

Annual Statistical

Report on Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) Society in Israel



Lee Cahaner
Gilad Malach

2025

Executive Summary



Introduction

Ten Years of IDI's Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox Society

IDI's Joan and Irwin Jacobs Center for Shared Society is pleased to present its tenth annual Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox Society, offering an in-depth, data-driven picture of long-term trends and recent developments in ultra-Orthodox society in Israel. The Report focuses on key domains in Haredi society including: population growth and fertility, education, higher education and training, employment, income and standard of living, military and civilian service, and patterns of technology and internet usage.

Looking back over the past decade reveals a complex and uneven picture. Ultra-Orthodox society has continued to grow rapidly—50% over the last decade, from 950,000 to 1,450,000—with no substantial change in fertility patterns or in the age at which women give birth to their first child. The education system has been growing rapidly, by 3.7% per year, yet structural change has been limited, and matriculation rates remain far below those of the non-Haredi Jewish population.

At the same time, the past decade has been characterized by a clear divergence between men and women. While ultra-Orthodox women have continued to integrate into education, training, and the labor market—reaching employment rates similar to those of non-Haredi Jewish women—ultra-Orthodox men have largely experienced a decade of stagnation. Employment rates among Haredi men have remained virtually unchanged, at 54% today and 52% a decade ago, following a rapid increase seen in the decade prior. Income levels have declined sharply, relative to non-Haredi men, and participation in higher education has slowed to a pace no faster than the community's demographic growth.

Over the past ten years, the rapid growth in the number of yeshiva (single men) and kollel students (married men) has outpaced overall population growth. Meanwhile, the share of Haredim enlisting in the IDF or volunteering for civilian

service stands at 3,060 Haredim in 2025, compared to 3,022 in 2015—relative to population growth, this represents a decline of about 25% in real terms. In any case, this is a significant overcount, as most of those categorized as Haredim enlisting in the IDF no longer identify as ultra-Orthodox.

This reality has intensified social and political tensions between ultra-Orthodox and non-Haredi Jews, especially since the outbreak of the war on October 7, 2023, as large segments of Israeli society continue to shoulder the primary burden of military and reserve duty. Debates over equality, shared responsibility, and the meaning of contribution to the state have become more acute, underscoring the centrality of Haredi integration to Israel's social cohesion and economic resilience.

Where we have seen notable improvement over the past decade is in the integration of technology, with 69% of Haredim using the internet compared to 42% in 2015 and 28% in 2008. As vocational training has increased, so has Haredi participation in the high-tech sector, to some extent. This reflects gradual but meaningful exposure to modern tools and labor market demands, giving cause for cautious optimism and suggesting that targeted policy interventions, aligned with cultural realities, can yield tangible results.

The 2025 Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox Society is intended to serve as a factual foundation for public discourse and policymaking as Israel paves the road ahead after two intensive years of war. The long-term trends documented here highlight both the costs of stagnation and the potential benefits of sustained investment in education, employment, and shared civic frameworks. As Israel grapples with growing demographic, economic, and social challenges, the integration of the ultra-Orthodox population remains one of the most consequential issues shaping the country's future.

The Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox Society is compiled by the Israel Democracy Institute's Program on Ultra-Orthodox in Israel, within the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Center for Shared Society. The program focuses on monitoring social and economic trends in ultra-Orthodox society and on developing evidence-based policy to promote integration while strengthening Israel's shared democratic and economic foundations.

