

Report on



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Annual Statistical Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) Society in Israel

2022

Executive Summary

Ultra-
Orthodox
in Israel
Series

Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) society in Israel is diverse, complex, and dynamic. In certain respects, it is unique; in others, it resembles the Israeli mainstream. What does the Haredi community look like today? What trends have emerged since the beginning of the millennium? In what ways is it different from the rest of Israeli society, and in what ways are the two alike?

The ultra-Orthodox sector in Israel has grown rapidly over the last two decades, and is undergoing accelerated changes resulting from its unavoidable interaction and integration with wider society. The 2022 Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) Society in Israel—the executive summary of which you are currently reading—is the seventh annual report, bringing together into a single volume the bulk of existing quantitative information about Haredi society, and presenting a comprehensive and up-to-date picture based on statistical information and data analysis spanning several important areas, including demography, education, welfare, standard of living, employment, lifestyles, and voting patterns. A special chapter this year is devoted to languages, to indicators of personal wellbeing, and to road safety.

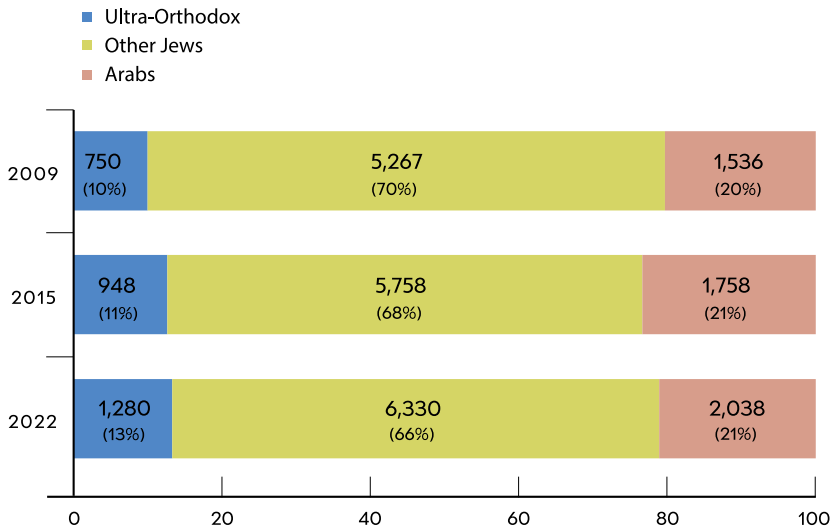
The Statistical Report is produced by the Israel Democracy Institute's Program on Ultra-Orthodox in Israel, which focuses on studying trends in ultra-Orthodox society and on shaping public policy for ultra-Orthodox integration into Israeli society.

Chapter 1

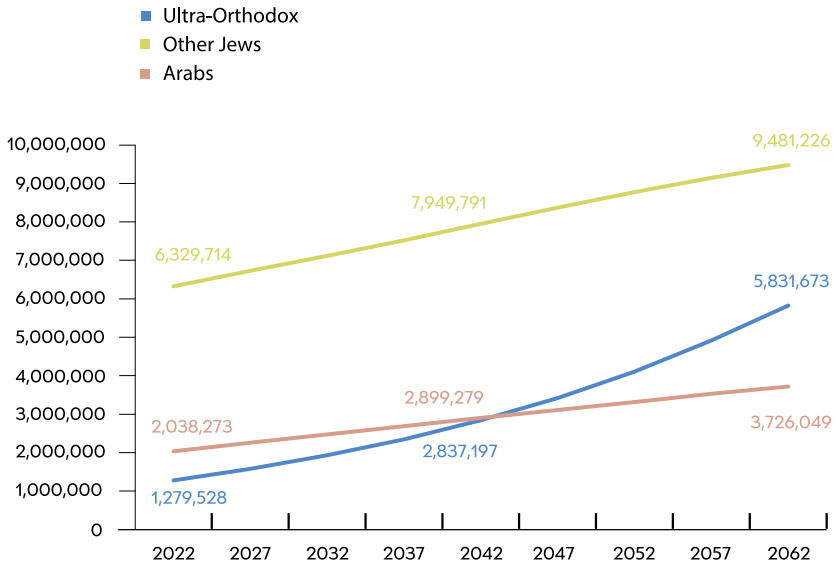
Population

The growth rate of the ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) population in Israel is the highest of any of the populations in developed countries, at around 4% per year. The factors underlying this particularly rapid growth are high fertility rates, modern standards of living and medicine, a young average age at marriage, and large numbers of children per family. Consequently, the ultra-Orthodox population in Israel is very young, with around 60% under the age of 20, compared with 31% of the country's general population. In 2022, the Haredi population numbered around 1,280,000, up from 750,000 in 2009, and constituting 13.3% of Israel's total population. According to Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) forecasts, its relative size is expected to reach 16% in 2030, and it will number two million people in 2033.

