

STATISTICAL  
REPORT ON  
ULTRA-ORTHODOX  
SOCIETY  
IN ISRAEL



2016

ABSTRACT



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לחקר ישראל  
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لدراسات إسرائيل



THE ISRAEL  
DEMOCRACY  
INSTITUTE

## INTRODUCTION

Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) Jews in Israel have chosen to erect “walls of holiness” to separate themselves from society at large. This voluntary segregation is virtually all-encompassing, extending not only to beliefs and opinions unique to this community, but also to the spatial, educational, cultural, communicational and political spheres. For many years, Israeli society’s response to the haredi desire for separation was disregard and estrangement, with only rare glimpses beyond the “walls.” The haredi community was in effect absolved of the responsibilities and obligations shared by Israeli society as a whole, thereby reinforcing its members’ isolation.

Since the late 1990s, however, there has been increasing public, academic and media interest in the haredi community as a result of the group’s rapid demographic growth, with all its social, economic and political ramifications. Yet, despite this growing awareness, a systematic database of haredi society is noticeably lacking. The consequence is a lack of answers to key questions, from the size of the community and its school system to employment and participation rates in new programs, and from military and civilian national service to higher education.

The **2016 Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox Society in Israel** aims to answer these questions and more, assembling a vast range of data for the first time in one place. It offers a wealth of information on haredi demography and voting patterns in Knesset elections, as well as data on the community’s poverty rates, employment patterns, education system, standard of living, and way of life. The tables and figures appearing in the report present the most up-to-date figures coupled with past data so that, in addition to the existing situation, the reader can learn about changing trends over time.

As detailed in these pages, the haredi community is a multifaceted group—at times different from the rest of Israeli society, at other times, remarkably similar. The portrait that emerges is of a conservative society, which is nonetheless experiencing rapid change. Taken as a whole, the report allows the reader to see how diverse and dynamic present-day haredi society is, mitigating the perception of it as a monolithic entity with uniform behaviors.

By presenting reliable, current information about haredi society, we hope to assist anyone in a position of influence on the haredi society and its relationship with mainstream society – decision makers in politics, the private sector and civil society – as well as anyone interested in this topic – researchers, media and the general public.

To make the information clear and accessible, we have added explanations of each of the tables and figures, including an analysis of the primary findings and a review of emerging trends. This report is an essential tool for assessing developments and processes underway in haredi society. For this reason, we plan to produce an updated report each year and to expand the number of subjects examined overtime.

Gathering statistics on haredi society obliged us to grapple with the question of, “Who is haredi?” The major methodologies that exist today for identifying haredim quantitatively/statistically are as follows:

- (1) **direct identification by subjective self-definition,**
- (2) **identification by educational institution under haredi supervision,**
- (3) **identification by electoral patterns,** (voting for haredi parties), and
- (4) **identification based on National Insurance Institute (NII) data** (yeshiva students [men], or students at haredi teacher-training seminaries [women]).

Since more than one method of identification was used for each subject area studied, we noted the relevant category for each table or figure.

This report is a joint publication of the Israel Democracy Institute and the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies. We wish to thank the team members from both institutes who played a part in bringing the report to fruition, along with the various government ministries for their cooperation in providing relevant statistics.

We also wish to thank the Russell Berrie Foundation for its generous support throughout the project.

We hope that you will find in the pages of this report the answers to a variety of questions relating to haredi society in Israel. Comments and suggestions for future yearbooks are welcome.

Dr. Gilad Malach, Dr. Maya Choshen, and Dr. Lee Cahaner  
2016

# POPULATION

## OVERVIEW AND TRENDS

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The rapid demographic growth of the haredi population, with the resulting impact on the community's economic, social and political status, has attracted a great deal of attention in recent years. This chapter discusses the size of the haredi community in Israel and its proportion to the overall population, offering an analysis of the various contributing factors to its growth. We also include demographic forecasts for the haredi population in the coming decades.

As of the end of 2015, the haredi community numbered approximately 950,000 people, meaning one in every nine Israelis is haredi (11% of the population). Some 18% of the total population of children and youth (ages 0–19) are haredim, and they make up 8% of the working-age population (20–46). The annual growth rate of the haredi population is 4% as opposed to 1% among non-haredi Jews. The high proportion of young people in the haredi population, and consequently the large number of people per household, are among the reasons for the existence of poverty within the haredi sector.

The rapid growth of the haredi population stems from the community's high birth rate: 40 births per 1,000 among haredi women as opposed to 21 births per 1,000 women in the general population. Between 2012 and 2014, the total fertility rate (number of children potentially born to a woman during her childbearing years) averaged 6.9 children per woman in the haredi community versus 3.1 in the general population. Thus, the age structure of haredi society resembles a pyramid with a very broad base made up of young people. By contrast, the age structure in the non-haredi Jewish population is more like a rectangle, since its age groups are similar in size.

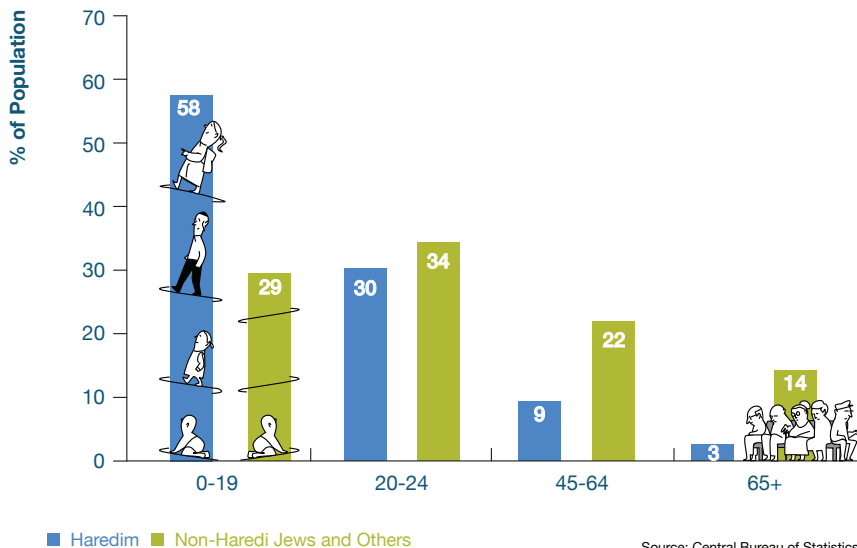
The share of haredim as a percentage of Israel's total population is predicted to be 14% in 2024; 19% in 2039, and 27% in 2059. By that year, the haredi community is expected to constitute 35% of the Jewish population in Israel. According to forecasts, the fertility rate of the haredi community, which dropped from 7.5 children per woman to 6.9 between 2003 and 2014, is expected to continue to decline, reaching 5.5 children per woman by 2025 to 2029.

