# Haredi Demography – The United States and the United Kingdom

The question of the Haredi population, which claims a central place on the Israeli public agenda, is also growing in importance in many of the world's Jewish communities. This is a group that is growing and young and that has unquestionable Jewish identity at a time when many communities are struggling with low birthrates, aging populations, and a decline in the practice of Jewish customs and in Jewish identity in general. At the same time, the Haredim are, in many respects, very different from the image that characterizes the world's major Jewish communities today. Although it is often supposed that Diaspora Ultra-Orthodox communities differ significantly - sociologically and demographically - from the Haredim in Israel, data from recent surveys point to significant similarities.

Some predict an increasing polarization of Jews between a group with a large proportion of Haredim that is observant, closed, and exhibits

strong solidarity, and a less religious (or not religious at all) group that is involved in wider society but is losing its ties to the Jewish world. This is taking place as the middle population, which balances between these characteristics, is eroding and shrinking.

The growing space the Haredim are claiming signals possible changes in the overall Jewish profile. It is important to ask whether along with the advantages of integration and growth we can expect communities to have less education, wealth and influence and to have different outlooks from those currently accepted. Recent surveys from the United States and the United Kingdom have paid greater attention to the Haredi population than in the past. Comparing their findings with earlier data will allow for an assessment of the Haredim today, its expected growth, and the differences between this group and other constituent groups of the Jewish community.

# Forms of Orthodox Identity Represented in the Surveys

All Haredim are Orthodox, but not all the Orthodox are Haredim

In these recent surveys, distinctions between Haredim and other streams of Judaism are neither entirely clear nor consistent. Some who fit the accepted definition of "Haredi" do not necessarily define themselves as such, and vice versa. Similarly, the term "Haredi" does not have a single, monolithic meaning among the world's different

In New York, which has the largest concentration of Jews in the United States, the proportion of Orthodox is 32% Jewish communities. In practice, the definition derives from a wide range of customs and identities that vary between individuals or groups. It is necessary to examine the recent data carefully, and to recognize definitional differences and assess them accordingly.

In general, Haredim are included in the Orthodox stream of Judaism, though not all the Orthodox are Haredi. Since those conducting the surveys relied on respondents' self-definitions, the data are likely to include those who see themselves as connected to the Orthodox establishment but who do not necessarily observe its practices – for example, those who are simply members of an Orthodox synagogue.

Researchers in the United States divide the Orthodox stream into Modern Orthodox and

Ultra-Orthodox. While the Modern Orthodox are likely to share certain characteristics with the Haredim, they are relatively engaged and involved in general society. The Ultra-Orthodox are closer to the accepted definition of Haredim in Israel, which includes punctilious religious observance in combination with a deliberate distancing from modern society. The terms "Ultra-Orthodox" and "Haredim" are used synonymously in this paper, and includes those who call themselves "Hassidic" or "Yeshivish."

In Britain, this definition is even more complicated, since the country has an Orthodox rabbinical establishment to which many of the Jewish community belong, even those who are not particularly observant. As elaborated below, various data from Britain present the Orthodox and strictly Orthodox (referred to as Haredim in this paper) separately from those who belong to one of the Haredi synagogues. Although each of these groups presents different numbers, it is possible to estimate actual numbers by weighting them.

## **Population**

The Haredi proportion of the overall Jewish population is higher in the United States and the United Kingdom than in Israel.

The United States: According to the 2013 PEW Survey,<sup>1</sup> Orthodox adults comprise about 10% of Jewish population. Within this group, almost a third (3% of the overall Jewish population) are Modern Orthodox, and 6% define themselves as Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi).<sup>2</sup> This population is not

distributed evenly across the United States but is concentrated in several locations.<sup>3</sup> In New York, which has the largest concentration of Jews in the United States, the proportion of Orthodox is 32% (19% of households).4 A previous nationwide survey, from 2001, found similar numbers - about 10% of Orthodox among Jewish adults, though it did not include precise data about the ratio of Haredim and Modern Orthodox.5

Even though these figures indicate stability in the proportion of Haredim among U.S. Jews, the birthrate and identity-retention data that will be presented later suggest that the continuity of this stability cannot be taken for granted.

