



# The 2017 Israel Religion & State Index

*The shortened report*

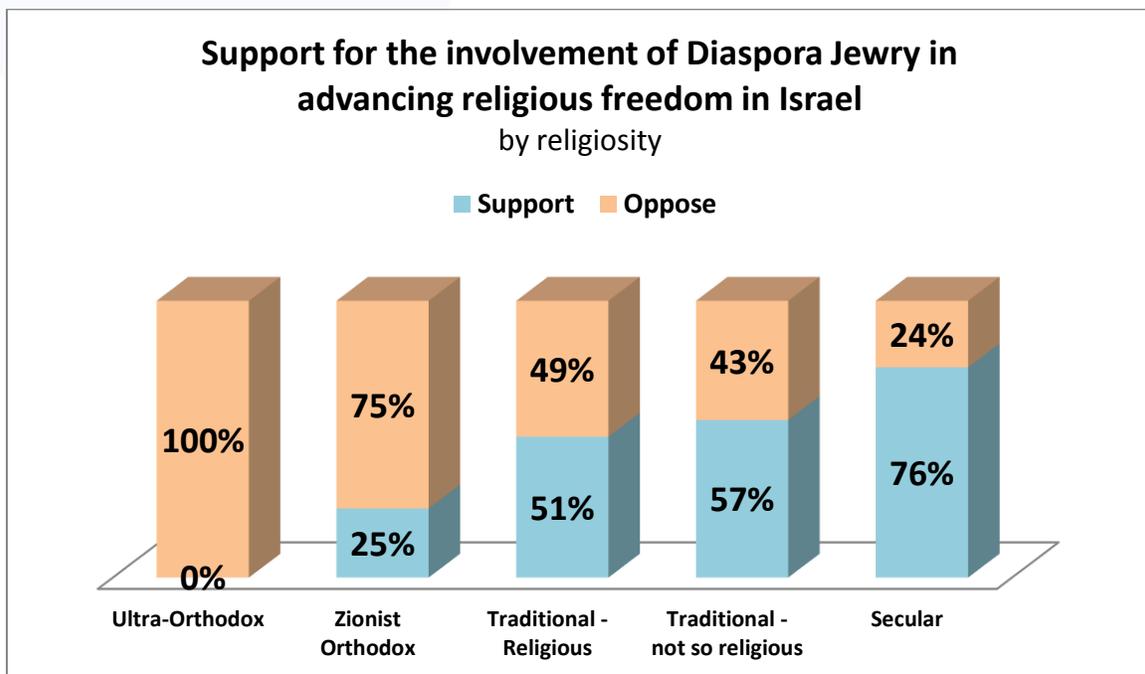
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## Primary Findings

**Increased support for separation of religion & state:** 68% support separation of religion & state, compared to 63% last year and 61% two years ago.

**Freedom of Marriage for all:** 67% support the State of Israel recognizing all forms of marriage. 50% would prefer a non-Orthodox marriage alternative outside of the Chief Rabbinate.

**Opposition to the Conversion Bill:** 73% oppose the Conversion Bill's intention to limit recognition of conversions performed in Israel only to those carried out with the approval of the Chief Rabbinate.

**Participation of Diaspora Jewry in the battle for religious freedom in Israel:** 55% (and 76% of secular Jews) support the Diaspora Jewry's active involvement in promoting freedom of religion and pluralism in Israel.

**Only Shas Party voters are satisfied:** 78% of Israeli Jews are dissatisfied with the government's actions and policies in matters of religion and state. Only a majority of Shas Party voters is satisfied (61%).

**Public trust:** The Supreme Court enjoys the highest level of trust, compared to the government, Knesset, Chief Rabbinate and the Rabbinic Courts. The Government received the lowest.

**If the Nation-State bill passes - then religious freedom should be anchored in it:** 65% of Israeli Jews, including most Likud party and Jewish Home party voters, want the Nation-State bill to explicitly include the Declaration of Independence's promise of freedom of religion and conscience for all.

**Ultra-Orthodox political parties should be in the Opposition:** 66% support having a Government without the ultra-Orthodox parties. There is great support for this even among voters for the Coalition parties.

**Support for a political party committed to promoting religious freedom:** 62% of secular Jews and 47% of traditional Jews responded that a party's commitment to the principles of freedom of religion and equality of civic burden would increase the probability that they would vote for it.

**A place for women:** 79% support a legislative amendment that would require all political parties to include women in realistic spots on their lists of Knesset candidates. This marks a 28% increase in support from last year.

**Kashrut certification outside the Rabbinate:** 80% support breaking the Chief Rabbinate's monopoly over kashrut certification and opening the market to competition, with the State acting as a supervisor.

**Free movement on Shabbat:** 73% support the operation of public transportation on Shabbat, on a full or partial scale.

**Military or National service should be mandatory:** 83% believe that all yeshiva students should be required to serve in the military or perform national service.



**Less funding for yeshivas:** After the government budget for yeshivas reached an all-time high, 80% think it should be cut or canceled.

**Budgeting for the Core Curriculum:** 82% believe that ultra-Orthodox educational institutions should be required to implement the state's core curricular studies. 72% hold that this should be enforced by denying government funding to those schools that refuse.