Population of Israel, by population group (in millions)



Population forecast, by population group



Analysis of the patterns in the ultra-Orthodox family over the last decade and a half, reveals a sizable drop in fertility rates, from 7.5 live births per woman in 2003–2005 to 6.5 in 2019–2021. Despite this decrease, this rate is still much higher than the average fertility rate among other Jewish women in Israel, which stands at 2.5. The average age at first marriage among ultra-Orthodox men was around 23 in 2021, and around 22 among ultra-Orthodox women, and the average age at birth of the first child was 24 for men and 23 for women.

The geographical distribution of the Haredi population reveals two “capital cities”—Jerusalem and Bnei Brak, which were home to 42.6% of Israel’s ultra-Orthodox citizens in 2020 (26% in Jerusalem and 16.6% in Bnei Brak). An additional 23.7% live in a series of ultra-Orthodox satellite cities, including Beit Shemesh, Modi’in Illit, Beitar Illit, and Elad. A third group can be found in more established large cities such as Ashdod, Petah Tikva, Haifa, Rehovot, and Netanya, in which 12.4% of the ultra-Orthodox population reside. Together, these three categories of localities with a high percentage of the Haredi population—encompassing 11 cities in total—account for 77.8% of the ultra-Orthodox population of Israel.

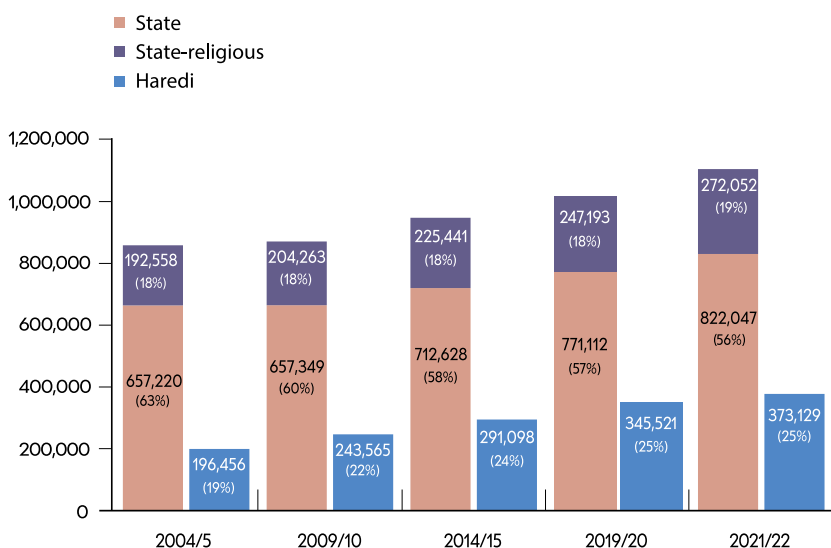
Chapter 2

Education

Since the beginning of the millennium, there has been a rapid increase in the number of students in ultra-Orthodox education frameworks, reaching around 373,000 in the 2021–2022 school year, including both elementary and secondary education. Ultra-Orthodox education now constitutes 25.5% of the Hebrew-language (Jewish) education system in Israel, and 19.5% of the entire Israeli education system.

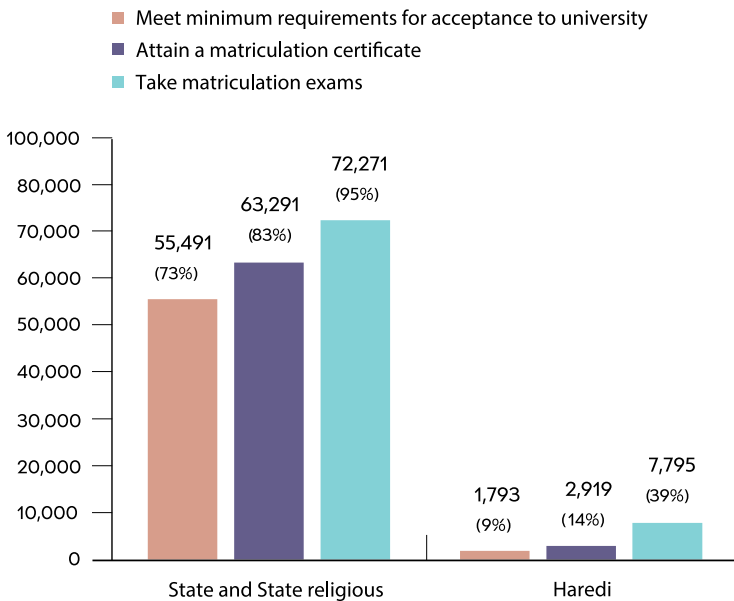
The last decade has seen several systemic and structural changes in ultra-Orthodox education, including the establishment of the Haredi Department in the Ministry of Education and of the State-Haredi education stream. Only 3.5% of Haredi schools are State schools; 74% are not defined as State schools but are "recognized" by the State under the compulsory education law, and 22.5% — schools which are "exempt" from the compulsory education law.

