

## ***English Abstracts***

### **Elements of Modern Life or 'Modern Ultra-Orthodoxy'? Numerical Assessment of Modernization Processes in Ultra-Orthodox Society**

Gilad Malach and Lee Cahaner

This article is meant to provide a first-ever estimate of the modern ultra-Orthodox sector's relative weight in the ultra-Orthodox society as a whole, based on numerical data. The authors distinguish between two modernizing factions in the ultra-Orthodox community using data analysis. One faction, comprising a significant percentage of all Israeli ultra-Orthodox, has incorporated elements of modern life into certain areas of their everyday life, but have not adopted modern values such as human autonomy and equality. Members of that faction are thus able to bridge the gap between their ultra-Orthodox affiliations and their desired lifestyle with modern features. The other, smaller, faction has thoroughly accepted general Israeli and modern values, norms, and lifestyle features. It tends to criticize the ultra-Orthodox political leadership and sometimes even its spiritual leaders. Accordingly, this latter group is trying, so far with partial success, to institutionalize its unique approach by establishing educational and political organizations that match its aspirations.

This article analyzes data from the Central Bureau of Statistics' social and manpower surveys, from the Ministry of Tourism, and from a TGI survey and a Shahrarit survey. The findings point at a rapid rise in the absolute number and percentage of ultra-Orthodox whose lifestyles exhibit elements of modernity. This is reflected in employment rates and in a growing diversity of livelihoods; the number of ultra-Orthodox pursuing academic degrees and enlisting with the IDF and National Service; patterns of technology and media consumption; changing fertility patterns; and increasing ultra-Orthodox participation in cultural, recreational, leisure, and consumption activities. We

demonstrate that the size of the group characterized by elements of modern life varies according to the particular modernized element, ranging between 15% and 30% of the total ultra-Orthodox population. By contrast, the fully-modern group amounts to a mere few percentage points. Still, this smaller group's successful institutionalization of a modern ultra-Orthodox outlook may have an impact on broader segments of the ultra-Orthodox sector.

### **“Other” Ultra-Orthodox Identities: The Representation of the Modern and the Proletarian Ultra-Orthodox in Israeli Ultra-Orthodox Community Films**

Matan Aharoni

Ultra-Orthodox individuals who work for a living are examined in this article through seven drama and horror “ultra-Orthodox Men’s Films”. The focus of this article is the representation of the modern ultra-Orthodox from middle and high socioeconomic strata and the proletarian ultra-Orthodox.

The findings suggest that the ultra-Orthodox modern male protagonists serve as intercultural mediators. Using their liminal location between the ultra-Orthodox society and the secular societies they act as gate keepers and as agents who expand and add ideas, values, and unfamiliar discourse to the ultra-Orthodox culture. The modern ultra-Orthodox represented in these films merge modern with orthodox aspects, and physical and material elements with spiritual ones. Due to their morality and faith, they are shown doing that in an attempt to be socially accepted and favorably appreciated.

Unlike the modern ultra-Orthodox, proletariat ultra-Orthodox protagonists are portrayed as moral critics. While dealing with ultra-Orthodox identities, they criticize the pursuit of materialism in the ultra-Orthodox society and the sanctification of work at the expense of spending quality time with their family.

Two main conclusions arise from analyzing the two social classes: (a) the ability of ultra-Orthodox films to redefine social classes in terms of contribution to the ultra-Orthodox communities and evaluate them under the concept of social roles; (b) The films represent a combined approach of “ultra-Orthodox-modernity”. This approach forms appropriations, translations, and the

redefinition of modern ideas, approaches, and practices to suit ultra-Orthodox values. This is being done while reaffirming the supremacy of the religious way of life and the ultra-Orthodox tradition.

## **Reflections of Characteristics of ‘Modern Ultra-Orthodoxy’ in Light of the Phenomenon of Divorce**

Anat Barth and Adital Ben-Ari

The prevalence of the modern ultra-Orthodoxy phenomenon has increased in the past decade. Researchers and policy-makers have been attempting to assess the characteristics of this phenomenon, and the theoretical model that explains the phenomenon is currently being designed. The goal of this paper is to elaborate on the theoretical model suggested by Zicherman and Cahaner, which provides basis for the definition of modern ultra-Orthodoxy, while addressing conceptual characteristics based on a corresponding process of straying from ultra-Orthodox norms via the phenomenon of divorce in the community. Divorce makes ultra-Orthodox individuals change basic collectivistic understandings and partly opting for individualistic insights, which is represented by a constant dual existence.