**'Religionization-Schmeligionization':** 69% of parents of children in the state's public 'non-religious' school system agree that there is a religionization process in their children's schools and oppose it. 66% of these parents support the establishment of an Educational Council for 'secular' state schools, to safeguard them

**Not all traditional Jewish Israelis are the same:** a systematic examination of the responses provided by traditional Jewish Israelis reveals a significant gap between the two subgroups that identify as 'traditional'. The traditional Jews who are not so close to religion hold views very similar to those of secular Jewish Israelis.

**Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus:** on many issues of religion and state, women are more determined and liberal than men.

This publication was made possible through a generous grant from the Stanley, Marion, Paul and Edward Bergman Foundation



Dear Readers,

In advance of Rosh Hashanah, Hiddush is proud to publish its ninth annual Israel Religion & State Index. During this period of soul-searching, it is important to address the question of the State of Israel's identity as a Jewish and democratic state. One of the most important arenas in this regard is that of the relationship between religion and state in Israel.

The Index's findings clearly and sharply fly in the face of statements made by several senior government official, including some particularly harsh proclamations. In an attempt to discredit and harm the Supreme Court's authority and cast aspersions upon the basic values of freedom of religion, equality, pluralism, and partnership between Israel and Diaspora Jewry, the Justice Minister claimed that she and her Knesset colleagues represent the public and its interests. Her boss, Minister Naftali Bennet stated last week that the Supreme Courts has lost the trust of the People. The Chairman of the Coalition arrogantly and falsely proclaimed that Israel is a country with an Orthodox majority, and secular Jewish Israelis also identify as Orthodox. The Chairman of the Knesset Interior Committee declared that American Jews should not attempt to influence Israeli politics, and even if they are insulted - "that's okay, nothing will come of it." There was no shortage of statements in this spirit, and of course the spokesmen of the ultra-Orthodox political and religious establishment also chimed in with their own disparaging comments. However, the Index findings indicate that the Israeli public's opinion is quite the opposite - it rejects the government's policies on religion and state. Voters for the civil Government Coalition parties, including the Likud (and even the Zionist Orthodox Jewish Home party in many matters) share this criticism of the government, want change, and support Diaspora Jewry's involvement in promoting religious freedom and equality in Israel.

It was a turbulent year in the realm of religion and state. Disagreements erupted not only between secular and religious Jewish Israelis, but also between the rabbinic establishment and liberal Orthodoxy, between Israel and the Jewish leadership of the Diaspora, and between non-Orthodox Jews and the Israeli government. The issues of the Western Wall, 'who is a Jew', Shabbat, gender equality, and many more frequently occupied the Knesset, the Government, and the media. The Israel Religion & State Index and other Hiddush surveys address all of these issues. Below, you can read our abbreviated English version of the report, and we encourage our Hebrew readers to review the full report, which includes a more detailed analysis of the Index findings.

There is no way of knowing when the next Knesset elections be held, but we included a question in the Index that sought to ascertain the public's mood on these issues in relation to the way it would vote in the next elections. It became utterly clear that parties which commit



themselves to promoting freedom of religion and equality (and refuse to be blackmailed by the ultra-Orthodox political parties) will likely win more votes in the elections.

The 2017 Israel Religion & State Index is rich in findings and insights. We trust that you will find it interesting, and we hope that it will enrich the public discourse in Israel and in the Diaspora with regard to many of the core issues facing the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. We hope it will contribute to increased involvement among Diaspora Jewry, in partnership with Israeli organizations and community leaders, in strengthening Israel's identity as a Jewish and democratic state.

Shana Tova and best wishes from Hiddush - Freedom of Religion for Israel,

Stanley P. Gold, Chair

Rabbi Uri Regev, President & CEO



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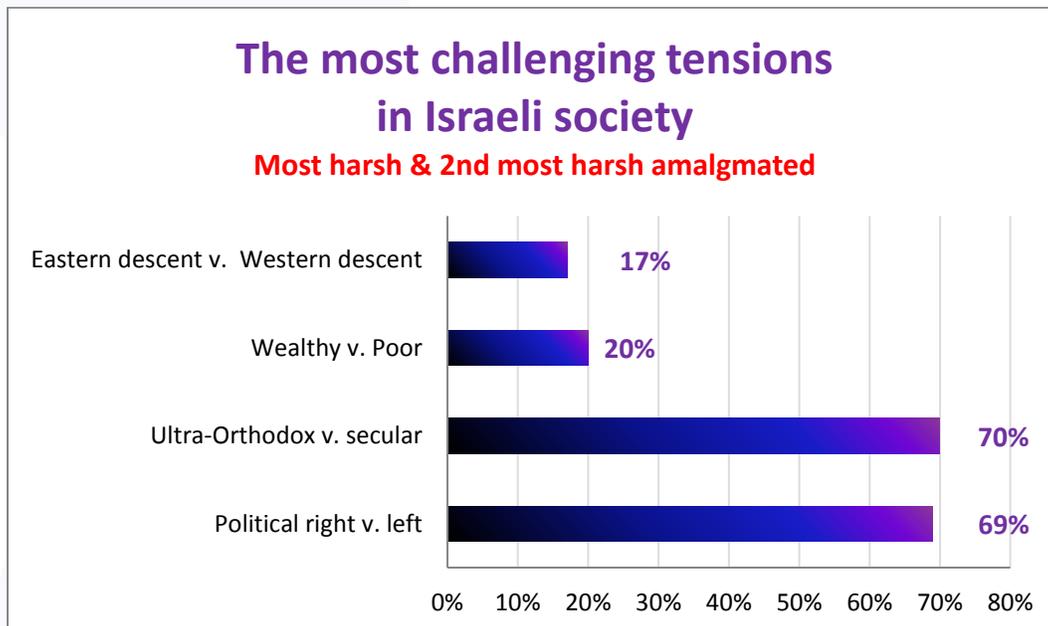
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## Religious tensions top the ladder of societal conflicts