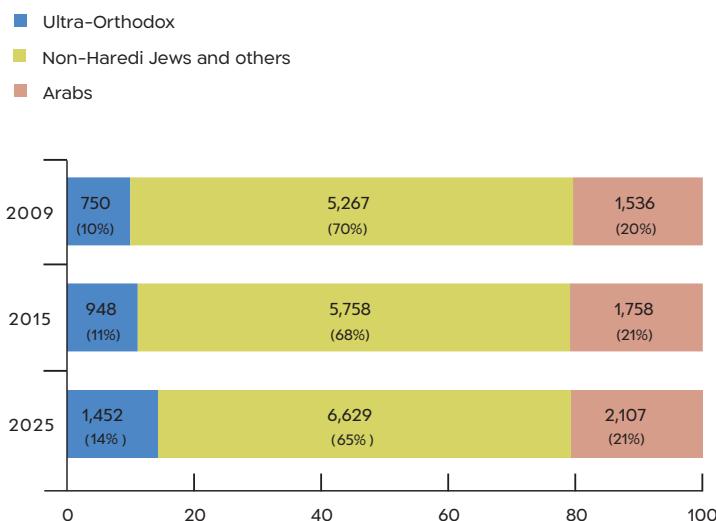
Note: The terms "ultra-Orthodox" and "Haredi" are used interchangeably throughout this report.

Chapter 1

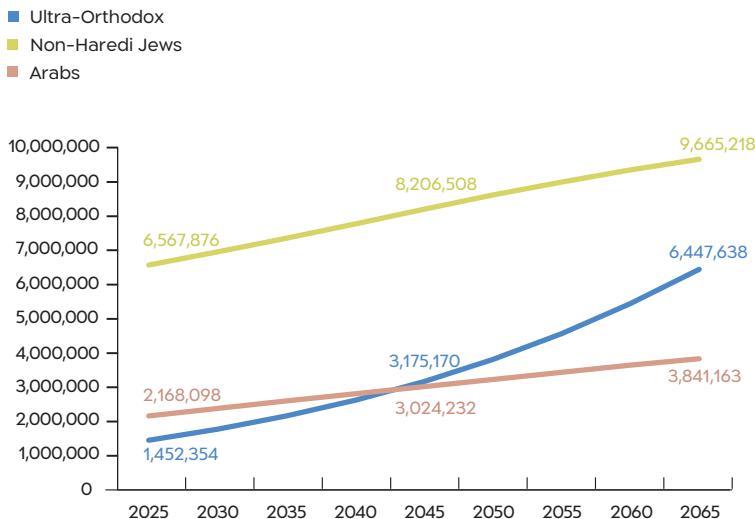
Population

The growth rate of the ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) population in Israel is the highest of any of the populations in developed countries, at around 4.2% 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 57% under the age of 20, compared with 31% of the country's general population. In 2025, the Haredi population numbered around 1,452,350, up from 750,000 in 2009, and constituting 14.3% 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 2021–2023. Despite this decrease, this rate is still much higher than the average fertility rate among other Jewish women in Israel, which stands at 2.2. The average age at first marriage among ultra-Orthodox men was around 23 in 2023, and around 22 among ultra-Orthodox women, and the average age at birth of the first child was 24.5 for men and 23.5 for women.

The geographical distribution of the Haredi population reveals two “capital cities”—Jerusalem and Bnei Brak, which were home to 38% of Israel’s ultra-Orthodox citizens in 2023 (22.6% in Jerusalem and 15.6% in Bnei Brak). An additional 25% 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 11% of the ultra-Orthodox population reside. Together, these three categories of localities with a high percentage of the Haredi population—encompassing 12 cities in total—account for 74% of the ultra-Orthodox population of Israel.

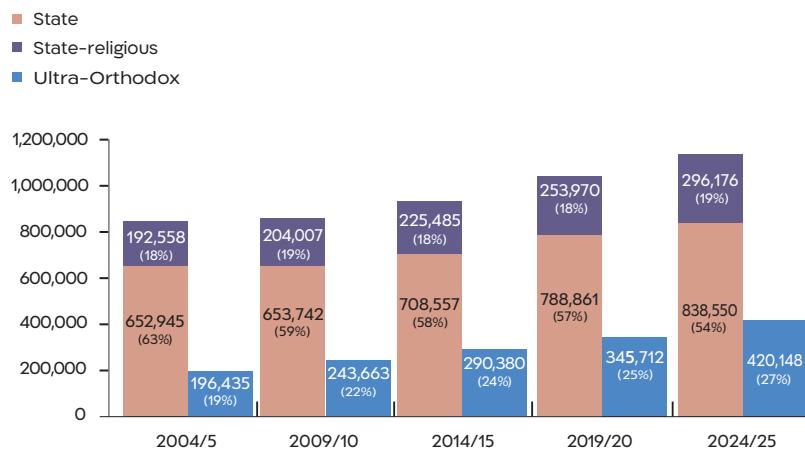
Chapter 2

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 420,000 in the 2024-25 school year, including in both elementary and secondary education. Ultra-Orthodox education now constitutes 27% of the Hebrew-language (Jewish) education system in Israel, and 21% of the entire Israeli education system.