Students in Hebrew-language education, by category of Ministry of Education supervision



In the 2019–2020 school year, 59% of ultra-Orthodox girls took at least one matriculation (*Bagrut*) exam, compared with just 31% a decade earlier, in 2008–2009. However, during the same period there was a slight decline in the percentage of boys taking matriculation exams, from 16% to 15%. The proportion of students who gained a matriculation certificate in the ultra-Orthodox sector in the 2018–2019 school year was just 14%, compared with 83% in the State and State-religious education streams.

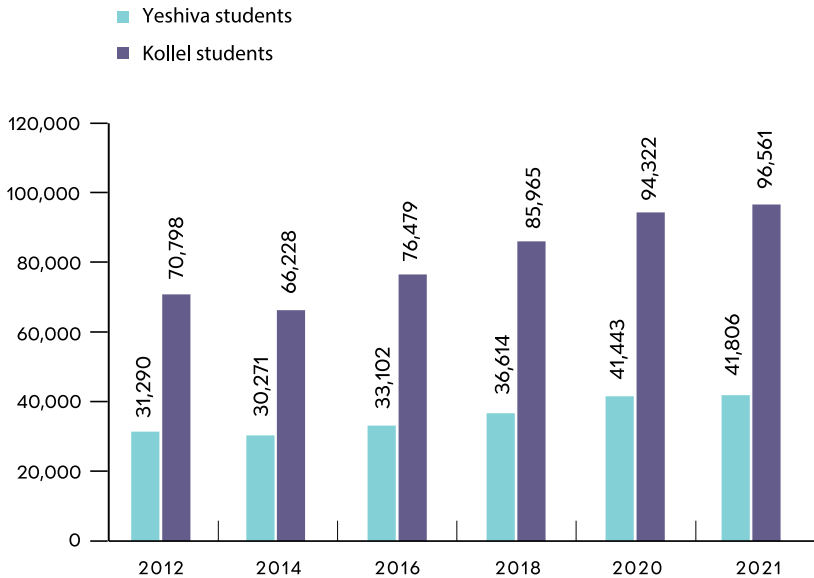
Students taking matriculation exams, attaining a matriculation certificate, and meeting minimum university requirements, by category of Ministry of Education supervision



There are four tracks in the post-secondary education system for Haredi men: studies in a yeshiva; studies in a *kollel* (full time advanced Torah study frameworks for married men); academic studies; and vocational training. For ultra-Orthodox women, the options are studying in a seminar (ultra-Orthodox post-secondary educational institutions, which also offer vocational training) or pursuing academic studies. Between 2014–2021, there was a 46% increase in the number

of yeshiva and *kollel* students in Israel, reaching 138,367 in 2021. This rise likely stemmed from increased state support for these students, which also brought to a halt the trend of more and more ultra-Orthodox men into the workforce.