### 70% of Jewish Israelis: The most challenging rift in Israel is between ultra-Orthodox and secular

The tension between ultra-Orthodox and secular Jewish Israelis is once again at the top of the public's list of challenging tensions in Jewish Israeli society, and it even edges out the societal tension between the political right and left. In response to the question: **"There are many internal tensions and conflicts in Jewish society in Israel. Which of the following tensions do you perceive as the harshest, and which do you view as the second harshest?"** - 70% responded that the tension between ultra-Orthodox and secular Israelis was either first or second in terms of severity, and 69% chose the tension between the political left and right. It should be emphasized that the most striking shifts, compared to the 2016 Index, are the tension between the ultra-Orthodox and the secular, as well as between Jews of Western descent and Jews of Eastern descent. While the political tension increased moderately (by only 2%), the religious tension jumped by 12%(!), and the social tension dropped by 12%. It would seem that the ultra-Orthodox political parties' appetite over the last year, and the Government's ceding to their demands regarding budgets, military enlistment, core curricular studies, etc., have increased the secular public's hostility and resistance towards them (as can be seen in many other Index findings) and a growing sense of this tension among ultra-Orthodox and secular Jews alike. On the other hand, as noted, the severity of the ethnic rift, which the Shas party and its leader Rabbi Aryeh Deri attempted to capitalize on in the last Knesset elections, was significantly reduced.

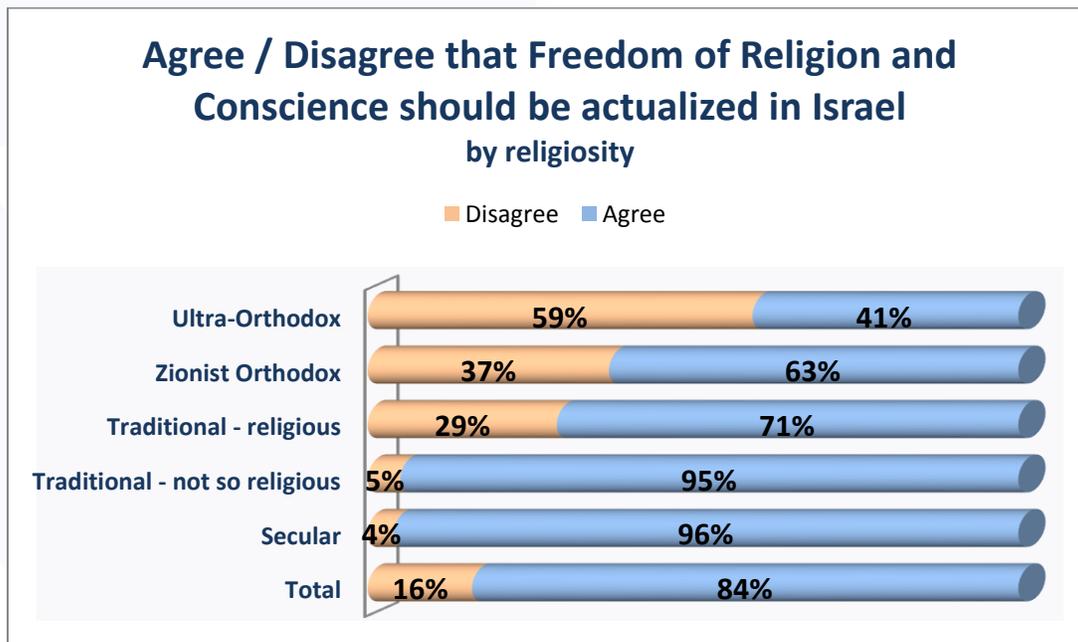




## Freedom of religion or separation of religion and state?

84% of the adult Jewish public supports freedom of religion and conscience in Israel

As in previous years, support for "freedom of religion and conscience" is significantly higher than support for "separation of religion and state." However, the support for separation is growing significantly and consistently. 84% of the adult Jewish public supports freedom of religion and conscience in Israel. The Index question asked: **"Do you agree or disagree that in the State of Israel, freedom of religion and conscience should be upheld. That is: freedom of choice and freedom of behavior for secular and religious people, according to their world views?"** 68% supported separation of religion and state, in response to the question: **"Do you support or oppose the separation of religion and state?"**



Among voters for the Government Coalition parties, 84% of Likud, 84% of Kulanu, 93% of Yisrael Beiteinu, 80% of Jewish Home, and even 61% of Shas party voters support religious freedom in Israel.