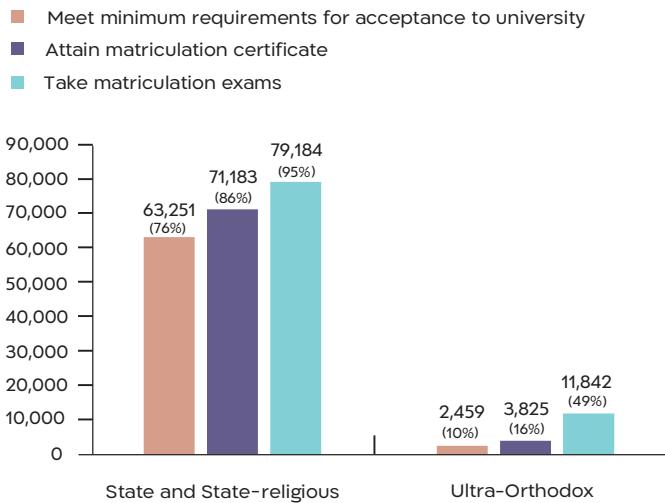
The last decade has seen several systemic and structural changes in ultra-Orthodox education, including the establishment of the Haredi Department in the Ministry of Education and of the State-Haredi education stream. Only 7% of Haredi schools are State schools; 71% are not defined as State schools but are "recognized" by the State under the compulsory education law, and 21% are schools which are "exempt" from the compulsory education law.

Students in Hebrew-language education, by religious stream



In the 2022-2023 school year, 77% of ultra-Orthodox girls took at least one matriculation (*Bagrut*) exam, representing an increase of 10 percentage points since the 2019-2020 school year, and compared with just 31% a decade earlier, in 2008-2009. However, during the same period, the percentage of boys taking matriculation exams remained stable, at only 16%, as compared with 86% in the State and State-religious education streams.

Students taking matriculation exams, attaining a matriculation certificate, and meeting minimum university requirements, by religious stream

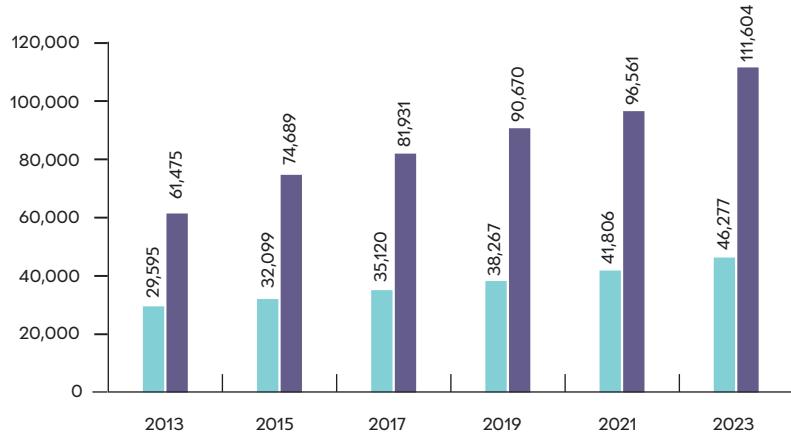


There are four tracks in the post-secondary education system for Haredi men: studies in a yeshiva; studies in a *kollel* (full time advanced Torah study frameworks for married men); academic studies; and vocational training. For ultra-Orthodox women, the options are studying in a seminar (ultra-Orthodox post-secondary educational institutions, which also offer vocational training) or pursuing academic studies. Between 2013-2023, there was an 83% increase in the number of yeshiva and *kollel* students in Israel, reaching 169,366 in 2023. 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 entering into the workforce.

