



Ultra-Orthodox Women Online

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The Ultra-Orthodox Community

- Approximately 8% of the adult Jewish population in Israel (ages of 20 and up)

Source: The Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006.

- The “part of a whole” concept: Each community member is ‘a link in a chain tying one generation to another.’ The primary role of every generation is to maintain the faith in G’d and to pass on the commandments to the next generation.

The Ultra-Orthodox Community

- The Ultra-Orthodox see the study of *Torah*, *Gmara* and religious laws as a key integral part of their daily lives. The Ultra-Orthodox look to “The sources” as a basis for the daily Torah study. “...but thou meditate therein day and night” (Joshua, 1, 8).
- 57% of Ultra-Orthodox men stated that religious study comprise a majority of their daily activities.
- Source: The Central Bureau of Statistics, 2004



The Ultra-Orthodox Community

- Zealous religiosity and hostility towards change.
- Jewish emancipation, liberalism, enlightenment and religious reform are perceived as a threat to the Ultra-Orthodox way of life.
- Communal hierarchy.
- Internal Divisions.

The Ultra-Orthodox Community: Segregation

- The ultra-orthodox are a minority in the Israeli Society and the relationship between them and the majority is complex. The majority of Ultra-Orthodox have chosen a segregation model.
- Geographic segregation
- Educational segregation
- Judicial segregation
- Dietary segregation



Ultra-Orthodox Women

- Ultra Orthodox Women constitute 6.4% of the Jewish women in Israel

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007

- Traditionally, limited to the private domain.



Ultra-Orthodox Women go to Work

- 67% of Ultra-Orthodox men do not participate in the workforce. Many Ultra-Orthodox young men receive an exemption from the Army, and study in the Yeshiva (religious school) instead.
- The work of Ultra-Orthodox women is a primary contributing factor to the Ultra-Orthodox economy in Israel.





Communication Means of the Ultra-Orthodox Community

- The *printed press* is a significant tool that serves the Ultra-Orthodox Community both for internal communication and for responding to opinions expressed in the non-Orthodox communication.



Ultra-Orthodox Women in the Press

- In the Ultra-Religious press the overwhelming majority of writers are men. The underlying assumption is that journalism is not a profession tailored for women.
- Still, there are a few women who are employed in media. In many cases, women journalists are not being given credit for their work. Instead, acronyms, pseudonyms or just a last name appears (Kaplan, 2006).

Women in the Ultra-Orthodox Press



וועדת וינוגרד סיימה את עבודתה והגישה מסקנותיה



כשבחוץ סערת שלגים ישבו
חמשת חברי וועדת וינוגרד
בבנייני האומה בירושלים ומסרו
את הודעתם לציבור. במשך חצי
שעה הקריא השופט אליהו
וינוגרד תמצות הדו"ח בן ה-600
עמודים. בקואליציה החליטו
לתקוף את נתניהו, האופוזיציה
ממשיכה לבקש את פיטוריו של
רה"מ. תם ולא נשלם!

כ"ג בשבט התשס"ח 19:40

לוי אשכנזי



Internet and the Ultra-Orthodox Community

- According to Barzilai-Nahon and Barzilai, the tensions between the Ultra-Orthodox way of the life and the Internet are manifest in four dimensions:

Hierarchy

Patriarchy

Discipline

Segregation



Internet and the Ultra-Orthodox Community

- An Ultra-Orthodox rabbinical committee has been established in 2006 to address “the Internet question”. The committee decided (12/2007) that the Internet can only be used for work purposes.



Internet and the Ultra-Orthodox Community

- Connectivity rates among the adult Ultra-Orthodox population is 8%, vs. 61% in the non-orthodox society (2003 CBS data).
- But 2007 data shows that 60% of Ultra-Orthodox population uses computers, 57% of which are connected to the Internet (Shiluv data).



Methodology

- Questionnaires distributed in discussion forums
- Questionnaires distributed to working women



Research Questions

- Do Ultra-Orthodox women perceive the Internet as a danger to their way of life, or as an opportunity for positive change?
- Do Ultra-Orthodox women feel personal empowerment due to their uses of the Internet?
- Is Internet used for work and study only, or for leisure as well?
- Do Ultra-Orthodox women get in touch with people from outside the Ultra-Orthodox community online?



Research Questions

- What kinds of content do the members of Ultra-Orthodox families get exposed to while using the Internet?
- Do friends of Ultra-Orthodox women know about their uses of the Internet?
- Are the husbands of Ultra-Orthodox women aware of their uses of the Internet?
- What are women's ideas about their rabbis' positions about using the Internet?