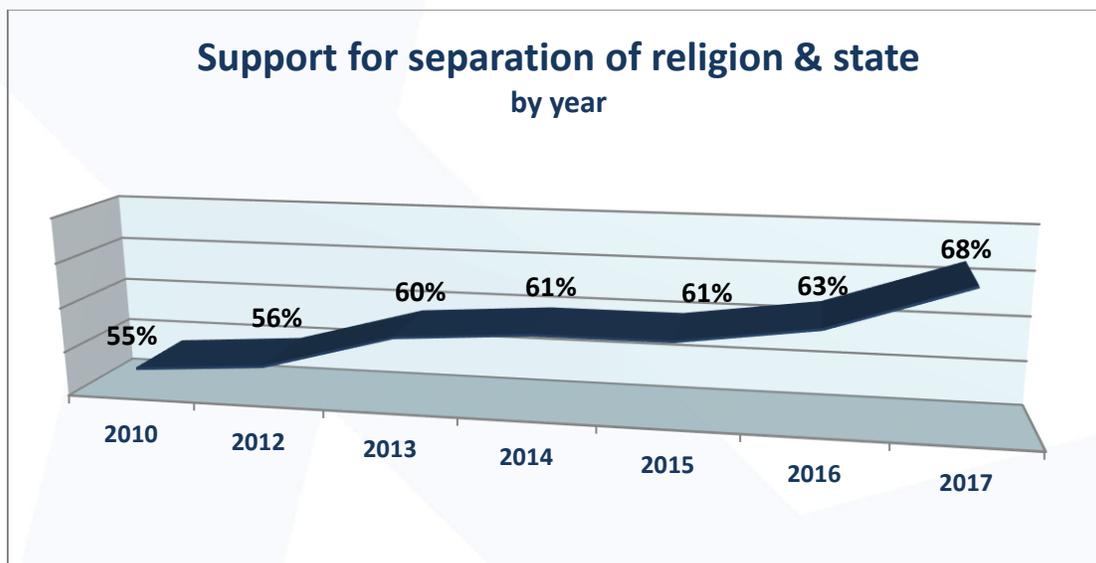
The responses to this question, as well as too many other Index questions, brought to the fore a significant gap between respondents who identify as "traditional - close to religion" and those who identify as "traditional - not so religious". The distinction between these two groups was made by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics in its annual social survey several years ago, and it has proven to be most useful in understanding the differences in Israelis' attitudes and views on religion and state. While 71% of those who define themselves as "traditional - close to religion" support freedom of religion and conscience, 91% of those who define themselves as "traditional - not so religious" support this! In other words, the "traditional - close to religion" sector is closer to the Zionist Orthodox sector (63%), whereas the "traditional - not so religious" sector is closer to the views of the secular sector (96%).



Support for **separation of religion and state** continues to rise, and in the current Index it stands at 68%. This reflects a 5% increase in support (compared with 63%) in 2016. In 2010, support stood at 55%, that is, an increase of 13% in support for separation of religion and state within 7 years. 90% of secular Jewish Israelis and 72% of "traditional - not so religious" Israelis support this. The "traditional - close to religion" sector is divided, and only 49% support and 51% oppose it. As expected, the Zionist Orthodox (73%) and ultra-Orthodox (83%) sectors are opposed. The 17% of the ultra-Orthodox sector that supports separation rejects the relationship of religion and state for the opposite reason than the secular sector. Theirs is an anti-Zionist stance, which denies legitimacy to the State of Israel and does not want any connection to it.

Support for the separation of religion & state is also evident among voters for the civil Coalition parties: 60% of Likud, 68% of Kulanu, and 95% of Yisrael Beiteinu voters. Among Jewish Home party voters, 39% are opposed, and, as expected, 77% of Shas party and 85% of United Torah Judaism voters are opposed. Among the Opposition parties, 93% of Zionist Union, 93% of Yesh Atid, and 97% of Meretz voters favor separation of religion and state.

As we note every year, the significant difference between the level of support for "freedom of religion and conscience" and "separation of religion and state" is due to the perception of many Israelis that a separation of religion and state would be equivalent to a separation between Judaism and the State of Israel, which they oppose. On the other hand, it is clear from Hiddush's Indices and surveys that "separation of religion and state" in Israel would not be a full separation like that in the United States or in France. Rather, it would be an abolishment of state supported religious coercion and a separation of religion from politics.





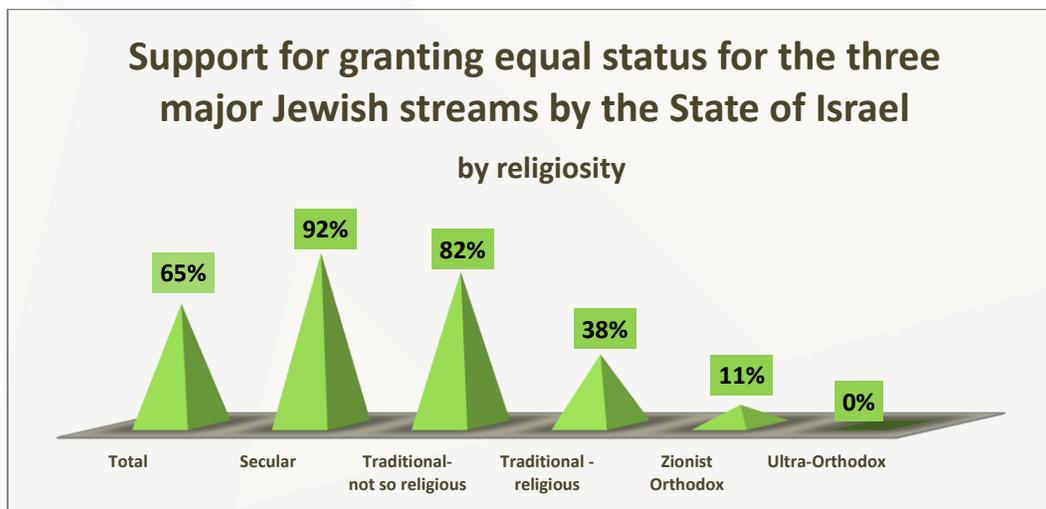
## Streams of Judaism, conversion, and Diaspora Jewry