A simultaneous change is apparently occurring in the phenomenon of modern ultra-Orthodoxy. An evaluation of the characteristics of coping with divorce, particularly in the modern society, can specify the mechanism that allows for this phenomenon. This research is based on a qualitative research which included 18 interviewees, including modern ultra-Orthodox women and men divorcees. A focused appraisal of patterns of divorce among (self-identified) modern ultra-Orthodox reveals three conceptual characteristics relating to the definition of the process: social mobility, including transferring between social roles and “spiritual decline”; individualistic perceptions, use of individualistic terminology, and exposure to the individualistic culture; and structural preservation as expressed in the creation of virtual institutions and the preservation of an internal social structure similar to that of the collectivistic culture. It seems that the conceptual skills adopted by the modern ultra-Orthodox divorcees can shed some light on this sub-culture’s

general behavior, which shifts between personal individualistic space, often conflicting with accepted ultra-Orthodox norms, and communal collectivistic realm, while attempting to remain members of the general ultra-Orthodox society and preserving collectivistic behavioral patterns in a world with individualistic values.

### **New Voices in the Ultra-Orthodox Media or the Same Old Thing?**

Inés Gabel and Varda Wasserman

This study examines the emerging discourse in the media regarding the lifestyle characteristics of the “new ultra-Orthodox” focusing on the struggle for a higher education. Based on the analysis of texts relating to higher education as published in the ultra-Orthodox *Mishpacha* (Family) weekly magazine between 2002 and 2013, the article seeks to expose the various strategies by which the weekly juggles between modernity and conservatism, thus constructing a dialogue that echoes the daily practices of the “new ultra-Orthodox”. The present study identifies four discursive strategies that are employed in the negotiation on the identity of the “new ultra-Orthodox” and reflect the complexity of a non-linear process of change. These strategies demonstrate not only the dynamic nature of the resistance within the ultra-Orthodox community, but also the construction of a liminal identity, which allows the “new ultra-Orthodox” to belong to the ultra-Orthodox community while acting in the secular world.

### **Three Generations of Israeli Ultra-Orthodoxy**

Haim Zicherman

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the Israeli ultra-Orthodox leadership has not definitely chosen the proper ideology for the community's

way of life. That ideology comprises a triad of main and intertwined issues that together form an ideological triangle – the attitude towards the state and its institutions; the right education system; and the goals of yeshivas. Ultra-Orthodox communities such as Chassidim, Lithuanians, and Sephardim (and related subgroups) clearly disagree on how to address that triad.

As specified in this article, the current ultra-Orthodox generation is in turmoil as cultural, economic, and leadership changes threaten its educational structure and significantly challenge its leaders. These changes may reshape the ideological triad of today's Israeli ultra-Orthodoxy.

Considering the past three generations of Israeli ultra-Orthodoxy, the article seeks to address the dilemma of the ultra-Orthodox leadership at this ideological crossroads. While the first generation's education addressed the non-Orthodox world through "immunizing" education, the second generation introduced a "blocking" education that ignores all non-Orthodox currents, which is the norm in today's ultra-Orthodox community. Disagreements within the Lithuanian leadership in recent years reveal a dispute over the future shape of that ideological triad.

### **Straddling a Cultural and Geographic Boundary: 'Modern Ultra-Orthodox' in the Urban Space**

Lee Cahaner

The insularity that characterizes the ultra-Orthodox world conflicts with other processes in which the Israeli ultra-Orthodox community is engaged – demographic growth, spatial expansion, and social diversification and involvement. These processes impact on the ultra-Orthodox society's changing profile as well as on its place in the general Israeli society. Additionally, they challenge the fundamentally conservative identity that prevails within the ultra-Orthodox geographic space.

The article focuses on the social and spatial attributes of the modern ultra-Orthodox – an ever-expanding and diversified sub-sector – attempting to understand the nature of this group that sees itself as part of the larger ultra-Orthodox community but is not isolated from the secular Israeli world. This

paper attempts to identify the geographic boundaries of the modern ultra-Orthodox habitat, and to characterize a way of life that involves straddling a cultural and geographic boundary between the homogeneous ultra-Orthodox city and the mixed urban space.