Yeshiva and *kollel* students

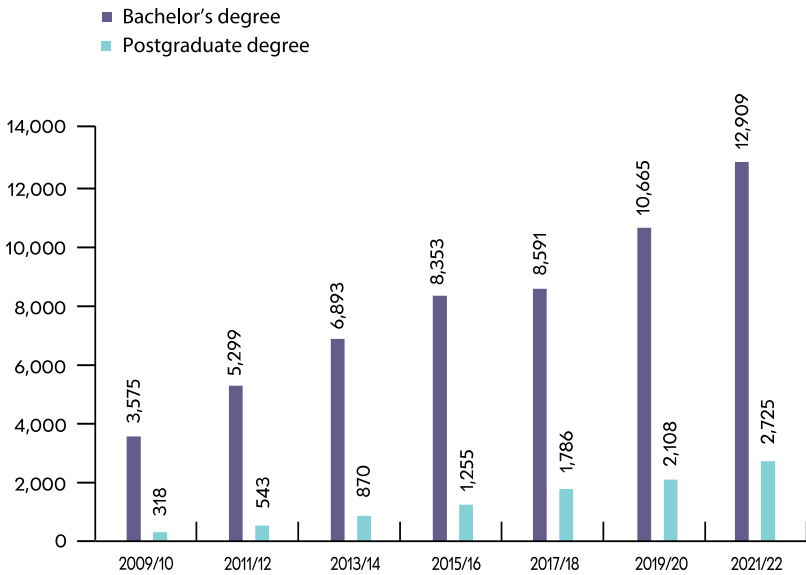


The number of Haredi students in higher education frameworks has grown rapidly. Between 2009 and 2022, their number grew by 235%, compared with a 19% increase in the overall number of students in Israel. In 2009–2010, ultra-Orthodox students constituted around 2% of the total student body; this leaped to 4.5% by 2021–2022. During this 12-year period, the number of ultra-Orthodox students rose by an average of 10.5% annually.

The total number of Haredi students in higher education stood at around 15,600 in 2021–2022. The subjects they choose to study are mostly practical and those that allow them to work within the ultra-Orthodox community or to enter professions that are in demand in the labor market (such as teaching and education, paramedical professions, business administration, and law). Haredi students choose mainly to attend colleges, due to their lower entry requirements, and

only 8.5% study at universities (not including the Open University)—compared with 33.5% of other Jewish students. The dropout rate of ultra-Orthodox students between the first and second year of academic studies has fallen in recent years, and is now equivalent to the dropout rate among other Jewish students. The number of Haredi students in technological vocational training (under the auspices of MAHAT, the Government Institute for Technology and Science Training) stood at more than 5,200 in 2020–2021.

Ultra-Orthodox students in higher education

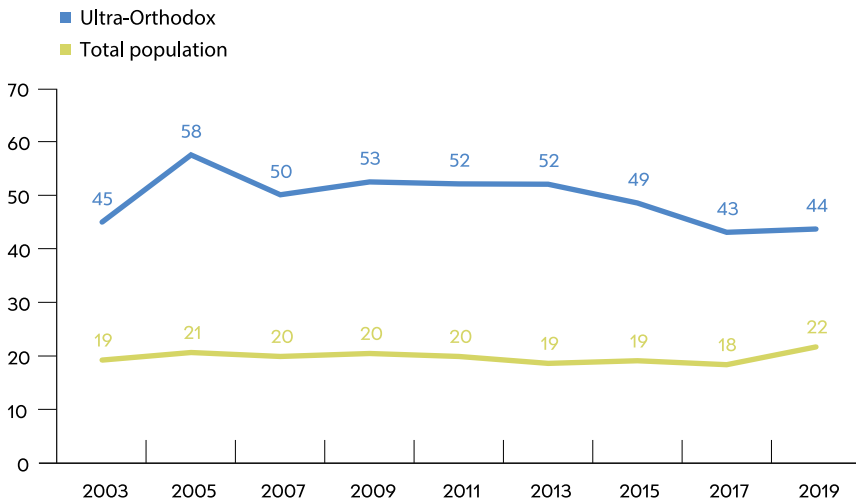


Chapter 3

Standard of Living

The prevalence of poverty among Israel's ultra-Orthodox population and its impact on the standard of living, is much greater than in the rest of the Israeli population. While there has been a sizable decline in the poverty rate among the ultra-Orthodox since 2015, it remains very high, standing at 44% in 2019—double than among the general population (22%).

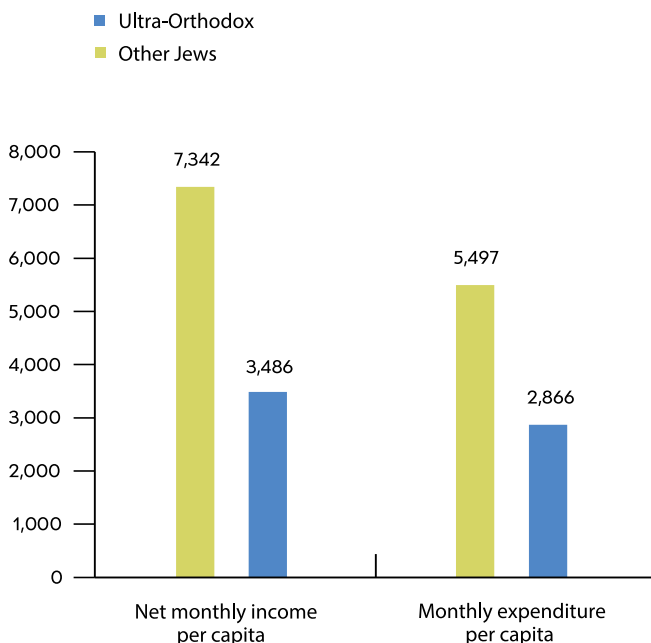
Poverty rate among families, by population group (%)



Standard of living is closely linked to household income and expenditures. In 2019, the average gross monthly income for Haredi households was NIS 14,121—far lower than the average for other Jewish households in Israel (NIS 21,843). The factors behind this low level of income include the fact that many households rely on the earnings of a single breadwinner (often the woman), working relatively few weekly hours in a low-paying job, and with fewer funds in investments or in pension plans.