### 73% of the public opposes the Conversion Bill

In response to the question, "**With which stream of Judaism do you associate yourself?**" the respondents responded as follows: ultra-Orthodox [9%], Zionist ultra-Orthodox [2%], Zionist Orthodox [18%], conservative [5%], Reform [6%], other [1%], and no affiliation with a religious stream [59%]. It is particularly interesting to compare the demographic religious self-identification of respondents with their responses to this question. The data indicate that 88% of secular respondents do not belong to any religious stream, but 10% responded "Reform" [7%] or "Conservative" [3%]. 18% of the "traditional - not so religious" replied "Reform" [10%] and Conservative [8%], and 11% of them responded "Zionist Orthodox". Among "traditional - close to religion" respondents, 45% responded "Zionist Orthodox" and 17% responded "Conservative" [11%] or "Reform" [6%].

65% of the public, close to two-thirds, maintains that **Israel should grant equal recognition to the three major streams of Judaism - Orthodox, Conservative and Reform**. This is a stable result from last year's Index (64%). Among the secular, 92% agree. Large gaps are evident among traditional Jews - while 82% of "traditional - not so religious" people agree, only 38% of "traditional - close to religion" respondents agree. 89% of the Zionist Orthodox and 100% of the ultra-Orthodox do not agree. Women support equality for the Jewish streams more so than men (70% and 59%, respectively). There is also clear support among the voters for the civil Coalition parties, including 67% of Likud, 64% Kulanu, and 85% of Yisrael Beiteinu voters. 30% of Jewish Home voters also support it. Among voters for the Opposition parties, 95% of Yesh Atid, 91% of Zionist Union, and 97% of Meretz voters support this.

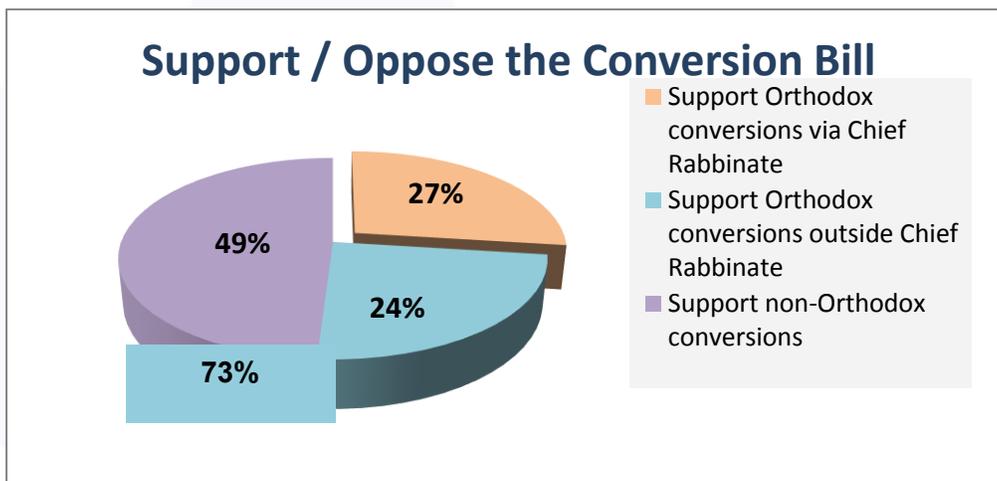
The 2017 Index also explored the public's response to the conversion bill initiated by the ultra-Orthodox parties and recently approved by the Ministerial Committee on Legislation when the Jewish Agency Assembly convened in Israel. This event caused a storm among representatives of the Diaspora Jewish community and led to their decision to cancel a festive dinner in the Knesset with Prime Minister Netanyahu for the first time in history.





Only 27% support the position of the ultra-Orthodox parties that the State of Israel must only recognize conversions performed under the auspices of the Chief Rabbinate. 73% oppose this position and reject the conversion bill. Of these 73%, 49% maintain that the State of Israel should recognize all types of conversion, including conversions conducted by the conversion courts of the Reform and Conservative movements in Israel. 24% hold that in addition to the conversions of the Chief Rabbinate, conversions should also be recognized within the framework of more lenient Orthodox courts, such as that of Rabbis Riskin, Rabinowitz and Stav, which the Chief Rabbinate refuses to recognize.

73% of Likud voters oppose the conversion bill (42% support recognition of all types of conversions and 31% support recognition of conversions performed by the Orthodox courts). It is clear that even among voters for the Jewish Home party there is no trust in the Chief Rabbinate, and 67% oppose the conversion bill (16% support all conversions and 51% support those performed by liberal Orthodox courts). Not surprisingly, only 3% of Yisrael Beiteinu voters support the Chief Rabbinate's monopoly on conversion.