Yeshiva and *kollel* students

■ Yeshiva students

■ Kollel students



The number of Haredi students in higher education frameworks has grown rapidly and dramatically. Between 2010 and 2025, their number grew by 306%, compared with a 18% 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 5.5% by 2024–2025. During this 15-year period, the number of ultra-Orthodox students rose by an average of 10% annually.

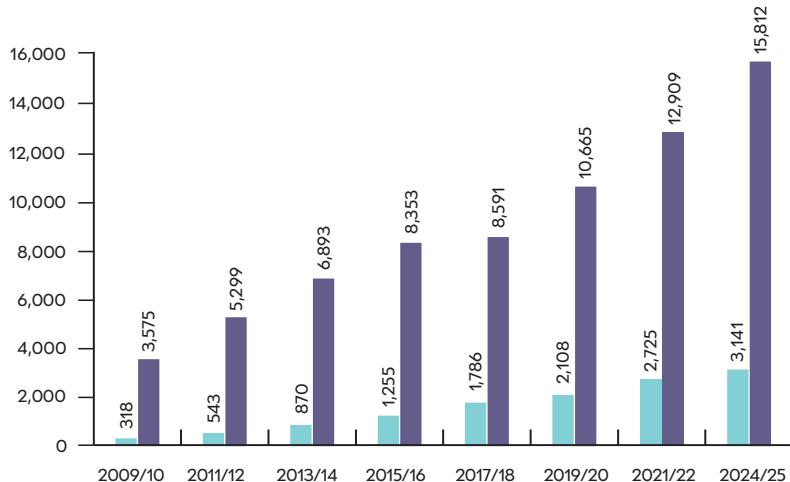
The total number of Haredi students in higher education stood at around 18,953 in 2024–2025. The subjects they choose to study are mostly practical and those that allow them to work within the ultra-Orthodox community or to enter professions that are in demand in the labor market (such as teaching and education, paramedical professions, business administration, and law). Haredi students choose mainly to attend colleges due to their lower entry requirements, and only 11% study at universities (not including the Open University)—compared with 35% 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 9,600 in 2024.

Ultra-Orthodox students in higher education

■ Postgraduate degree

■ Bachelor's degree

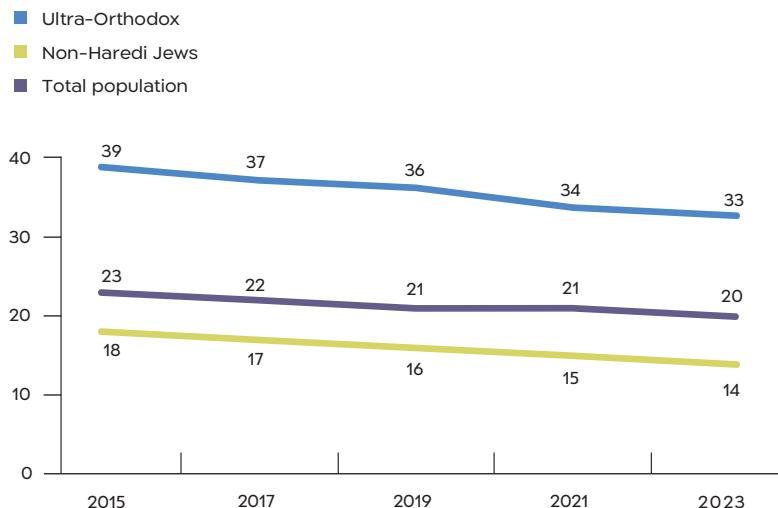


Chapter 3

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 33% in 2023—significantly higher than among the rest of the Jewish population (14%).