Table 1. Orthodox Jewish Adults in the United States, Percentage and Absolute Numbers (2013)6

	Percentage of the Adult Jewish Population	Number
Total Orthodox	10%	530,000
Haredim	6%	318,000
Modern Orthodox	3%	159,000
Others	1%	53,000

The United Kingdom: In this country of 290,000 Jews,7 a survey of those aged 16 and above found that 12% of Jews identify as Orthodox and another 4% as Haredim.8 Similarly, since not everyone who lives a Haredi way of life defines himself by that term, affiliation with an organization of Haredi synagogues (the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations) was also checked, and they make up 13% of the respondents.

Data on the UK's Haredi population from the early 2000s, provide only partial information from which it is possible to make only a general assessment about the actual growth rate. A partial survey of the Jewish population from 2001, which focused on the London area, shows that 7% of the respondents defined themselves as Orthodox and only 1% as Haredim, while 3% stated that they are members of a Haredi or Independent Orthodox synagogue (as distinct from main stream Orthodox, the United Synagogue).9 A 2001 study that focused on synagogue membership found that households that included members of Haredi synagogues (strictly Orthodox) represented 8% of all synagogue members, compared to 11% in 2010.10 It is not possible to infer the precise growth rate from these data, but it is possible to assume that during the decade from 2001 to 2010, there was significant growth in the UK's Haredi population, a statistic that is supported by the birthrate data included below.

Table 2: Proportion of Orthodox and Haredim Over Age 16 in the UK (2013)<sup>11</sup>

	% of Jewish Population
Orthodox	12%
Haredi	4%
Belong to Orthodox synagogue	13%

Comparison to Israel: These data show that the proportion of the Haredi communities in the United States and the United Kingdom is slightly higher than the proportion of Haredim in Israel's Jewish population, which (as of 2011) comprises 9% Haredim above age 20.<sup>12</sup> This ratio is also correct for figures from the beginning of the last decade, when the Haredim represented 6% of the Jewish population above age 20. At the same time, compared to the United States where the proportion of Haredim had thus far been stable, a significant growth in the population is evident in Israel. For the UK, the figures are, as we have said, less unequivocal, but they, too, show a relatively

smaller growth than in Israel, of 37% (from 8% to 11%) who are members of Haredi synagogues (see above) compared to a 50% growth in Israel (from 6% to 9%).

#### Birthrate and Children

As in Israel, higher birthrates mean that the Haredi population is young.

The United States: The figures show that in Orthodox families there are 4.1 children on average (for those aged 40-59), compared to 1.9 among the overall Jewish population, and between 1.8 and 1.4 among other streams.<sup>13</sup> The study does not include figures regarding internal divisions within the Orthodox streams, but shows that the Modern Orthodox population is older in general, which is likely to indicate a lower birthrate. The Haredim are over-represented in the younger age-groups and under-represented in the older – even though they comprise 6% of the total Jewish population, they represent 9% and 10% in the 18-29 and 30-49 age groups respectively, and 3% and 2% among those aged 50-64 and over 65 respectively. The Modern Orthodox, on the other hand, comprise 3% of the total Jewish population but only 1% of the younger age group, 18-29, and 4% of the over 65s.

Table 3: Proportion of Orthodox Streams in the United States by Age Group (2013)<sup>14</sup>

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Haredim	9%	10%	3%	2%
Modern Orthodox	1%	3%	3%	4%

Similarly, the data from the New York study show that birthrate patterns of the Modern Orthodox are not similar to those of the Haredim, but are closer to those of lews from other streams. 15 While the Haredi streams have an average of 5-5.8 children per woman aged 35-44, among the Modern Orthodox this figure stands at 2.5, and 1.3 among the non-Orthodox. The national study does not give data on the proportion of Orthodox children among Jewish children today, but a survey from 2001 showed that 23% of Jewish children were Haredi. 16 The recent data from New York, where there is a relatively high concentration of Haredim, show that 49% of Jewish children in the city are from a Haredi background, and an additional 12% are from a Modern Orthodox background.