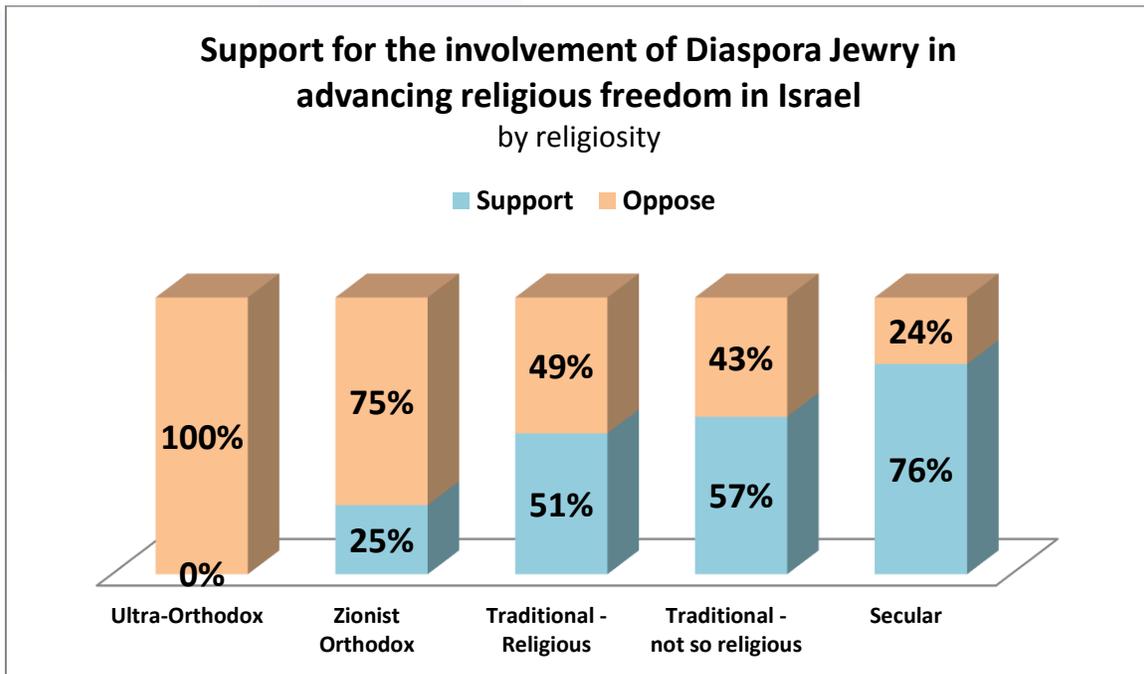
In examining the public's relationship to the various streams of Judaism, the question also arises as to the attitude toward the involvement of Diaspora Jewry in promoting freedom of religion and pluralism in Israel.

The significance of this question and understanding the attitude toward the involvement of Diaspora Jewry, which mostly identifies with the non-Orthodox streams, is clear in the face of harsh statements made by government figures such as Tourism Minister Yariv Levin and Chairman of the Knesset Internal Affairs Committee MK David Amsalem (Prime Minister Netanyahu, on the other hand, recognizes the strategic importance of maintaining dialogue and cooperation with Diaspora Jewry). This is also important to Diaspora Jewry itself, which often asks whether the Israeli public welcomes its involvement in these issues and care for its opinion.



The answer is clear: 55% of the adult Jewish public supports the involvement of Diaspora Jewry, compared with 45% who oppose it. A majority of voters for all civil parties (including a majority among Likud voters) support this: 52% - Likud, 73% - Kulanu, 76% - Yisrael Beiteinu; and among opposition party voters: Zionist Union - 81%, Yesh Atid - 72%, Meretz - 76%. The only majority opposed was among the voters for the religious parties, and this is certainly not so much in relation to the question of the involvement of Diaspora Jewry in its own right, but rather due to their opposition to freedom of religion and pluralism: Jewish Home - 66%, United Torah Judaism - 98% and Shas - 92%.

An examination of the Index findings those of previous surveys conducted by Hiddush allows us to conclude, on the one hand, that there is majority support for the involvement of Diaspora Jewry and its leadership in matters of religion and state in Israel. However, on the other hand, this has mostly grown due the Israeli public's consistently increasing concern over the struggle for marriage freedom in Israel (as opposed to other matters of religion and state in general and the issues of the Wall and conversion specifically).





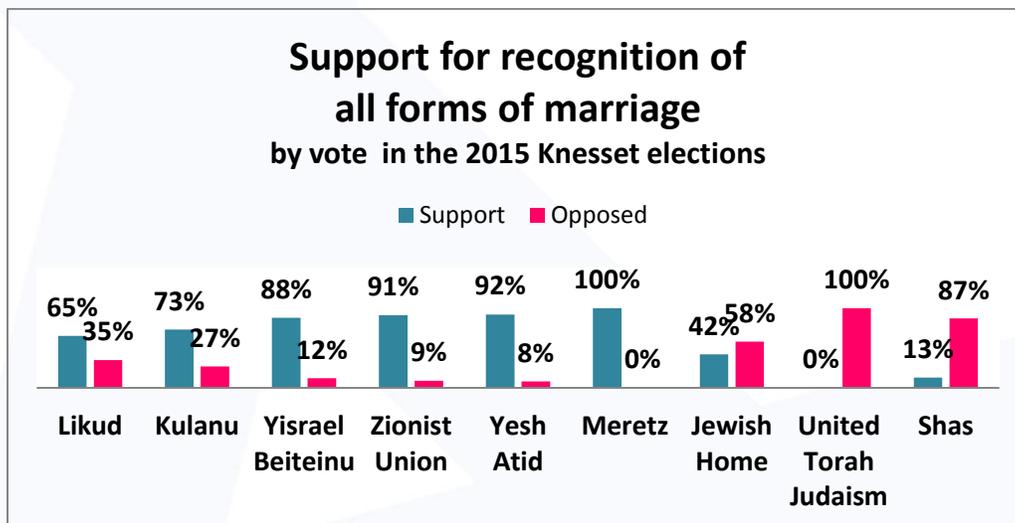
## Freedom of marriage\*

67% support Israel's recognition of all forms of marriage.  
Personal preference for non-Orthodox weddings increases.