The growth rate of this population group in the more established haredi cities of Jerusalem and Bnei Brak was relatively slow between 2002 and 2013 (1% to 2% per year), compared with 7% to 10% annually in the newer haredi cities of Beitar Illit, Modi'in Illit, and Elad. It should be noted that since 2009, there has been a downturn in the growth rate of the new cities due to the aging of the population and construction shortages, which reduced the level of migration to these localities.

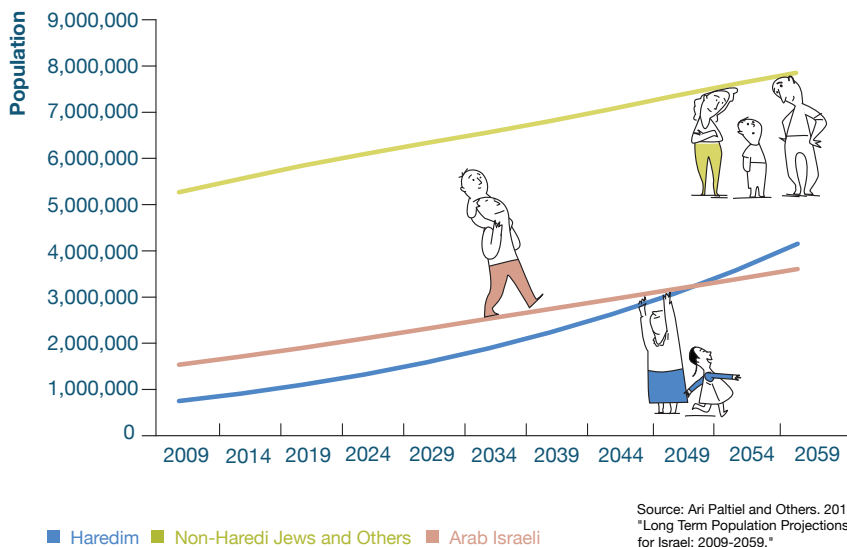
The proportion of Israelis born into haredi society in the over-20 age group (84%) is much greater than the corresponding figure in the non-haredi Jewish population (63%). The majority of Israeli-born haredim (57%) are children of native Israeli mothers, as compared with 43% of children in the non-haredi Jewish population.

At 83%, the share of married haredim over the age of 20 is much greater than that among non-haredi Jews (62%). This is explained by the younger age in which people get married within haredi society—yielding a rate of singles roughly half that of the general Jewish population (12% versus 23%). Another factor is the very low incidence of divorce and widowhood in the haredi community (5%), as opposed to the figure of 14% for the general Jewish population.

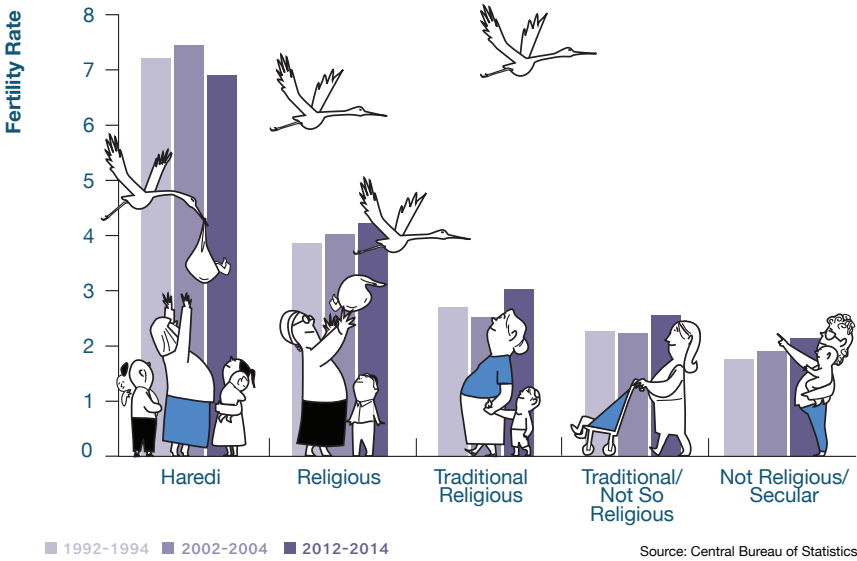
## Population, by Population Group and Age, Estimates 2014



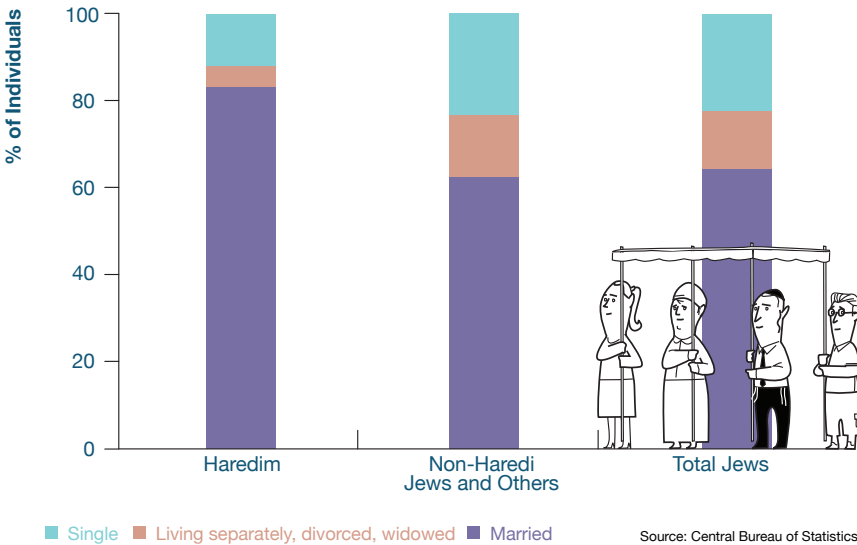
## Population, by Population Group, Projections 2014-2059



## Fertility Rate of Jewish Females, Based on Religious Identification, 1992-2014



## Marital Status, Individuals Over Age 20, by Population Group, 2003-2014





# EDUCATION

## OVERVIEW AND TRENDS

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The haredi school system plays a significant role in Jewish education and in Israel's education system in general. Over the years, it has seen rapid demographic growth coupled with systemic and structural changes, among them the establishment of a haredi division in the Ministry of Education. In the 2012/2013 school year, 23% of students in the Jewish education system studied in educational institutions under haredi supervision, comprising 17% of the entire Israeli school system. But influenced by the rise of the state and state-religious systems, the growth rate of haredi schools slowed to 0.5% per year between 2008 and 2013. Some 76% of students in educational settings under haredi supervision study in one of two "recognized but unofficial" networks (Hahinuch Ha'atzma'i and Ma'ayan Hahinuch Hatorani), while 24% attend schools that are partially exempt from certain Ministry of Education requirements (4% of elementary-age girls and 43% of boys study in exempt schools). In the decade from 2004 to 2013, the recognized networks grew in strength: 52% of male haredi students having studied there in 2004/2005, a figure that rose to 57% by 2012/2013.

The average number of students in institutions under haredi supervision (186) is lower than the comparable figure for state and state-religious schools (299). For this reason, the share of haredi institutions in the Jewish education system (35%) is greater than the share of haredi students in Jewish elementary schools (26%).