The authors call attention to the existence of a spatial model that encompasses the array of diverse modern ultra-Orthodox identities – Interstitial space – a geographic concept that denotes people’s need – by desire or constraint – to live on a seam line, between two states, at the edge of two spaces whose social identities differ and thus enjoy the best of both worlds. It is argued that the modern ultra-Orthodox interstitial spaces are unstable, subject to dynamic social and spatial processes, and that the various identities involved in creating these spaces are not static and are themselves engaged in a transformation processes. Moreover, the intrinsic need for religious and social communalism reinforces the active processes by which identity is spatialized in the interstices, in as much as modern ultra-Orthodox identity, itself currently in flux, is being defined vis-à-vis new groups – a process that may ultimately lead to convergence, the creation of a new enclave, and a move toward a “new interstitial space” for those seeking human space that is more heterogeneous and less communal.

The article expands on a study that identified the attributes of a subsector on the modern ultra-Orthodox continuum, a group that straddles the “boundary” and feeds on two different worlds – the ultra-Orthodox “learning society” (the main group of origin) and the Israeli public with which it maintains daily contact in contexts such as employment, education, consumerism, and recreation. The research methodology is qualitative and based on in-depth interviews with self-identified modern ultra-Orthodox, subjects who espouse a conservative ultra-Orthodox worldview but maintain a degree of social openness, and individuals active in local governments who contend with the current communal diversity and with the aforementioned “seam” groups. Tours of the urban seam spaces where ultra-Orthodox who identify as modern reside were conducted as well.

## **Ultra-Orthodox Students Managing Cultural Duality: The Shift from Compartmentalization to a Both/and Stance**

Nurit Novis-Deutsch and Osnat Rubin

The past 15 years have seen a rise of two trends in the ultra-Orthodox world in Israel: modern ultra-Orthodox Judaism and the enrollment of ultra-Orthodox students in academic programs. To analyze possible links between the two phenomena we conducted a qualitative study of 61 ultra-Orthodox female students in various academic institutions. The students described their motivations for enrolling, their experiences during their studies, their management of challenges, and their views on the ultra-Orthodox involvement in academic institutions. A mixed-methods analysis of the data found that academic studies presented those students with multiple practical challenges, identity issues, and value conflicts, but also that most students found ways to successfully cope with these challenges. The narratives of managing these challenges were characterized by a both/and cognitive stance, which is typical of individuals with bicultural identities, and may be associated with modern ultra-Orthodox Judaism. Our findings lead to policy recommendations that include training professors who teach ultra-Orthodox students in managing intercultural encounters and devoting attention to value conflicts that arise from such encounters.

## **Obedience and Authority in a Conservative Enclave: The Case of Ultra-Orthodox Women with Academic Education**

Tehila Kalagy and Asher Cohen

This article examines the attitudes of the leading rabbis and the general population of the ultra-Orthodox community toward the expanding phenomenon of community women who wish to acquire an academic education. A qualitative examination of the issue was conducted with sociological and anthropological research tools that address the characteristics of fundamentalist societies facing modernization, based on Avi

Sagi's model. The examination of the process of change that ultra-Orthodox women undergo and their community's attitudes toward them sought the dynamics of change and preservation in the ultra-Orthodox community. We postulate that education is a means of preservation and does not necessarily signal the emergence of a new, modern orthodoxy.

The fact that ultra-Orthodox women seek the permission of their spiritual leaders shows that they understand the need to change their traditional roles as providers in the ultra-Orthodox society while observing community boundaries and conventions. Thus, while rabbis maintain their authoritative roles, envelopes are pushed to include individuals who emerge from their social enclaves.

### **The Importance of Historical Perspectives of Israel's Ultra-Orthodox Society**

Kimmy Caplan

The past 15 years have witnessed a significant rise in the number of applicable studies of Israel's ultra-Orthodox society that address various practical topics such as their economic challenges and prospects, education, and employment. The authors of most of these studies, however, tend to ignore historical perspectives or marginalize them at best. Based primarily upon existing scholarly works, this paper focuses on three extensively discussed topics, their influences and projections on contemporary ultra-Orthodox society, and point to the advantages of placing them in their respective historic perspectives. These topics are the "society of learners", ultra-Orthodox women in the workforce, and the introduction of core studies in ultra-Orthodox schools.