Table 4: Birthrates among Jewish Streams in New York (2011)<sup>17</sup>

	Average Number of Children (per woman aged 35-44)
Hasidim	5.8
"Yeshivish"	5.0
Modern Orthodox	2.5
Non-Orthodox	1.3

The United Kingdom: There are no precise data on the Haredi, but there are findings that indicate a young age distribution relative to the Jewish population, which suggests a higher birthrate among Haredim - 50% of Haredim are under age 20, compared to 21% of non-Haredim. A similar pattern can be found in the older population, those aged 65 or older, which comprise 23% of the non-Orthodox population and only 8% of the Haredim.<sup>18</sup> These figures were gleaned by comparing the Jewish population in those local authorities where there is a large Haredi

majority, where most of the country's Haredim concentrated, are opposed to the other Jews sampled in the census. This comparison also shows that while the average age in non-Haredi Jewish areas is 44 (which is relatively high compared to an average of 39 in the general population), in Haredi areas, the figure

In the U.S. today, there is relatively little movement from other streams to Orthodoxy

is 27. Accordingly, the researchers estimate that 40% of the births among Jews in 2010 were in Haredi families, and that Haredi children made up 29% of all Jewish children under age 5 in 2011, an increase over the 21% in 2001. The implications of these findings can also be seen in the patterns in the Jewish population, which, according to the population census, show numerical growth in the Orthodox population centers and a decline in areas of predominantly non-Orthodox Jews. 19

Table 5: Age Distribution among Haredim and Non-Haredim in the UK (2011)<sup>20</sup>

	Under 20	20-65*	Over 65
Non-Haredi Jews	21%	56%	23%
Haredim	5%	42%	8%

<sup>\*</sup> The middle group, those aged 20-65, is the remainder after deducting the other groups from the total.

Comparison to Israel: In Israel, the Haredi birthrate is considerably higher than that reported in the United States – an average of 6.5 children per woman in 2007-2009.<sup>21</sup> This rate represents a relative decline compared to 2002-2004 when the average was 7.5 (the highest during a surveyed period since 1979). At the same time, the general birthrate among Israel's Jewish population is relatively higher than in Jewish communities elsewhere – 2.9 births per woman for the general population in 2007-2009.

## **Identity Retention**

About half of those born as Haredim in the United States move to another stream; the rate is relatively lower in the United Kingdom and Israel.

The United States: Given the birthrate figures above, we should remember that not all those born into a given stream remain in it as adults, and this is especially evident among the Orthodox population, including the Haredim. Among those raised Orthodox, only 48% remained so as adults.<sup>22</sup> This rate is higher compared to the 2001 findings (42%).<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, this proportion declines according to age group – among the older groups,

those aged 50-64 and those aged 65-plus, the proportions of those who have left are 59% and 77% respectively, compared to 43% among those aged 30-49 and plunging to 17% among those aged 18-29. According to the Pew researchers' analysis, this does not just reflect life cycle and gradual departure, but a difference between the previous generation, which came of age in the 1950s, '60s and '70s, and the current generation.

Today, there is relatively little movement from other streams to Orthodoxy, although the data on this are partial - only 4% and 1% respectively for those raised Conservative or Reform, but there is no data available about other groups. These numbers are consistent with the general trend of less traditional Judaism. The 2001 survey showed a similar trend in a slightly different way. It found that only two out of ten Orthodox Jews did not grow up with an Orthodox education but joined Orthodoxy as adults. This compared to three to four out of ten in the other streams (including those who define themselves as "Just Jewish"). Since the Orthodox population is significantly smaller than the other groups mentioned, it can be inferred from these rates that the absolute number of those joining Orthodoxy was also small during this period.