The drop-out rate from haredi institutions (roughly 3,000 students annually) is greater than that in state or state-religious schools. The highest proportion of drop-outs is in boys' secondary schools (3.5%, twice the comparable rate of 1.7% in the state school system). Overall, the drop-out rate totals some

20%, calculated over a six-year period. This rate has decreased by one half since the 2006/2007 school year, when it topped 6% annually in the boys' secondary school system.

The share of haredi students taking matriculation exams was 27% in 2013 (the latest year for which figures are available), as opposed to 93% in the state and state-religious systems. Only 10% of haredi students earned a matriculation certificate, compared with 70% of their peers in non-haredi frameworks. Breaking down the figures by sex, we find that only 2% of haredi boys earned matriculation certificates in contrast to 17% of haredi girls. The period from 2005 to 2013 saw a rise in the share of haredi students who took a matriculation exam of any kind (27% in 2012/2013 as opposed to 23% in 2004/2005), but there was not a significant change in the proportion who actually earned a matriculation certificate. The percentage who took matriculation exams in haredi cities—both established and new—was relatively low (12% to 22% and 15%). By contrast, 50% of haredi students in mixed cities (haredi and non-haredi populations), such as Haifa and Safed, sat for matriculation exams in the 2011/2012 school year.

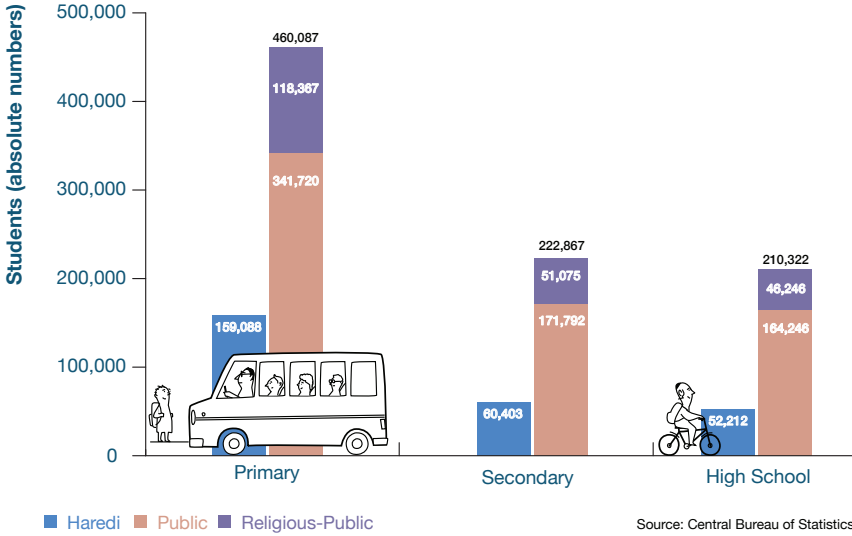
Students in the haredi secondary school system are divided between localities where all, or virtually all, pupils are haredi (for example, Bnei Brak and Modi'in Illit); cities where haredim constitute 50% or more of the students (for example, Jerusalem and Beit Shemesh); and cities where they constitute a sizeable majority (for example, Ashdod and Petach Tikva). Close to 80% of haredi students (of these, over two thirds of the male students) attend high school in their own community. Between 2004 and 2013, there was a slight decline in the share of haredi female secondary school students studying outside their community (from 16% to 13%), unlike their male counterparts.

In 2015, the number of yeshiva students totaled approximately 108,000, 65% of them married and the remainder single. This population grew by about 4% a year between 2003 and 2015, matching the growth rate of the

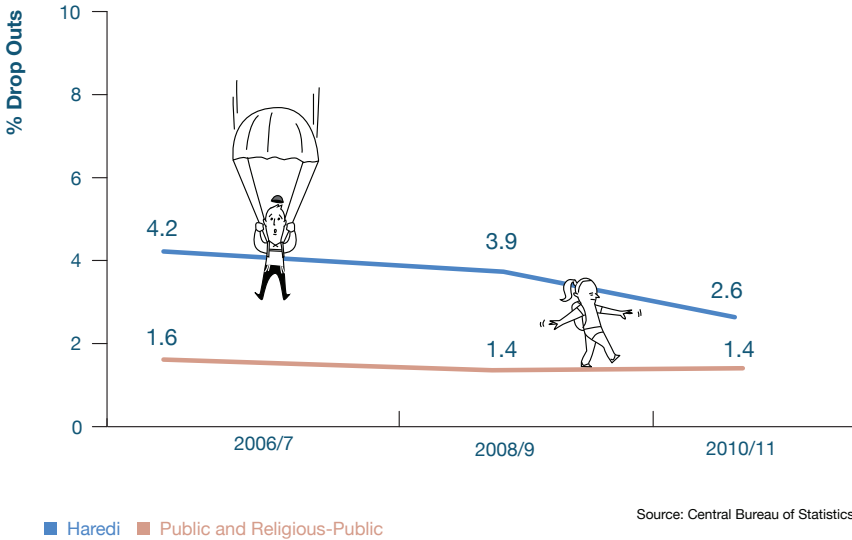
haredi community as a whole. From 2012 to 2014, the number of single and married yeshiva students declined by 8%, apparently due to the exemption required under the new conscription law as well as the reduction in state support for yeshivas and kollels (yeshivas for married men). In 2015, the number of yeshiva students surged by 14.5%, in response to the influx of state funding for yeshivas and kollels as a result of the return of the haredi parties to the government coalition.

In the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) social survey for 2013/2014, 19% of the haredi population reported that it was pursuing, or had pursued, an academic degree—a noticeable increase over 2007/2008, when the figure was 15%. In addition, the share of women engaged in academic study (23%) was much greater than that of men (15%).

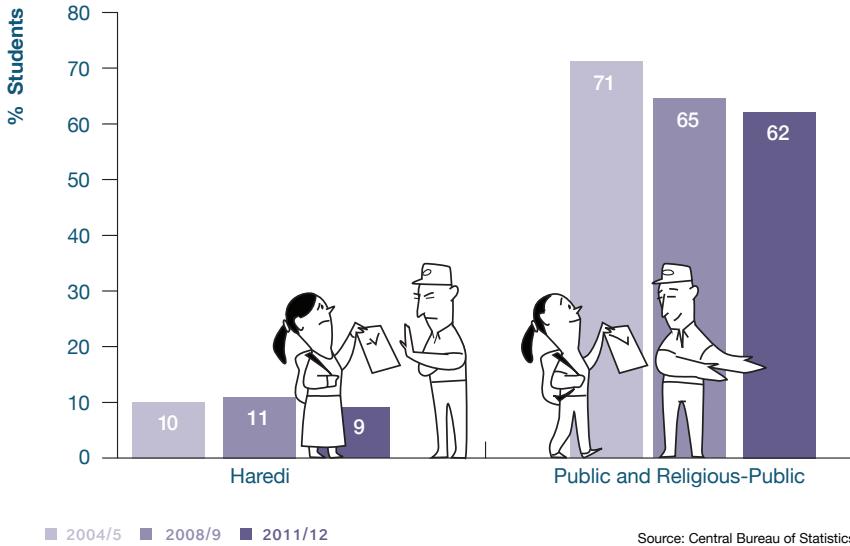
### Primary, Secondary and High School Students, Based on Type of School System and Educational Level, 2012/13



