### **H. Helping Women Whose Family Commitments Do Not Allow Them to Relocate For Their Careers**

Another type of counseling that the Rabbinical Assembly can offer to women is help in “creating opportunity” where they are. A number of rabbis, men and women in the Rabbinical Assembly, have succeeded in building opportunities in a particular geography where they found no full-time job by seeking greater visibility, developing sub-specialties and areas of expertise within the rabbinate, and working with local institutions to create new jobs. By working with women who face these challenges, we hope to help rabbis expand their skills and reputations and ultimately transition from part-time to full-time work.

### **I. Re-entry Support for Women Rabbis Seeking to Return to the Full-Time Rabbinate after an Interval of Part-time Work**

Our study showed that child rearing leads some women rabbis to limit their professional advancement. We must assume that some percentage of these women will return to more extensive duties when their children get older. One question that has been raised in many professions is the effect on women's professional advancement of a hiatus from full-time work. The Rabbinical Assembly can help to minimize the impact of this hiatus by offering female colleagues opportunities to prepare for reentry into the full-time rabbinate. We would utilize our Professional Growth and Learning Series featuring outside consultants specializing in this area.

### **J. Hold A Conference For Women in the Part-Time Rabbinate**

We find that bringing our rabbis together around particular career specialties can be very effective towards helping those rabbis develop their careers. We think that the goals outlined in points H, I, and J above could be advanced by bringing part-time women rabbis together for a conference where we could begin this important work.

## **II. BEGIN A NATIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT THE GENDER GAP**

The first step towards addressing the gender gap is in recognizing that there is a problem. By commissioning this study and openly sharing its results, we hope to trigger a dialogue in the Conservative community, and in the larger community as a whole about gender discrepancies in the rabbinate. We believe that the dialogue should focus on three areas: 1.) compensation; 2.) hiring practices and workplace conditions; and 3.) quality of life issues in the rabbinate. Working through the Joint Commission on Rabbinic Placement, we want to more effectively monitor and advise search committees in order to assure gender equity and encourage the advancement of women rabbis. We also want to help women rabbis weather the challenges they face and remain in the placement pipeline long enough to be considered for prestigious positions.

We are joining a dialogue that has already begun in Federations and JCC's in regard to gender inequities in Jewish professional life. We hope that by bringing this issue to the attention of our congregations and institutions, the focus on the problem will be the first step towards change. The Rabbinical Assembly cannot do this alone. We will require the input and cooperation of the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism and other Conservative institutions.

We believe that the issues identified in this study call for a companion study of synagogue search committees and other rabbinic employers. In that study, we would also like to do more in-depth interviews with



job applicants to tease out some of the more subtle issues contributing to the gender gap. The data revealed by this study is compelling unto itself, but as mentioned before, we believe that the root causes are many and complex. We hope that we will be able to identify funds to conduct further study of these important issues.

The Rabbinical Assembly is committed to the ideal that *Rabbi* is a gender-free designation. We want to call upon all of the institutions of the Conservative movement, from the smallest to the largest, to examine their attitudes towards women in religious leadership and their openness to inviting such leadership into their midst. For thousands of years, men enjoyed exclusive access to Jewish religious leadership. This precedent does not stand silent when women rabbis apply for jobs, seek promotions and raises, or simply carry out their duties. Preconceived notions and long-held biases about the “proper” or “customary” roles of women are also felt in the decision-making processes surrounding female rabbis.

Another important area of inquiry raised by the study is that of work/life balance. In the rabbinate, as in many professional arenas, women have achieved an increased profile in the workplace, while their role in the home has not decreased. Women in many professions have sought greater flexibility and greater integration with home in the way they perform their duties. Examples of these innovations in other arenas have included flexible hours, decreased emphasis on face time, and job-sharing. Conversations with younger rabbis and with rabbinical students show that this not just a women’s issue, but an issue that is becoming more prevalent for men and women as social norms and aspirations as well as economic factors influence both the amount of time that people *want* to spend at work, and paradoxically, the amount of time people *need* to spend at work in order to maintain their lifestyle.