Poverty rate among families, by population group (%)



Standard of living is closely linked to household income and expenditures. In 2022, the average gross monthly income for Haredi households was NIS 14,816—far lower than the average for other Jewish households in Israel (NIS 24,466). The factors behind this low level of income include the fact that many households rely on the earnings of a single breadwinner (almost always the

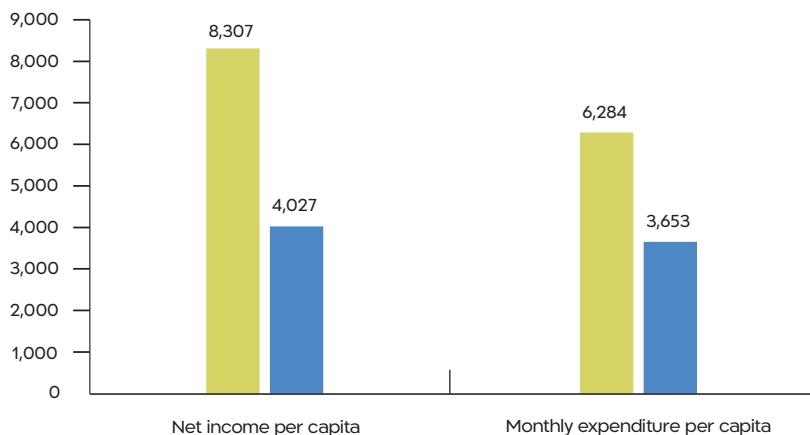
woman), working relatively few weekly hours in a low-paying job, and with fewer funds in investments or in pension plans.

An assessment of monthly household expenditure reveals that the ultra-Orthodox spent an average of NIS 3,653 per capita, compared to NIS 6,284 per capita among other Jews. 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.

The expenditure of ultra-Orthodox households on income taxes, social security and health insurance is on average only 33% of the expenditure of non-Haredi households.

Monthly income and expenditure per capita (NIS)

■ Ultra-Orthodox
■ Non-Haredi Jews

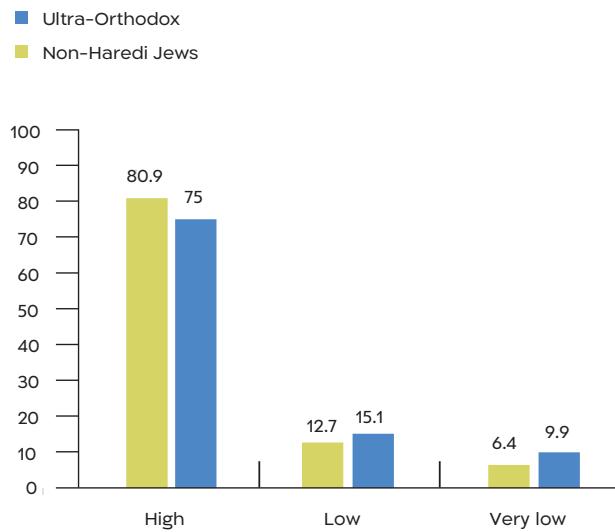


According to the definition of the National Insurance Institute, the level of food security includes the availability of food and of resources for purchasing food, as well as the quality of the food from a sanitary and nutritional standpoint.

According to a survey conducted by the National Insurance Institute in 2024, the share of households in the ultra-Orthodox population living in food insecurity (low or very low food security) stands at 25%. This rate is slightly lower than that of the general population (27%), higher than the rate among the non-Haredi Jewish population (19%), but substantially lower than the rate among the Arab population (58%). Research indicates a far higher rate of Haredim live in poverty than the share who experience food insecurity.

In 2024, there was a decline of nearly four percentage points in the share of ultra-Orthodox households experiencing food insecurity compared to 2023 (29%). A decline of a similar magnitude was recorded among households in Israel overall, and the National Insurance Institute's explanation for these findings is state support for evacuees from the south and the north during the period of the war.