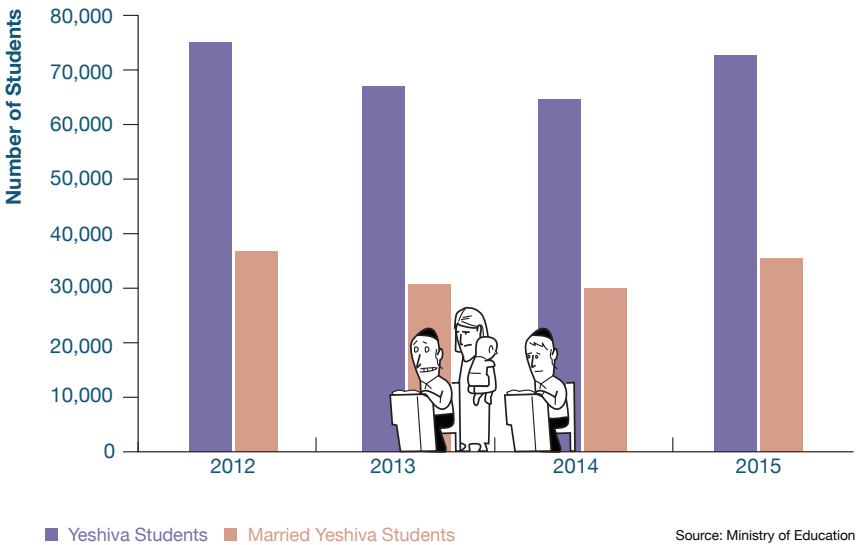
### Students who Dropped out of School between 7th and 12th Grades, Based on Type of School System, 2006/2007, 2008/2009, 2010/2011



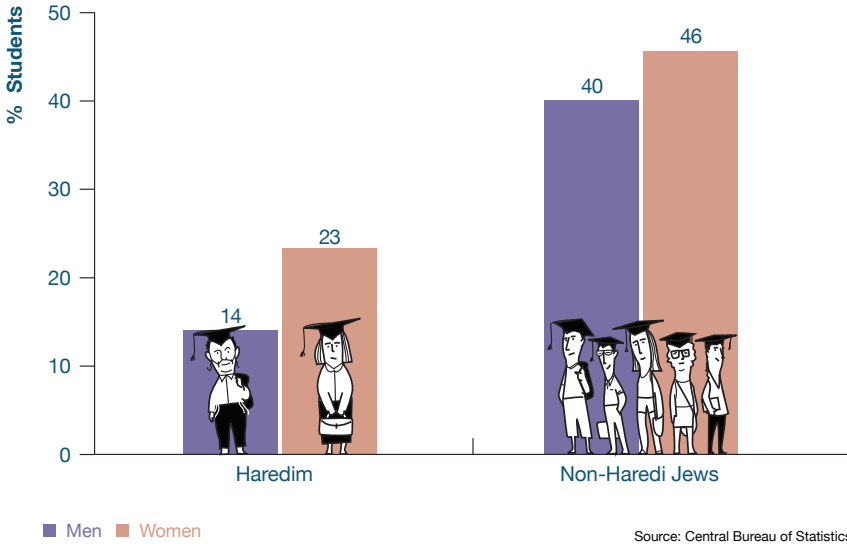
**Students in 12th Grade Taking the Matriculation Exams, who are Eligible to Graduate and Have Fulfilled University Requirements, Based on Type of School System, 2004/2005, 2008/2009, 2011/2012**



**Yeshiva Students and Married Yeshiva Students, Based on Institution, 2012-2015**



### Individuals Over Age 20 Studying Toward an Academic Degree, Based on Community, 2007/8-2013/14



# POVERTY AND STANDARD OF LIVING

## OVERVIEW AND TRENDS

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

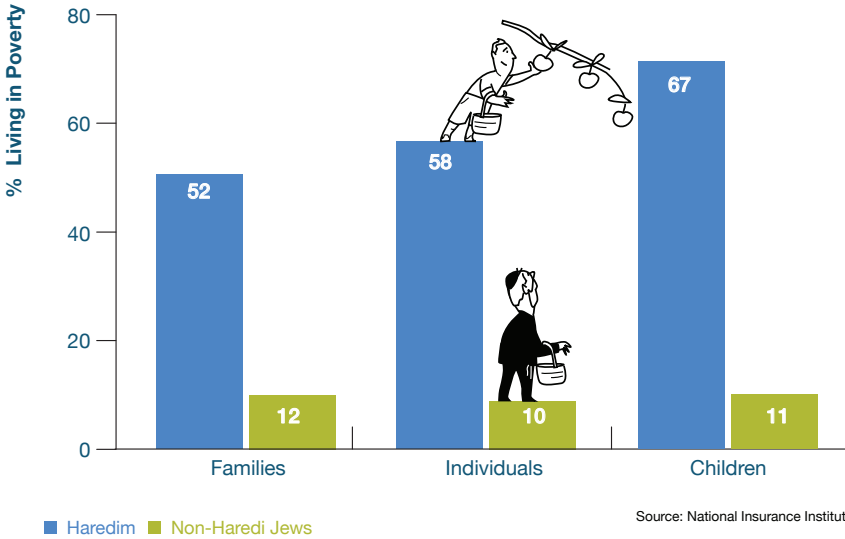
The extent of poverty, and its impact on standards of living, is noticeably greater in the haredi community than Israeli society in general. In fact, this population's poverty rate is very high. Despite this fact, the haredi community reports high levels of satisfaction with its social and economic status, more so than Israeli society as a whole.

The proportion of the haredi community living beneath the poverty line is much greater than that of the general population (52% as opposed to 19%), with poverty levels among haredim remaining constant since 2006. A majority of haredi families are living in poverty, and the share of haredi children defined as poor is extremely high (67%). A quarter of haredi families suffer from food insecurity and per capita income is 47% lower than that of the general public. At the same time, the percentage of haredim who report being very satisfied with their lives is double that of Israeli society as a whole, and a similar share of haredi Jews state that they are satisfied with their financial situation.