Table 6: Rates of Identity Retention among Those Educated in the Orthodox Stream, by Age Group (2013)<sup>24</sup>

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Remained Orthodox	83%	57%	41%	22%
Moved to a different stream	17%	43%	59%	77%

With respect to the growth of the U.S. Haredi population, if the patterns of earlier generations had been maintained, it would have been possible to assume that the growth would have been relatively moderate - in a situation where of the 4.1 children born on average to a Haredi family, just over half move to another stream, there will remain a difference in growth that favors the Haredim, though this would not be very high (48% of 4.1 leaves 1.96 children who remain Orthodox, compared to a birthrate of 1.4-1.8 in the other streams). By contrast, if the pattern of identity retention among the young generation continues at a similar rate as the researchers predict, the pace of the change will increase substantially. It is likely that the relative balance that caused the static demographics of Orthodox population, which did not change between 2001 and 2013, will be broken as a result of the significant growth in the proportion of Haredim. Similarly, in this scenario, the proportion of Modern Orthodox in the overall Orthodox population will continue to decline as a result of their lower birthrates.

The United Kingdom: As distinct from the situation in the United States, in the UK, it was found that the Orthodox and Haredi population exhibits high identity retention, and that it has grown as a result of people joining from other streams. An increase was noted in the Haredi population since 3% were educated as Haredim although 4% define themselves as Haredi today. This is contrary to the general trend in the Jewish population, which is moving in a direction of decreasing observance. Those joining the Haredi stream come mainly from the Orthodox (6% of those who had an Orthodox education), but also from the non-observant (2%). The Haredim also have the highest identity retention rate - 76% - among the streams. Similarly, the Orthodox population remained at 12%, a figure that applies to both the number of respondents who received an Orthodox education and those who consider themselves Orthodox today.25 We cannot infer from this that there is full retention among members of this stream, only that the total of those leaving and joining is similar. The entirety of the data shows that in the case of the UK, we can assume that the Haredi population will not decline significantly in the future due to defections by its members to other religious streams.

Comparison to Israel: In Israel, as in the UK, there is a significant number of people joining the Haredi population - in 2009, it was found that 33% of Haredi respondents aged 20 and over grew up in a non-Haredi home.26 Nevertheless, this rate is similar to figures among those who define themselves as religious (31%) and smaller than that among the traditional-religious/Masorti (43%). The same survey found that the defection rate was lower than in the United States, and only 7.1% of those aged 20 and older who grew up in a Haredi home state they had become less religious over the course of their lives, compared to 20-21% among other religious people and those who are traditional. It should be noted that this figure includes both those who ceased being Haredi and those who became less observant but remained within the Haredi framework. Hence, the real departure rate is likely to be lower still.

### **Education and Income**

In the three countries studied, the education and income of the Haredim are relatively lower than those of the general Jewish population.

The United States: The proportion of Orthodox who hold an academic degree is significantly lower than in the general Jewish population – 39% compared to 58%.<sup>27</sup> This disparity mainly results from the situation of the Haredi population in which only 25% have an academic degree, compared to 65% of the Modern Orthodox, which is higher than that of the general Jewish population. These data represent a decline compared to 2001, when 44% of the total Orthodox population held a degree.<sup>28</sup> The percentage among all Jews has held steady - 58%, then and now. Thus, the Orthodox have had the lowest percentage of degree holders among the Jewish streams (including the unaffiliated), in both 2001 and 2013. Education figures for New York Jews show relative gender parity among the moderate Haredi "Yeshivish" stream - 45% of men and 41% of women hold degrees. Among Hassidic Haredim, there is a more significant difference between the sexes, in addition to a low overall rate -16% of men hold degrees versus 11% of women.<sup>29</sup>

Table 7: Proportion with Academic Degrees among the Jewish Streams (2013)<sup>30</sup>