Clearly the pulpit rabbinate, with its emphasis on the interpersonal relations of rabbi to congregants creates special challenges in working through these aspirations. Could Conservative synagogues move away from the model of the rabbi who makes himself or herself available to the congregation 24/7 at the expense of his or her family and move towards a model that places greater emphasis on creating work/life balance for the rabbi as a model for all the families in the congregation? Might these quality of life issues leading some women rabbis away from the pulpit in fact be the very ideas that reinvigorate the synagogue as a place of relevance to the daily life of Conservative Jews?

Already, for some years, there have been Jewish congregations in North America that have adopted a model of “co-rabbis” rather than senior and assistant rabbis, which amounts to “job sharing.” There have always been congregations with high levels of member participation and responsibility. Despite these examples, the importance of the rabbi in so many aspects of congregational life makes the “24/7” model a particularly hard pattern to change. In all likelihood, it will change one congregation at a time, if at all. The Rabbinical

Assembly already does work with rabbis on creating balance, but we can do more research to generate ideas as to how rabbis can work with their communities to make their jobs more manageable.

## **TOOLS FOR BEGINNING THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION**

### **A. Working With Search Committees**

The data clearly indicate that search committees are the gatekeepers. A majority of Conservative congregations have been egalitarian for a sufficient number of years to be ready to embrace a gender-free rabbinate. The study points to an opportunity for the Joint Commission on Rabbinic Placement to work intensively with search committees planning to interview rabbis. One goal is to impress upon congregational leaders the need to increase representation of women on search committees. Additionally, we need to inform congregational leaders of the results of the study clearly indicating that discrimination is taking place. Most importantly, the Joint Commission on Rabbinic Placement will sharpen its efforts to review the search and hiring processes of congregations in order to ensure that women candidates receive their just due.

### **B. Working With Women to Effectively Pursue High Status Jobs**

The Joint Commission on Rabbinic Placement recommits itself to the priority of helping women to effectively pursue high-status jobs. The JPC will increase its efforts to ask search committees to justify their choices for job finalists in order to reveal instances where gender has played an unfair role. At the same time, we will work with women involved in competitive searches to help them optimally present themselves in order to attain the desired position. We want to encourage younger women to persevere through early career challenges so that they will be available when opportunity strikes. This encouragement begins with women in rabbinical school, who frequently express that they feel that the pulpit is not a good place for them.

### **C. Utilizing Our Literature and Creating Additional Material**

The Rabbinical Assembly has several publications that we provide to congregations and rabbis to aid in the job placement process. A book, *Electing a Rabbi to Your Congregation* is an invaluable tool that our Placement Director, Rabbi Elliot Salo Schoenberg created for congregations searching for rabbis. This comprehensive guide to rabbinic placement discusses the issues that arise when a congregation interviews women rabbis for the first time. The book also includes a guide for a focus group that congregations can conduct regarding the issue of women rabbis. Based on what we learned from this study, the Rabbinical Assembly can add more mate-

rial about the gender gap in the second edition of the book.

Additionally, the Rabbinical Assembly can work with outside consultants to create a pamphlet for congregations regarding issues of gender in the congregational search process. This pamphlet could expand upon the work already done by Rabbi Schoenberg and help congregations use focus groups, outside speakers and other means to prepare for a rabbinic search that makes no distinction among candidates solely on the basis of gender.

#### **D. Creating a Video/DVD to Showcase Women Rabbis**

Insofar as there are institutions, particularly congregations that have not been adequately exposed to women rabbis, we should seek a grant to create a high quality video featuring women rabbis preaching, teaching and talking about their vision of the rabbinate. We should make this video available to all congregations in the movement, and especially to those embarking upon a search process.

#### **E. Webcasts With Congregations**

Every year, during the active placement season (winter and spring), our Placement Director, Rabbi Elliot Salo Schoenberg conducts several webcasts for congregations searching for rabbis. These webcasts, which bring together congregational leaders throughout North America, provide an excellent venue in which to explore issues of gender in rabbinic searches.

### **CONCLUSION**

With the completion of this year long project, we find ourselves not at the end, but rather at the beginning. As we review the results of the study, we are as moved by the unanswered questions as by the answered ones. We hope that we will be able to obtain additional funding to help us follow-up on the results of this study in order to be maximally helpful to women rabbis and to our communities.