An assessment of monthly household expenditure reveals that ultra-Orthodox households spent an average of NIS 13,824 in 2019, 21% less than other Jewish households, despite the fact that the average number of persons in ultra-Orthodox households is almost double that of other Jewish households. To some extent, these differences can be explained by the ultra-Orthodox consumer culture, which puts a high premium on thriftiness, as well as by consumer outlets for the ultra-Orthodox population, at which shoppers can buy products more cheaply, and even receive them for free on occasion.

Monthly income and expenditure per capita (NIS)



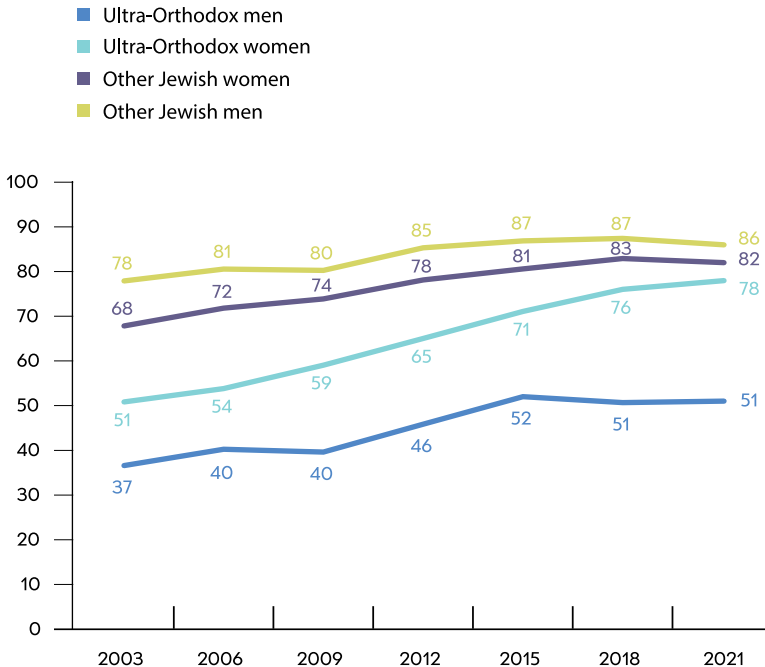
Analysis of data on the standard of living in the ultra-Orthodox public, reveals that the differences—as compared to the rest of the Jewish public in Israel—remain large, but have become somewhat smaller in recent years. This is true of income, poverty rates, consumption, and access to motor vehicles. The only area in which findings for the two populations are almost the same is home ownership.

Chapter 4

Employment

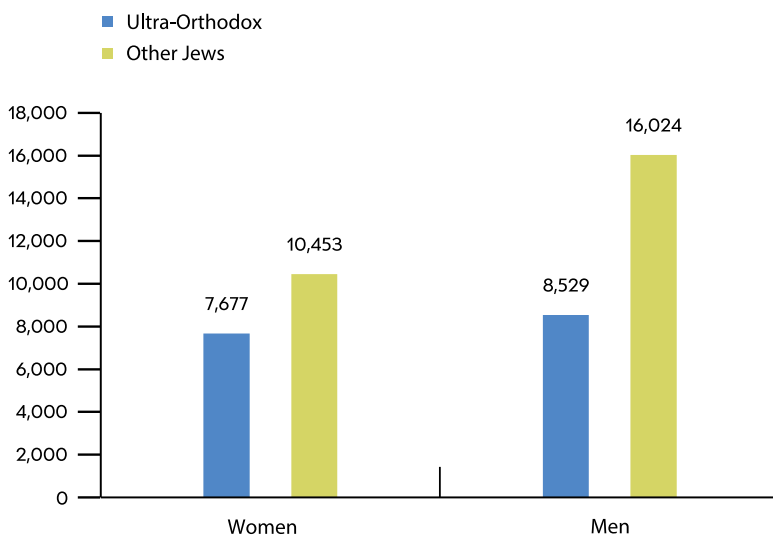
One of the main topics of public debate regarding the place of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israeli society, is employment. In 2002, around one-third of ultra-Orthodox men were employed, and just over half of ultra-Orthodox women. Between 2003 and 2015 there was a major surge in ultra-Orthodox employment rates for both men and women, resulting from a combination of economic need in the community and of public policy designed to promote entry of ultra-Orthodox Israelis to the labor market by various means. As a result, more than half of ultra-Orthodox men (51%) and more than three-quarters of ultra-Orthodox women (78%) are now employed. However, the rise in employment rates among men has come to a halt in recent years (2015–2021).