As in previous years, Hiddush included two regular Index questions on the subject of freedom of marriage. One question measures the degree of support for the State of Israel to allowing freedom of choice in marriage, and not limiting Jews to weddings conducted exclusively according to Orthodox Jewish law. The second question examines the respondents' personal preference regarding the type of wedding they would prefer for themselves or their children, given that all the alternatives are available to them and equally recognized by law. In other words, in the first question respondents are asked to express their position on the proper state of affairs in Israel in the arena of marriage freedom, regardless of whether they themselves prefer an alternative to Orthodox marriage. The other question examines the public's personal preferences.

67% of the Jewish public in Israel supports Israel's recognition of all forms of marriage, including civil, Conservative and Reform. This includes 90% of secular Israeli Jews, 81% of the "traditional - not so religious" and 49% of the "traditional - close to religion". This question has been posed annually in every Israel Religion & State Index, and there has been a consistent increase in support over the years. In 2009 support was at a level of only 53%, and in 2010 the percentage of supporters has risen to 61%. In 2016 support was at 66%, and today, in 2017, support is at 67%.

Among voters for the civil Coalition parties, 65% of Likud, 73% of Kulanu, 88% of Yisrael Beiteinu, and 42% of the Jewish Home voters support freedom of choice in marriage. It should be noted that support among women [73%] is significantly higher than among men [59%].



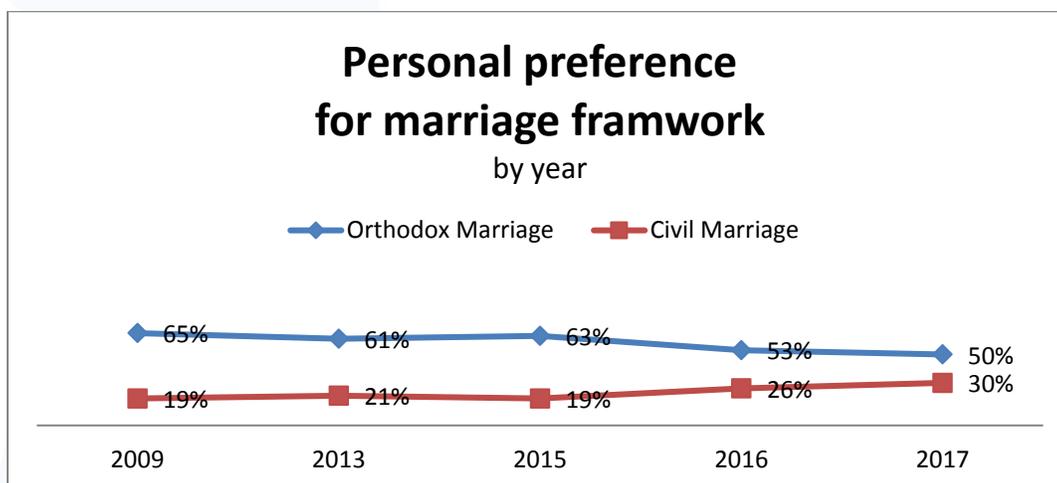


The question of personal preference was formulated as follows: **"If you or any of your children want to marry - What framework would you choose for marriage (assuming all these options exist and are equally recognized by law?)"**

50% expressed their preference for non-Orthodox marriages or partnerships (11% prefer Conservative or Reform chuppah ceremonies, 30% prefer civil marriage, and 9% prefer cohabitation without formal marriage). This is consistent with Hiddush's survey for the holiday of Lag BaOmer, which indicated that 55% of the Jewish public would prefer alternative marriages outside the auspices of the Chief Rabbinate. This percentage also includes couples who would prefer Orthodox marriages, but outside the auspices of the Chief Rabbinate. This phenomenon is growing in Israel, as an expression of conscientious objection by couples who live according to Orthodox Jewish law but reject the Chief Rabbinate's monopoly. Parallel phenomena can be seen in the field of kashrut ("Hashgacha Pratit" and other initiatives) and conversion ("Giyur k'Halacha" and other initiatives).

84% of the secular Jewish public (which constitutes almost 50% of the Jewish population in Israel), i.e. more than four out of every five secular Jews in Israel would prefer to marry outside the auspices of the Chief Rabbinate if they had a choice! [53% would prefer civil marriage, 17% - Reform or Conservative marriage, and 14% - cohabitation without marriage. Only 16% of the secular Jewish public would prefer marriage to the Rabbinate].