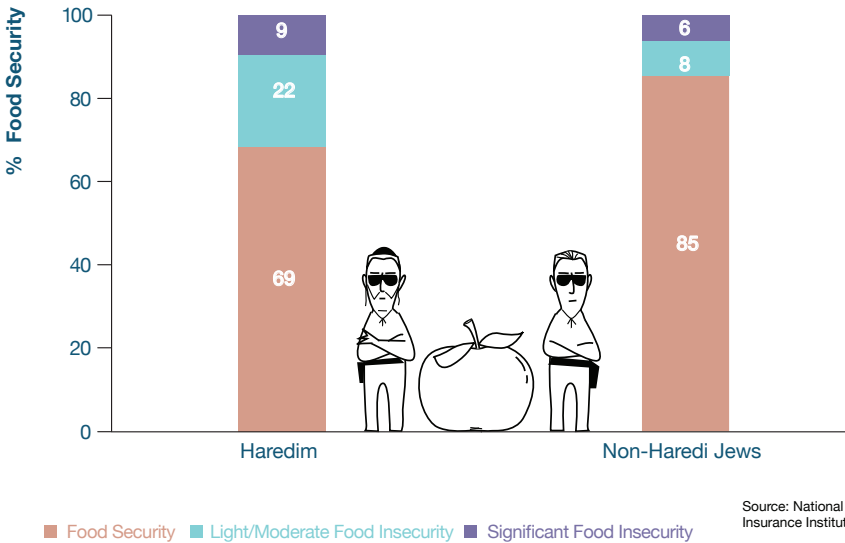
The proportion of apartment owners among haredi and non-haredi Jews is similar, at roughly 75%. However, the share of haredim who own more than one apartment is lower than that of the non-haredi Jewish population (7% and 10%). The cost of an average apartment in five selected haredi communities (Elad, Beit Shemesh, Modi'in Illit, Beitar Illit and Bnei Brak) is lower than in the rest of Israel. The steepest rise in housing prices has occurred in Beit Shemesh, followed by Bnei Brak and Elad, and finally, Beitar Illit and Modi'in Illit.

With regard to car ownership, the gap between haredi and non-haredi society remains high (37% versus 77%), but here too—as in other consumer indicators—we see an upward trend in the haredi sector from 2004 to 2014.

### Poverty Rates, Families, Individuals and Children, after Taxes and Benefits, Based on Population Group, 2013

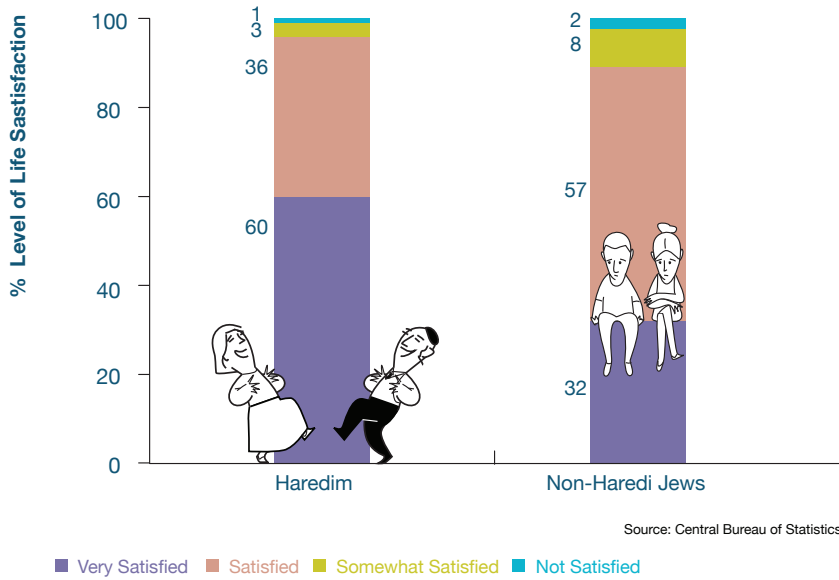


### Level of Food Security, Families, Individuals and Children, 2011-2012





## Life Satisfaction of Individuals Over Age 20, Based on Population Group, 2013-2014



# EMPLOYMENT

## OVERVIEW AND TRENDS

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Employment is one of the focal points of public discourse on the integration of the haredi community in Israeli society. As shown in this chapter, there are profound differences between the haredi, overall Israeli, and non-haredi Jewish populations when it comes to workforce participation, employment rates, and income levels of individuals and households.

In 2015, haredi participation rates in the workforce (people who are either employed or are actively looking for work) stood at 65% as compared with 87% in the rest of the Jewish population. The gap is even more pronounced among males: 54% as opposed to 91%, in the haredi and non-haredi Jewish populations. Among females, the gap in workforce participation is smaller with 78% employment among haredi women versus 84% among non-haredi Jewish women.

Employment rates are the most frequently cited statistic when discussing the issue of haredim in the workforce. In 2015, the employment rate for haredi males stood at 50%, as contrasted with 87% among non-haredi Jewish men. Among women, the corresponding figures were 73% and 81%. Unemployment in the working-age population dropped sharply between 2003 and 2015 in the non-haredi Jewish population. However, the employment rate in the haredi sector climbed steeply between 2003 and 2015 from 36% to 50% among males, and from 51% to 73% among females.

There are noticeable gaps between the haredi and general populations with regards to income level, as well: in 2013/2014, haredi workers (both men and women) earned just 71% of the average monthly salary in Israel.

Among men, this disparity stemmed primarily from low hourly wages, whereas among women the main reason was fewer work hours (83% and 78% of the corresponding figures for the general population). A comparison between National Insurance Institute figures for the general population and four haredi cities shows even greater differences, with haredi workers on average earning 65% of the mean income of the general workforce in 2013. A combination of low employment rates (both men and women) and low earnings led to a situation where the income level of an average household in the four haredi cities was 46% that of the average for households elsewhere in Israel.

The disparities in workload (full-time vs. part-time employment) between haredim and non-haredim are reflected in the fact that in 2013/2014, 38% of haredi employees, as opposed to 19% of non-haredi Jewish workers, worked less than 35 hours a week. Differences in work hours are more salient among haredi women, with 59% working less than 35 hours a week versus only 24% of non-haredi Jewish women. Roughly half (49%) of haredim work part time. They cite challenges finding full-time work and childcare responsibilities as reasons for this situation. Additionally, 28% of haredi employees state that they work part time due to the nature of the job or a lack of desire to work full time, similar to 25% rate among non-haredi Jews.