Employment rates, ages 25–64, by population group (%)



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Average gross monthly income from employment, ages 25–64, by population group (NIS)



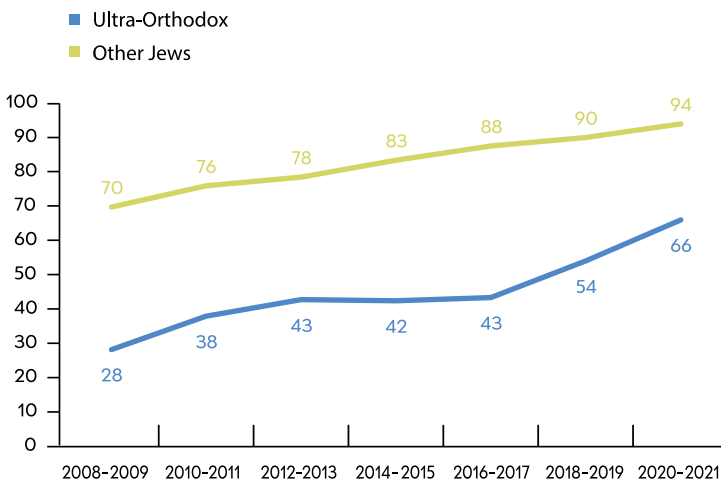
In the last seven years which we examined (2014–2021), we have not seen a trend towards narrowing the difference between the industries in which ultra-Orthodox men and women are employed and those in which other Jewish men and women work.

Chapter 5

Lifestyles

Lifestyles in the ultra-Orthodox community are in constant flux, and serve as a good source for understanding the relations between ultra-Orthodox society and the general Israeli society. Regarding military service and national civilian service, for example, recent years have seen a decline in participation among the ultra-Orthodox—in 2020, only 1,193 ultra-Orthodox men entered military service, and just 495 entered national civilian service. On the other hand, when it comes to internet usage, the gaps between the ultra-Orthodox and the rest of the Israeli public have narrowed, with 66% of the ultra-Orthodox and 94% of other Jews reporting that they are regular internet users. Similarly, there has been a rise in the share of ultra-Orthodox Israelis with access to a motor vehicle and of those who have a driver's license. In light of the increased ultra-Orthodox participation in these areas of life, it can be stated that the trend towards social and economic integration of ultra-Orthodox society into general society is gaining strength.

Use of the Internet among ages 20+, by population group (%)

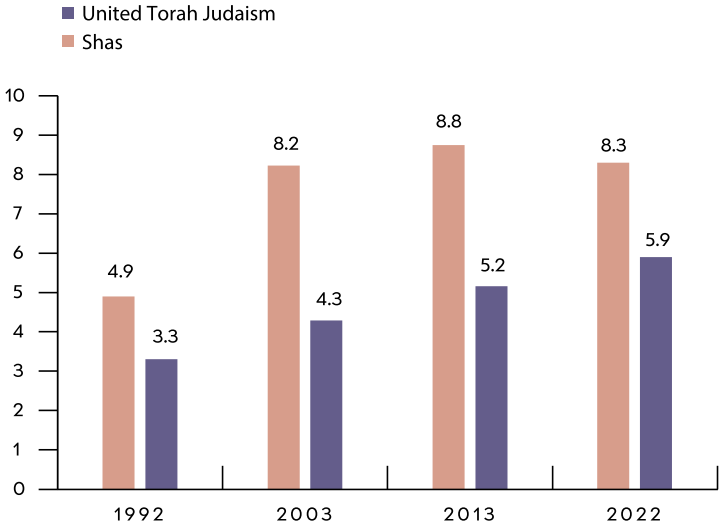


Over the past decade, the growing numbers of ultra-Orthodox Israelis in higher education and the growing numbers of women who are employed, is creating greater disposable income, awareness of consumer and leisure culture, and a modern discourse among the growing middle class in ultra-Orthodox society. The communal and social characteristics of the Haredi sector find expression in volunteer activity (40% of the ultra-Orthodox volunteer, as compared with 23% of other Jews) and in making major financial contributions to the community (86% of the ultra-Orthodox ages 20 and over versus 58% of other Jews).

We also analyzed voting patterns for the United Torah Judaism and Shas electoral lists in Knesset elections, which are indicative of the political power of the ultra-Orthodox parties, the geographical distribution of the ultra-Orthodox public in Israel, and the and the internal composition of the population residing in locales with heavy concentrations of Haredim.