	College Graduates	Households with Annual Income over \$150,000
All Jews	58%	25%
Orthodox	39%	28%
Haredim	25%	24%
Modern Orthodox	65%	37%

In terms of income, the data show that highincome households (over \$150,000 per year) can be found at a similar rates among Haredim as among the Jewish population as a whole - 24% and 25% respectively.31 On the other hand, for the Modern Orthodox this rate is 37%, the highest among Jewish streams. With regard to those with low incomes, there are no national data divided by group. Nevertheless, the study of New York Jews found that 35% of the city's Orthodox are defined as poor, and they represent 42% of all Jewish poor in the city, compared to 27% of those defined as poor in the overall Jewish population.<sup>32</sup>

The Orthodox also rely most on support from the Jewish community - 44% of Haredim who sought human-services assistance did so within the community compared to 19% of the general Jewish population. At the same time, the rate of households with an annual income of less than \$50,000 was similar when comparing the general Jewish population (41%), the Modern Orthodox (38%) and the Yeshivish Haredim (34%). The rate is a significantly higher 66% for Hassidic Haredim, with 89% earning less than \$100,000 a year, compared to 63%-69% among the other groups.

Table 8: Annual Income among Orthodox and Non-Orthodox Households in New York (2011)<sup>33</sup>

	Under \$50,000	Under \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Haredi – Hassidic	66%	23%	11%
Haredi – Yeshivish	34%	35%	31%
Modern Orthodox	38%	25%	37%
Non-Orthodox	41%	28%	32%

The United Kingdom: Data from the UK on this subject are only partial. There is no information about education levels for the Haredi or Orthodox populations. Indices of poverty rates among the Haredim are based on segmentation of the Jewish population into areas that are characterized by especially high rates of Haredim, which was conducted using relatively old data from 2001. Although these data are circumstantial, at least in part, combining them shows a substantial difference between the Haredim and the overall Jewish population. For example, in Hackney, one of these areas, the number of Jews living in public housing ("social rented") is 35% compared to 8% of the Jewish population as a whole,<sup>34</sup> and the rate of home ownership was 38% compared to 77% of Jews as a whole. This area is also characterized by crowding and 25% of the Jewish families state that they do not have enough room to live, compared to 8% of the Jewish population overall. Within Hackney, a 2001 survey of the Haredi population in the Stamford Hill neighborhood found that 85% of the families receive some sort of allowance payment from the government, the most common of which is child allowance, which 62% of families received, while 18% of families received income support allowances. Notwithstanding the partial nature of these data, the picture that emerges is one of wide gaps between Jews in Haredi areas and the UK's Jewish population overall.

The Haredi population in Israel, like that of the United States, also has a low rate of degree holders – 10% of Haredim in Israel aged 20 and older have academic degrees, compared to 29% of the general population.<sup>35</sup> This pattern of education levels is similar to that found in the United States, and the difference between Haredim and the general Jewish population is just over 40% in the United States compared to 34% in Israel. Another similarity is that, as in the United States, Israeli Haredim have the lowest rates of degree-level education of any of the Jewish religious groups (religious, traditional, secular, etc.).

The income rate of Israeli Haredim is also low relative to the general Jewish population and calls to mind the figures coming from the communities in the United Kingdom and the United States. The figures cannot be compared directly, but show a similar pattern – 72% of Haredim aged 20 and above live in households with average per capita monthly incomes of NIS 2,000, and only 7% live in households with incomes over NIS 4,000.<sup>36</sup> The position of the great majority of Haredim in the lowest income category in Israel is comparable to the Hassidic Haredim in New York, but contrary to the Yeshivish Haredim among whom a smaller proportion are at the bottom of the ladder.<sup>37</sup>

# Political Views and Attitudes toward Israel (available only for the United States)

A majority of Haredim define themselves as politically conservative, and tend to hold rightwing political views with regard to Israel