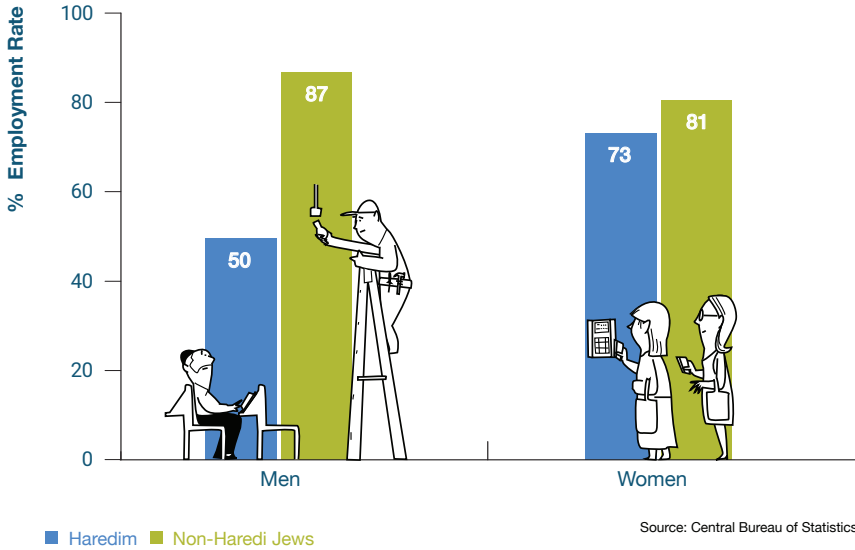
Haredim tend to work in fields greatly different from those of non-haredi Jews: 33% of haredi men work in education and 23% in manufacturing or business services, as opposed to 5% and 40% for non-haredi Jewish males. A total of 53% of haredi women who work are employed in education compared with 18% of non-haredi Jewish women. The share of haredi women in manufacturing or business services is 13% versus 23% among their non-haredi counterparts. Between 2001 and 2011, the proportion of haredi women working in education dropped from 64% to 53%.

The percentage of self-employed individuals in the haredi sector is slightly lower than that among non-haredi Jews (12% versus 15%). It should be noted that this gap exists only among males. Among women, roughly 10% in both the haredi and non-haredi Jewish populations are self-employed.

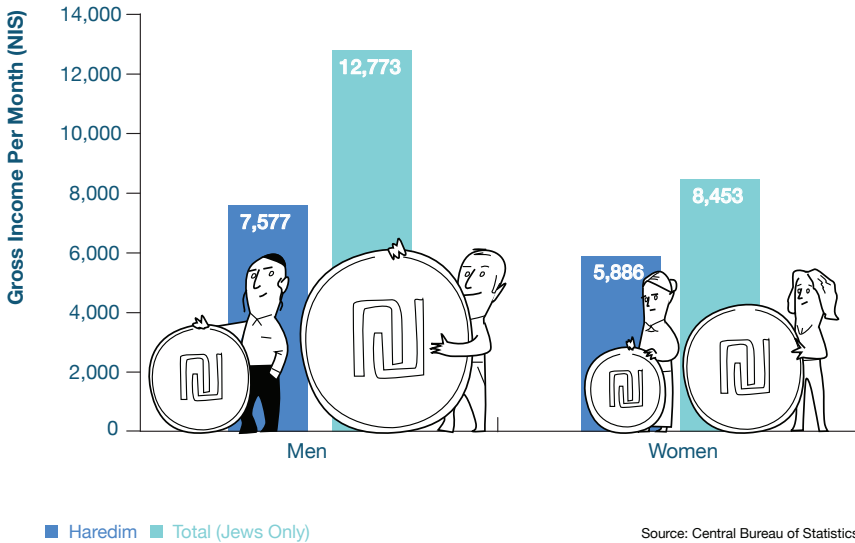
The proportion of haredi employees who have a pension plan is very close to that of the general population, representing a significant increase from the 62% of haredi workers with pensions in 2008 to a figure of 86% in 2014.

A comparison between the four haredi cities in a range of parameters demonstrated that Elad tops the others in employment rates and average income level, followed by (in descending order) Bnei Brak, Beitar Illit, and Modi'in Illit.

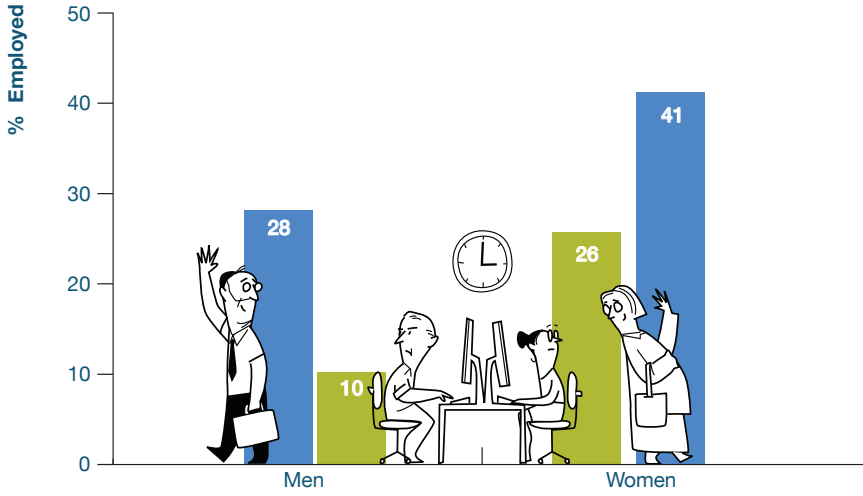
### Employment Rate of Individuals 25-64, Based on Population Group and Gender, 2015



### Average Income from Salaried Employment, Individuals 25-64, Based on Population Group and Gender, 2014



### Part-time Employment Rates, Individuals Over Age 20, Based on Population Group and Gender, 2013-2014



■ Haredim ■ Non-Haredi Jews

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics

# WAY OF LIFE AND VOTING PATTERNS

## OVERVIEW AND TRENDS

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The haredi way of life is in a state of constant flux and sheds light on the relationship between the haredi community and broader Israeli society. This chapter highlights the sizeable gaps between the community and the general/non-haredi Jewish population in Israel in terms of: participation in military and civilian national service, computer and Internet use, number of driver's licenses, and vacationers. Despite the differences, however, it is clear that integration of the haredi community in these aspects of Israeli society is a growing trend, with numbers rising steadily in all the above areas.

Voting patterns for the Yahadut Hatorah party (United Torah Judaism - UTJ) are a reliable indicator of the number and geographic distribution of haredim in Israel. Between 1992 and 2015, the proportion of voters for the UTJ list out of all voters for any party rose from 3.3% to 5%. This was coupled with a shift in distribution of UTJ voters, with a greater share now living in the new haredi cities as opposed to Jerusalem and Bnei Brak.

The proportion of haredim who enlist in the army or civilian national service is roughly 30% of each cohort of eligible draftees and is rising steadily. Still, the number of conscripts is lower than the target set in the amendment to Israel's Defense Service Law, which stipulates that the annual conscription of haredi males shall not be less than 3,300 draftees per year. There is also a considerable gap in the proportion of the 20+ age group (men and women) who have served in the IDF in the past, which is very low in the haredi community as compared with the general population (18% as opposed to 68%). Among haredi males, the percentage who has served in the IDF is 31% compared with 85% of non-haredi Jewish males.

The share of haredim (both men and women) who perform national service is very low (5%), though due to the existence of a special haredi track, the share of haredi men who engage in national service is higher than that of the rest of the Jewish population (6% versus 2%). The proportion of male and female haredim who perform national service has remained stable since 2005 (compared with the general population, where the rate rose from 8% to 14.5%), though an increase of 5% was recorded among haredi males between 2005 and 2014.

The rate of volunteer activity in the haredi community (39%) is higher than that in the general population (23%), though the gap has diminished over the years. In addition, the share of haredim who stated that they make financial contributions to the community is much greater in comparison with the general population (91% versus 69%).