Between 1992 and 2022, the overall share of the vote gained by Shas and United Torah Judaism rose from 8.2% to 14.1%. In addition, there has been a change in the geographical distribution of voters for these lists, reflected in the growing importance of the ultra-Orthodox satellite cities and the declining relative importance of Jerusalem and Bnei Brak.

Voting for United Torah Judaism and Shas, by election year (%)



Chapter 6

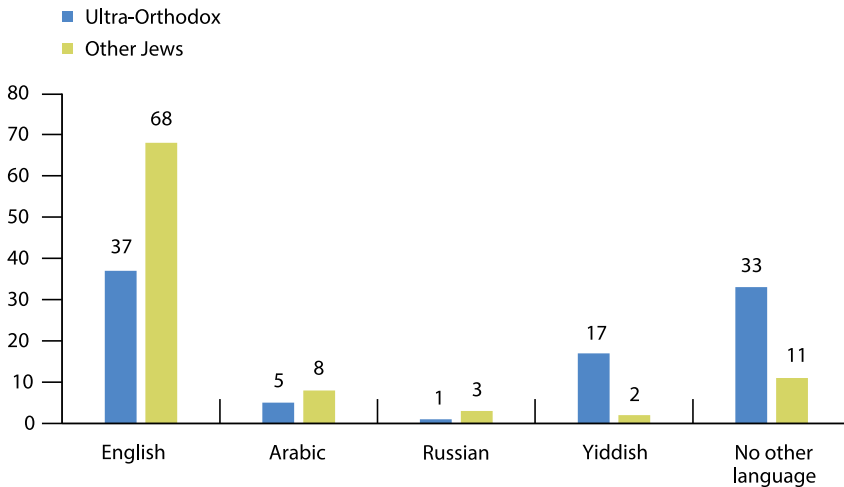
Knowledge of Languages, Wellbeing, Transportation and Road Safety

In this year's report, we included information on knowledge of languages, wellbeing, transportation, and road safety based on the 2021 edition of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) Social Survey.

Languages

Over the last decade, there has been a noticeable rise in the percentage of ultra-Orthodox Israelis who list Hebrew as their mother tongue (75% in 2022, compared with 69% in 2011). Just 10% of ultra-Orthodox respondents report Yiddish as their mother tongue, down from 13% in 2011. With regard to knowledge of English, just 37% of ultra-Orthodox Jews reported having a command of English, compared with 68% of other Jews.

Satisfied with various factors, by population group (%)



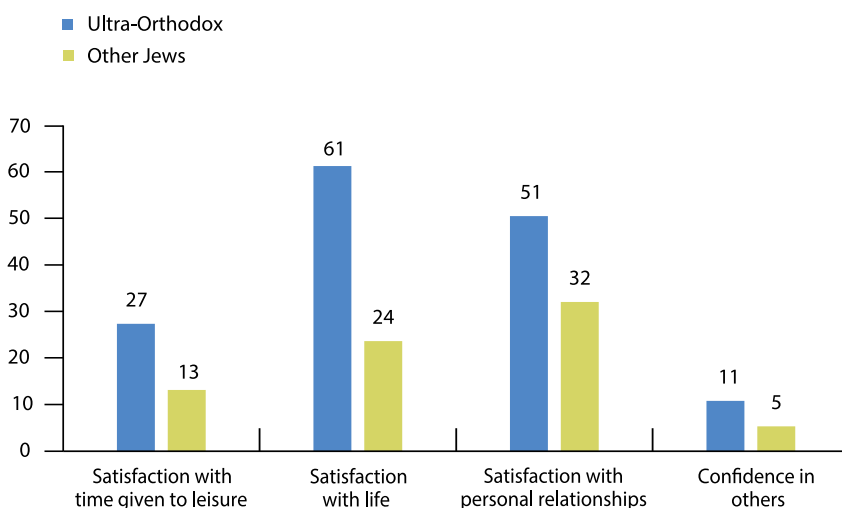
Indicators of Personal Wellbeing

The data reveal that by objective indicators, the situation of the ultra-Orthodox is worse than that of other Jews, while according to subjective indicators, they are better off.

On the objective indicators, we see that 47% of ultra-Orthodox Israelis report having difficulty with covering their household expenses, compared with 36% of other Jews. The ultra-Orthodox also report less participation in various leisure activities: 19% said they had attended arts, cultural, or sporting events in the last year, compared with 39% of other Jews. Similarly, 24% of the ultra-Orthodox had taken part in group activities, such as singing or sport, in the last year, compared with 32% of the rest of the Jewish population.