In the United States, where Jews are identified with support for Israel as well as with a liberal Democratic ideology, findings about the Orthodox population in general and the Haredim in particular show significant differences compared to the larger community.<sup>38</sup>

When it comes to Israel, the Haredim exceed the general Jewish population in measures of closeness and importance, and also hold views further to the right than in the internal Israeli arena. The Modern Orthodox are even more attached to Israel than the Haredim. On the question of ties to Israel, 86% of Haredim and 99% of the Modern Orthodox declared themselves to be connected at least to some degree, compared to 69% of Jews in general. The Haredim and the Modern Orthodox also visit Israel at high rates (74% and 86% respectively) compared to Jews overall (43%).

Regarding Israel's diplomatic situation, only 26% of the Haredim and 33% of the Modern Orthodox believe that there is a chance that the process will lead to two states, Israel and Palestine, compared to 61% among Jews as a whole. Similarly, this population believes the settlements contribute to Israel's security. Among the Haredim, 31% think that they contribute compared to 18% who think they are harmful; and among the Modern

Orthodox, 38% and 12% respectively. Among Jews overall, only 17% believe that the settlements contribute to Israel's security while 44% believe that they are harmful. Finally, in relation to Israeli-U.S. ties, 48% of the Haredim and 64% of the Modern Orthodox believe that American support for Israel is inadequate, compared to 31% of Jews generally. These views, which are far both from the overall numbers and from the other lewish streams individually, indicate that the Orthodox are substantially different in their outlook. With the growth of their proportion of the Jewish population and their influence within it, it is likely that their positions will gain more significant weight.

Table 9: Views on Israel Among the Orthodox and General Jewish Populations (2013)<sup>39</sup>

	"Very" or "Somewhat" connected to Israel	Have visited Israel	Believe the two-state solution has a chance	The settlements contribute to Israel's security	The settlements are harmful to Israel's security	The U.S. does not support Israel enough
All Jews	69%	43%	61%	17%	44%	31%
Haredim	86%	74%	26%	31%	18%	48%
Modern Orthodox	99%	86%	33%	38%	12%	64%

Differences with Jews in general are also reflected in the general political positions held by the Orthodox.40 While the Jewish population as a whole is among the most liberal in the United States, both the Haredim and the Modern Orthodox consistently express opposite views. In the distribution between Democrats and Republicans, Jews as a whole lean toward the Democrats (70%) by a significant 48% margin. The Haredim and the Modern Orthodox, in comparison, support the Republicans (58% and

56% respectively), though at lower margins (23 and 19 percentage points respectively). Thus, these populations are far less liberal – only 7% of the Haredim and 22% of the Modern Orthodox consider themselves liberal compared to 49% of Jews in general - 64% of Haredim and 41% the Modern Orthodox define themselves as politically conservative, compared to 19% of all Jews. Among the various issues in the American political discourse, it is not surprising to learn that the Orthodox oppose gay marriage. Support

for small government, 57% of Haredim and 58% of the Modern Orthodox compared to 38% of Jews in general, also attests to their conservatism. On ideological questions, the Haredim represent the extreme position even when compared to the Modern Orthodox, and they express right-wing views at a similar or greater rate. The only case in which a significant proportion of Haredim answered "don't know" on a political issue was in relation to President Obama's performance, with 18% of Haredim answering that they did not

know whether they would support him or not, compared to 3% of the Modern Orthodox and 6% of the Jewish population overall. It can therefore be expected that a greater proportion of Haredim will also bring about a change in Jewish attitudes to domestic political issues, and it is evident that, in contrast to its image, this population is not apathetic but rather holds and expresses clear views on most of the issues on the socio-political agenda.

Table 10: Ideological positions among the Orthodox and General Jewish Populations (2013)<sup>41</sup>

	Democrat	Republican	Liberal	Conservative	Prefer small government
All Jews	70%	22%	49%	19%	38%
Haredim	35%	58%	7%	64%	57%
Modern Orthodox	37%	56%	22%	41%	58%

### **Endnotes**

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