Rate of food security among families, 2024 (%)

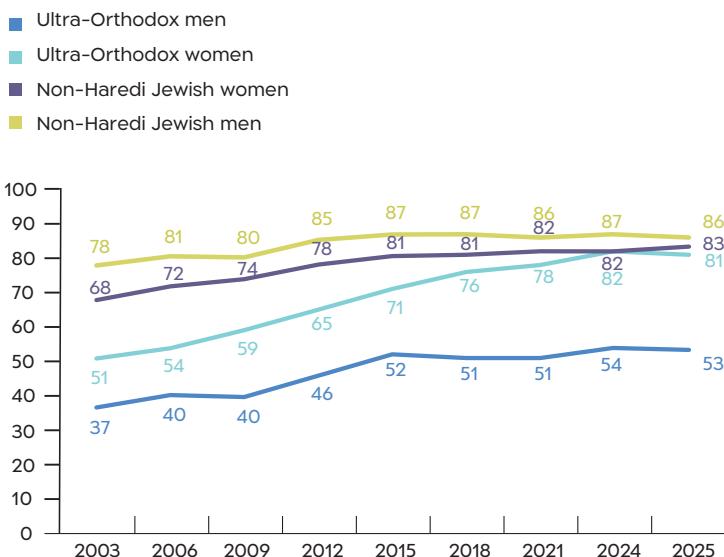


Chapter 4

Employment

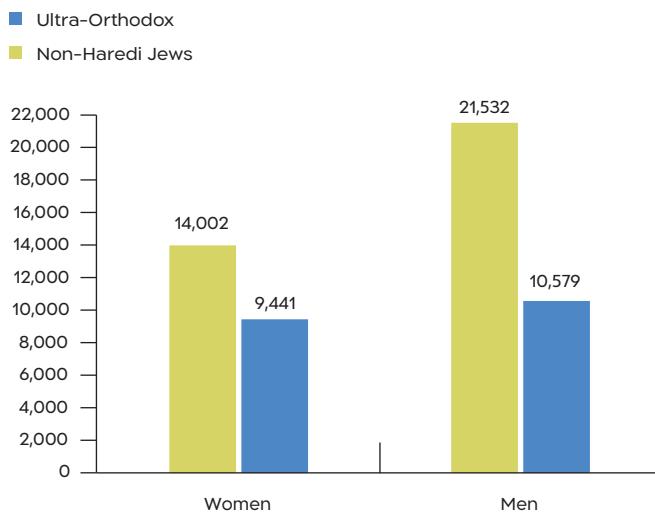
One of the main topics of public debate regarding the place of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israeli society is employment. In 2002, around one-third of ultra-Orthodox men were employed, and just over half of ultra-Orthodox women. Between 2003 and 2015 there was a major surge in ultra-Orthodox employment 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 (54%) and more than three-quarters of ultra-Orthodox women (81%) are now employed. However, the rise in employment rates among men has come to a halt in recent years (2016–2025).

Employment rates, ages 25–66, by population group (%)



The average income of ultra-Orthodox employees is just 56% of that of other Jewish workers. Among other factors, this difference can be attributed to the fewer weekly hours worked by ultra-Orthodox workers and lower compensation, which is a result of limited vocational training and concentration of these workers in lower-paying occupations.

Average gross monthly income from employment, ages 25–66, by population group (NIS)



In the last 10 years which we examined (2014–2024), 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. For example, 19% of non-Haredi Jewish men work in high tech, compared to only 5% of Haredi men.