A very large disparity was also found with regard to driver's licenses: 43% of haredim have one compared with 79% of the general population, and the gap is even greater among women. It should be noted that there has been a sizeable increase since 2003 in the proportion of haredim who hold a driver's license.

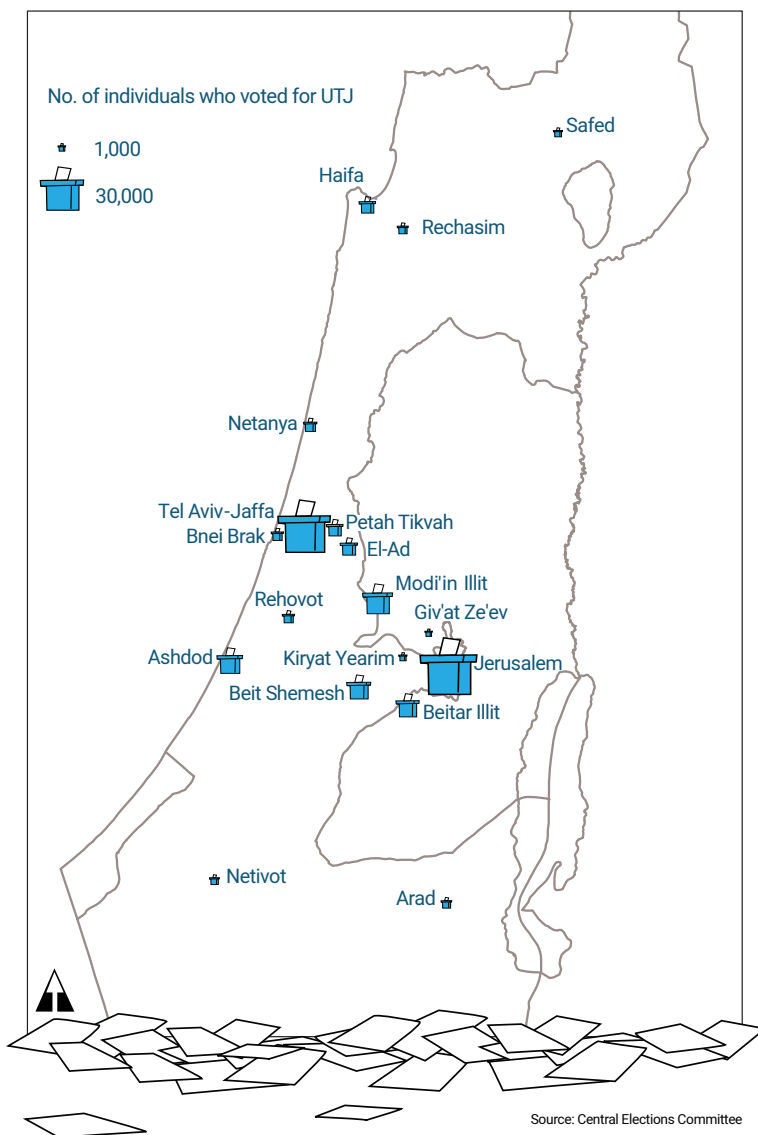
Substantial differences also exist between haredi and non-haredi Jews in terms of computer and Internet use: the share of haredim who use a computer stands at 54% as opposed to 79% of the non-haredi Jewish population, with an even greater gap with regard to Internet use (41% versus 80%). Nonetheless, there has been a rapid rise since 2008 in computer and Internet use in the haredi population.

The proportion of haredim who vacation is lower than that of the general population (46% versus 59%); with the difference even more pronounced if we narrow the focus to vacationers outside of Israel (12% versus 40%). Unlike other statistics on the haredi populations lifestyle, these figures have remained constant since 2003.

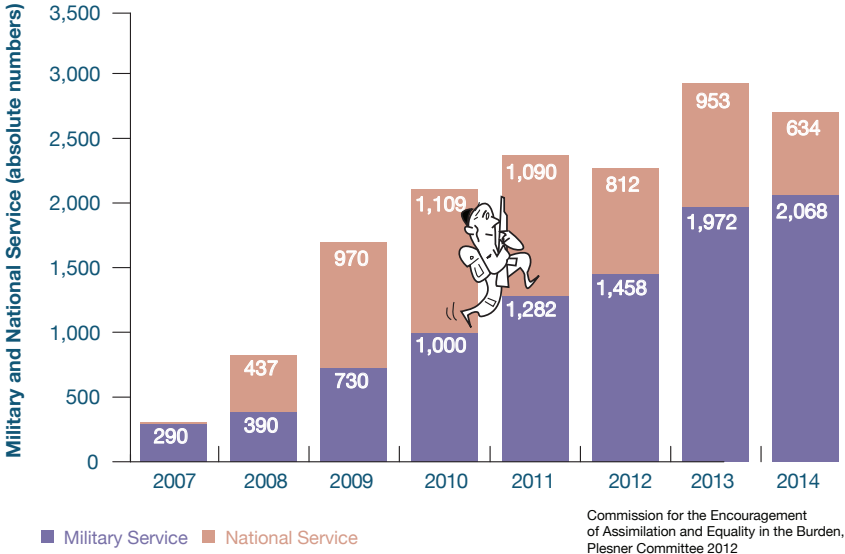


# Voting Patterns

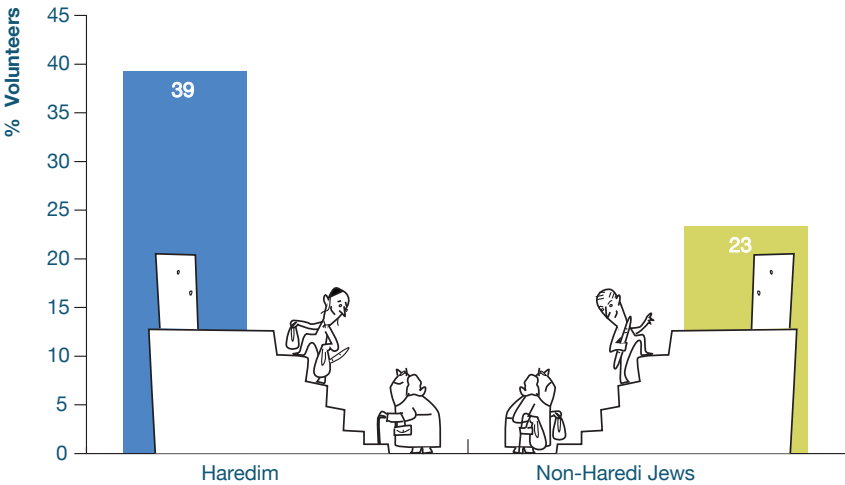
United Torah Judaism (UTJ) Voters, by Location, 20<sup>th</sup> Knesset (2015)