By contrast, the subjective indicators assessed in the Survey, reveal that 82% of ultra-Orthodox Israelis described their emotional and mental state as "very good", compared with 58% of other Jews. The ultra-Orthodox also scored higher on satisfaction indicators: 61% ranked their satisfaction with life as being at the highest level, on a scale of 1–10, compared with just 24% of other Jews. Similarly, 51% of ultra-Orthodox Jews are satisfied with their personal relationships, compared with 32% of other Jews.

Voting for United Torah Judaism and Shas, by election year (%)

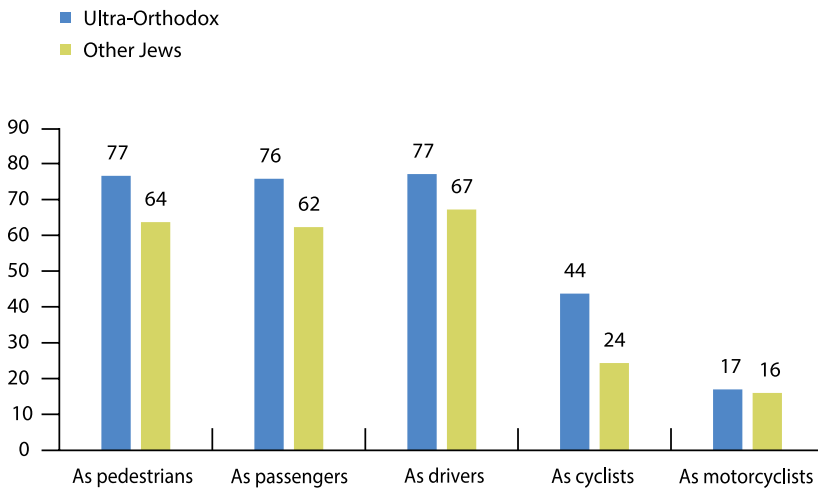


Ultra-Orthodox respondents also suffer less from negative feelings: 18% reported experiencing feelings of loneliness (at some frequency or other), compared with 32% of other Jewish Israelis, and 29% reported feeling depressed (at some frequency or other), compared with 45% of other Jews.

Transportation and Road Safety

According to the Social Survey, road safety among the ultra-Orthodox population is better than among the rest of the Jewish population: 76% of ultra-Orthodox respondents reported feeling safe as pedestrians, compared with 64% of other Jews, while 76% of the former feel safe as passengers, compared with 62% of the latter.

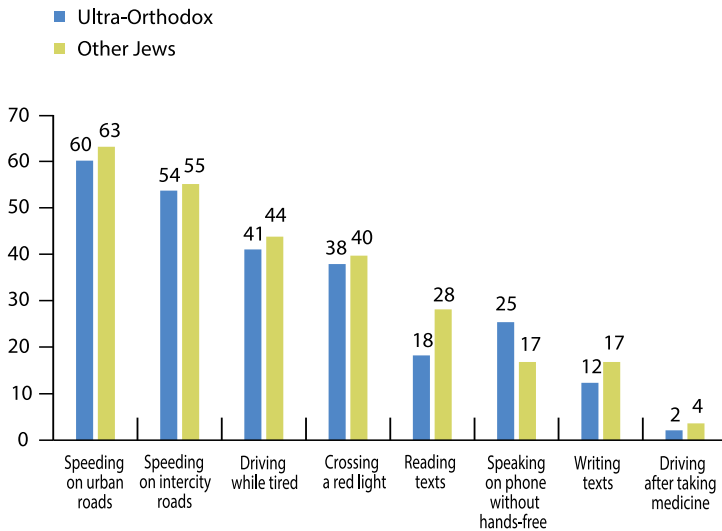
Feel safe on the roads, by population group (%)



The ultra-Orthodox also worry less about accidents (57%) than do other Jews (79%). According to the Survey, ultra-Orthodox Israelis commit fewer traffic offenses. For most of the traffic offenses assessed, the share of ultra-Orthodox respondents who report having committed them in the last year was lower than that of their other Jewish counterparts. There were relatively large differences when it came to reading texts while driving and driving above the speed limit on intercity

roads (for both, 18% of ultra-Orthodox versus 28% of other Jewish respondents). Smaller differences were reported for driving above the speed limit on urban roads (ultra-Orthodox, 60%; other Jews, 63%) and for driving while tired (41% versus 44%, respectively).

Driving offenses committed in the last year, by population group (%)



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Yael Bachar is the editor and data coordinator for the Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox Society in Israel, and a Research Fellow at the Meyers-JDC-Brookdale Institute. Bachar holds an MA in conflict resolution from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

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