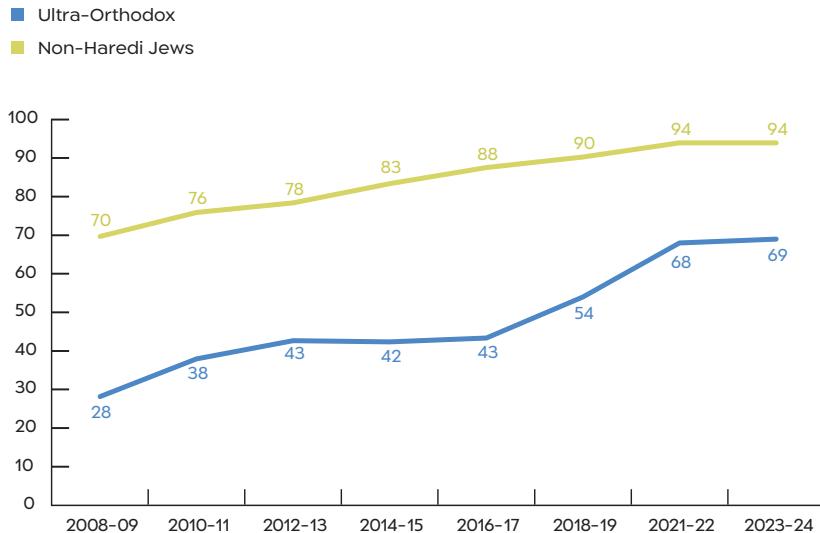
Chapter 5

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. The war that followed the October 7 attack has impacted both the relations within the ultra-Orthodox community and between Haredim and the rest of Israeli society. This has intensified tensions between ultra-Orthodox and non-Haredi society, as a large portion of non-Haredi Israelis continue to shoulder the primary burden of military and reserve duty. For example, recent years have seen a decline in military and civilian service among the ultra-Orthodox—in 2024, only 2,560 ultra-Orthodox men entered military service, and just 500 entered national civilian service. At the same time, however, within ultra-Orthodox society, community engagement appears to be far more prevalent than in the rest of Israeli society, particularly in terms of volunteer activities and financial contributions within the community.

Beyond military matters, we see promising trends in the use of technology. The gaps in internet usage between the ultra-Orthodox and the rest of the Israeli public have narrowed, with 69% of the ultra-Orthodox and 94% of other Jews reporting that they are regular internet users.

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



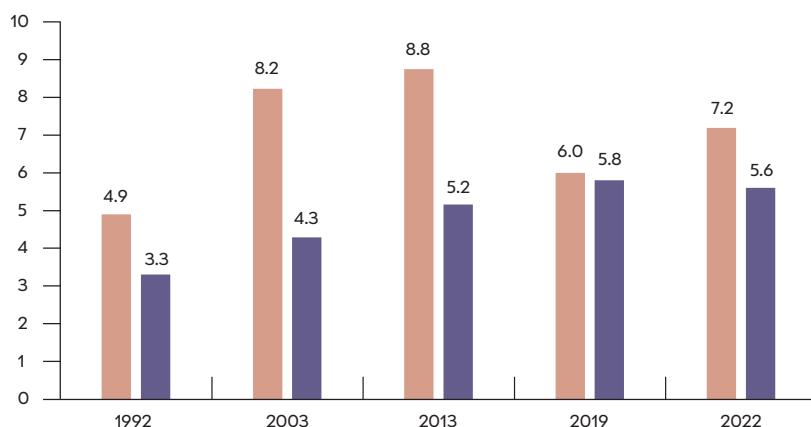
Over the past decade, the growing numbers of ultra-Orthodox Israelis in higher education and the growing numbers of women who are employed, are generating greater disposable income, awareness of consumer and leisure culture, and a modern discourse among the growing middle class in ultra-Orthodox society. The communal and social characteristics of the ultra-Orthodox 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 (89% of the ultra-Orthodox ages 20 and over versus 61% of other Jews). Note that these data do not account for the rise in volunteerism seen following the October 7, 2023 attack.

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 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 population of the ultra-Orthodox satellite cities and the declining of Jerusalem and Bnei Brak.