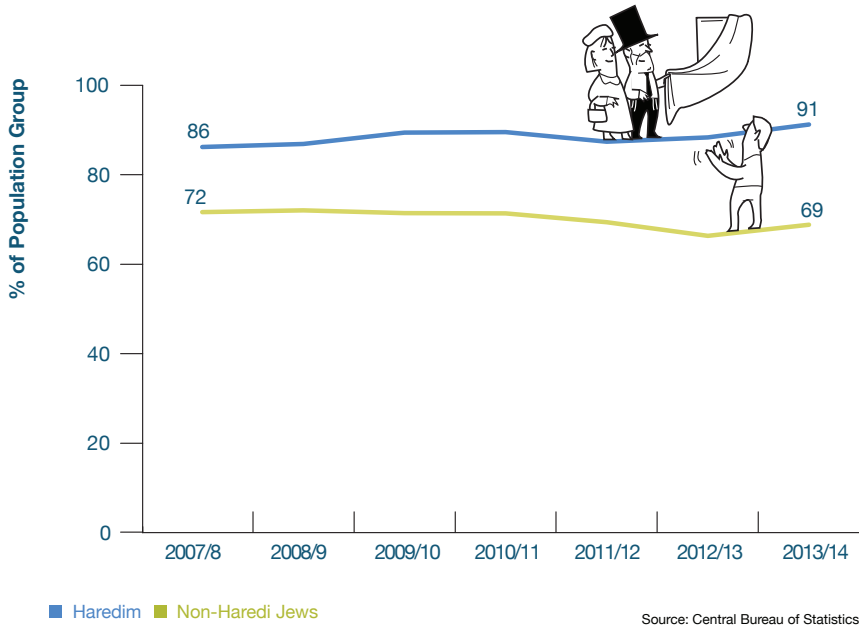
## Voluntary Military and National Service Participation Rates among Haredi Males, 2007-2014



## Volunteerism by Individuals Over Age 20, Based on Population Group, 2013-2014

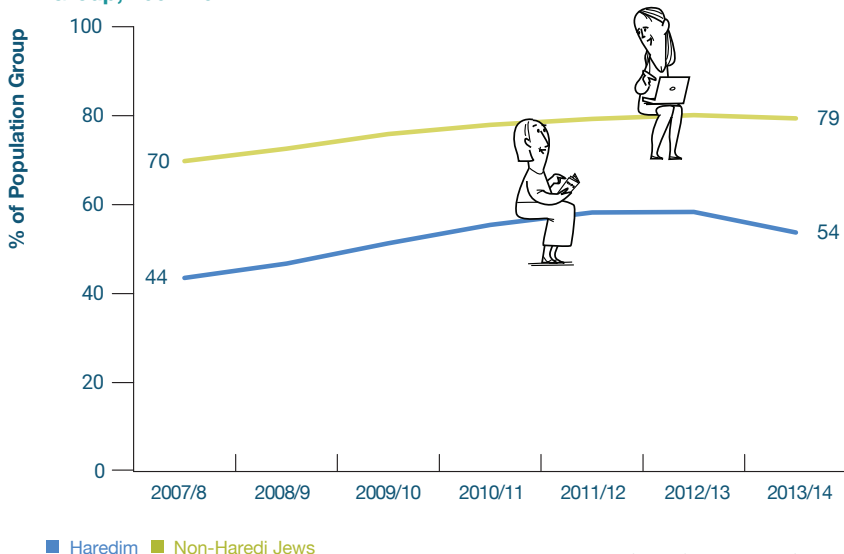


## Philanthropic Contributions by Individuals Over Age 20, Based on Population Group, 2013-2014



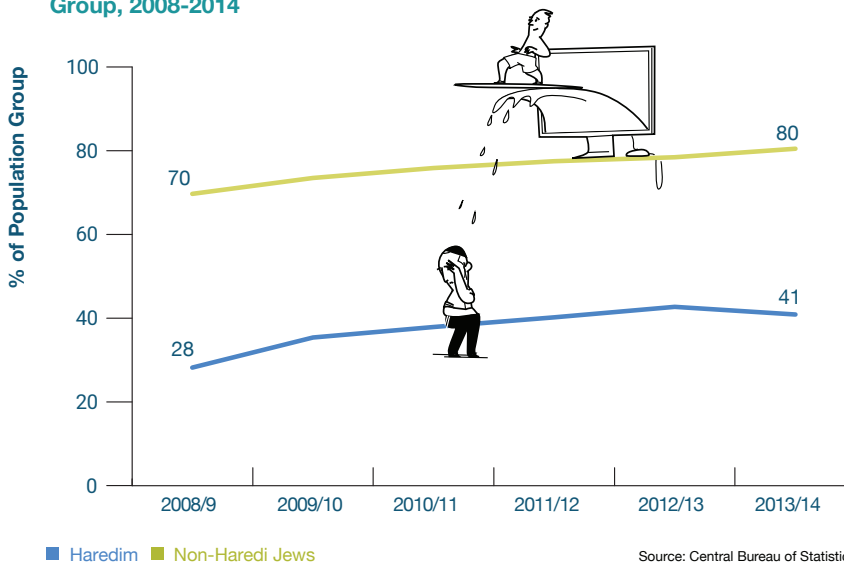
## Media Usage

Computer Usage by Individuals Over Age 20, Based on Population Group, 2007-2014



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics

Internet Usage by Individuals Over Age 20, Based on Population Group, 2008-2014



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics

The 2016 Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox Society gathers, for the first time in one place, a wide array of data on Israel's haredi community. The Report features statistics about the haredi demographic with regards to Knesset voting patterns, the educational system, employment norms, poverty rates, standards of living and lifestyle. It then analyzes the trends that are to be discerned from the data.

The report teaches us that the haredi community's behavior and lifestyle in Israel is varied, belying the monolithic impression of many people outside the haredi world.

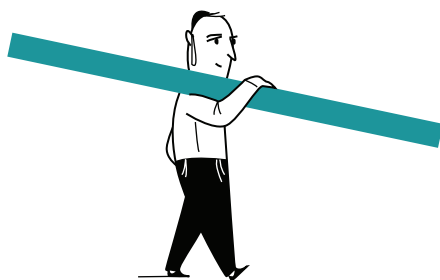
The information presented in this report portrays a multifaceted community, simultaneously different from and similar to the wider Israeli society; a conservative set that is nonetheless experiencing a series of significant changes at a rapid pace.

The 2016 Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox Society has been published as a result of the cooperation between researchers at the Israel Democracy Institute and the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies.

**Dr. Gilad Malach** heads IDI's Ultra-Orthodox in Israel program and is a lecturer at Bar-Ilan University and Ono Academic College. Malach's field of expertise is in developing public policy initiatives for the haredi population.

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**Dr. Lee Cahaner** is a researcher with IDI's Ultra-Orthodox in Israel program. In addition, she is a senior lecturer in geography and environmental studies at Oranim College. Cahaner's primary field of expertise is spatial trends among Israel's haredim.



To order the full book:

**The Yearbook of Ultra-Orthodox Society in Israel 2016**

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