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

■ United Torah Judaism
■ Shas



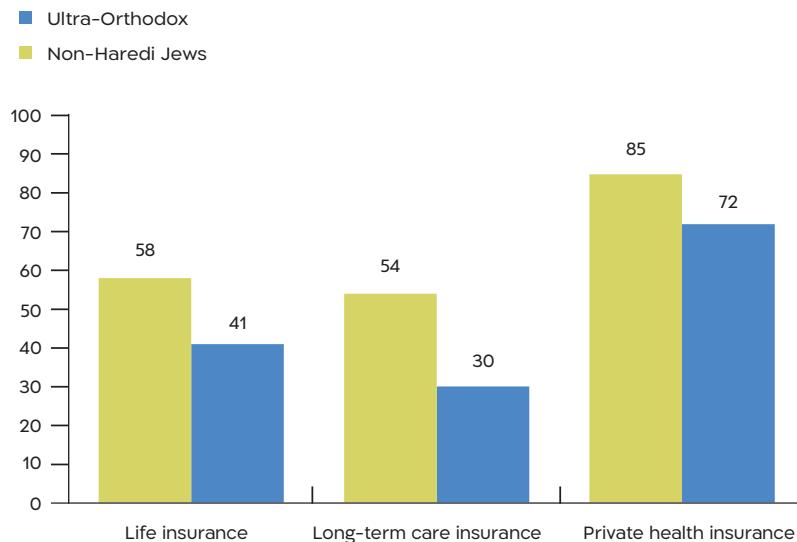
Chapter 6

Financial Literacy

Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) Social Survey indicate there are substantial gaps in financial behavior and economic preparedness between ultra-Orthodox Jews and non-Haredi Jews.

Overall, Haredim are less financially resilient. Members of the ultra-Orthodox community save less than non-Haredi Jews, and even when they do save, many tend toward savings frameworks that lack real yields. Rates of voluntary insurance coverage—such as private health, long-term care, and life insurance are significantly lower among Haredim, as is confidence in their ability to cope with income loss.

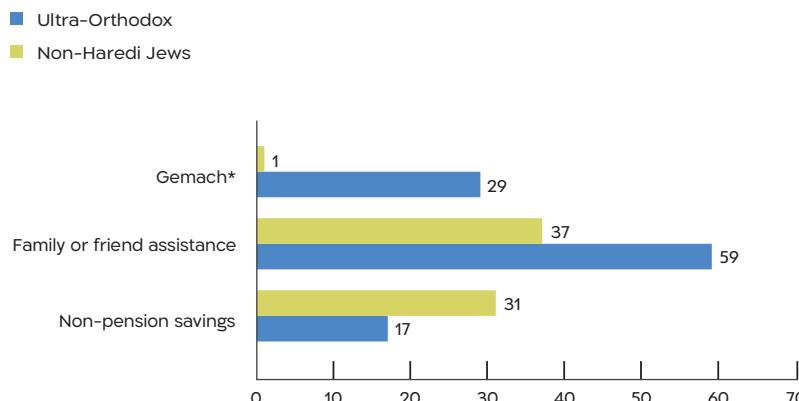
Holders of voluntary insurance by population group, 2024



Preparation for retirement is also weaker, and retired Haredim rely on a narrower range of income sources.

Haredim carry higher financial liabilities: 41% report having a mortgage and 36% additional loans, compared to 29% and 28%, respectively, among non-Haredi Jews. In times of economic distress, they rely more heavily on family and community support networks. Only 41% believe they could manage an unexpected expense without family assistance, compared to 63% of non-Haredi Jews.

Ways of coping with inability to meet expenses, by population group, 2024



*Gemach is a community based, interest free loan fund.

Differences are also evident in routine financial management. Haredim make greater use of debit-based payment methods and are less likely to use standard credit cards. Participation in capital market savings is particularly low (11% versus 28% among non-Haredi Jews), and digital financial literacy, such as using comparison tools or online pension information platforms, is more limited. Despite these objective gaps, subjective perceptions are similar: roughly one-quarter of both Haredi and non-Haredi Jews report satisfaction with their economic situation, reflecting a divergence between measured financial security and self-assessment.

Dr. Lee Cahaner is a social geographer. She is a research fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute's Ultra-Orthodox in Israel Program, and a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Oranim Collage. Her work examines, among other topics, the Haredim in the public space in Israel and the "modern Haredi" subgroups.

Dr. Gilad Malach established the Israel Democracy Institute's Ultra-Orthodox in Israel Program and is a Research Fellow at IDI. He is an expert in public policy planning for the ultra-Orthodox population, in fields including employment, military service, schooling, and higher education.

Moshe Bachar is the data coordinator for this year's statistical report. He is a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and a researcher of gender and culture in ultra-Orthodox society.

This report was made possible by the generous support of the Azrieli Foundation, the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, the Diane and Guilford Glazer Foundation and foundations that requested to remain anonymous.



For reports from past years:

orders@idi.org.il | 02-5300800



En.idi.org.il

Design: Studio Alfabees