In exploring the responses to this question over the years, there is a significant and consistent decline in the percentage of those who would prefer Orthodox marriage via the Chief Rabbinate. **In 2009, 65% preferred this, in 2013 - 61%, in 2016 - 53%, and in 2017 only 50%!** This represents a drop of 15% drop in 8 years. On the other hand, the preference for civil marriage has grown: in 2009 only 19% expressed their preference for this alternative, and today 30% of the Jewish Israeli public would choose civil marriage as their preferred marriage framework.





Support for surveying public opinion regarding marriage freedom is generously provided by JFNA's Israel Religious Expression Platform

## The political system

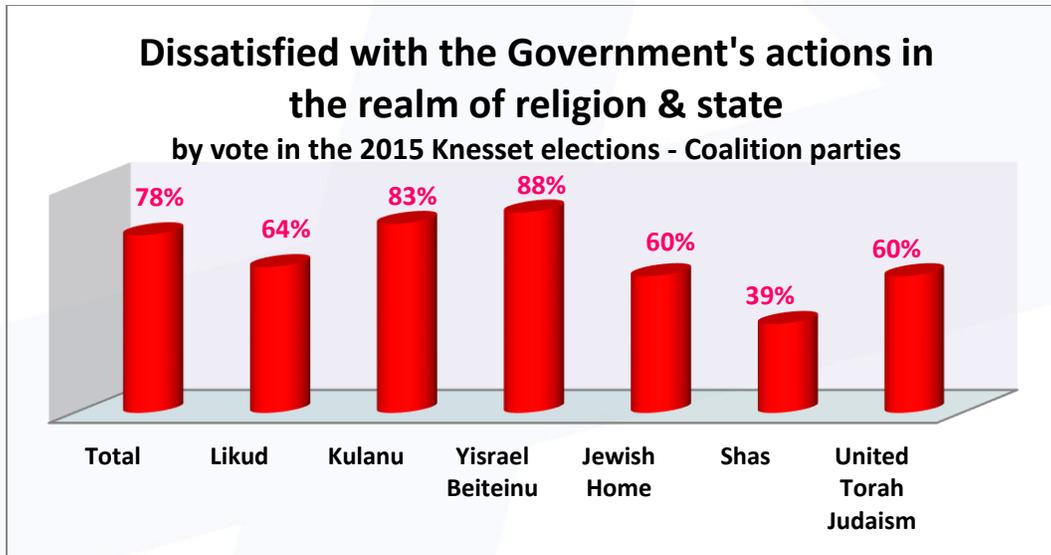
### Most of voters for the Government Coalition parties are dissatisfied with the government's conduct in the areas of religion and state

One of the topics on which the Index focuses is the public's attitude to the government's policies on religion and state. In this 2017 Index, we attach special importance to these questions, particularly in light of the Government's consistent policies based on its coalition agreements, which dictate its policies, budget, and legislative priorities in this arena. Moreover, during this last year the tension between key Coalition leaders and the Supreme Court has increased, and strident voices from within government leadership have assaulted Israel's judicial system and have attempted to delegitimize the Court by claiming that only the Government Coalition represents the will of the people, while the High Court of Justice is removed from public will and has lost public trust. These voices also claim that the Jewish public is essentially "Orthodox," and that there is no room for pluralism at the Western Wall (for example), public transportation on Shabbat, or ending the Chief Rabbinate's monopoly. Beyond the substantive and ethical aspects of these arguments (and their connection to democratic principles and the values of Israel as a Jewish and democratic State), there is the glaring matter of the gap between these politicians' proclamations and the public's true will, which is in the spirit of Israel's Declaration of Independence.

The questions asked in the 2017 Index (such as the attitudes toward the conversion bill and public transportation on Shabbat) underscore this increasing gap. Below we will detail additional questions that were included in the Index, measuring the level of public support for having the ultra-Orthodox political parties in the Coalition, its support for requiring political parties to include women on their party lists for the Knesset, and the public's levels of trust for relevant government institutions (Knesset, Government, Supreme Court, Chief Rabbinate, Rabbinical Courts). These will be considerations in the next Knesset elections.

There is no basis in reality for the self-righteousness and pretentiousness expressed by Government leaders and the rabbinic establishment when they claim to be the exclusive representatives of the public's will. Will this have implications for the composition of the next Knesset? Time will tell, but it is clear that these issues may affect Israelis' votes in the next elections, in light of their growing dissatisfaction and frustration with the policies adopted by the parties, which they voted in the past.

The first question that was asked in this series of questions, after respondents were told that "The political system deals with a long list of issues of religion and state, such as conversion, marriage, exemption from military service for yeshiva students, budgets for yeshivas and more," was: **"To what extent are you satisfied with the government's actions in the arena of religion and state?"**



78% of the adult Jewish public (81% of the non-ultra-Orthodox Jewish population) are dissatisfied with the government's actions in matters of religion and state. This is a small decrease of 3% compared to the 2016 Index, in which 81% expressed dissatisfaction, but it can be understood by the composition of the coalition and current government's policies: the rate of satisfaction among the ultra-Orthodox public increased from 39% to 48% and among the Zionist Orthodox public from 41% to 56%! The reason for the increase in the percentage of satisfaction among these two sectors is a clear cause for concern for the rest of the Jewish and non-Jewish Israeli population. As in the past, over 90% of the secular public is not satisfied with the government's policies. All sectors of Jewish society are dissatisfied: either because they feel that there is an urgent need to strengthen freedom of religion and equality, or: because they feel that Israel does not yet sufficiently resemble a theocratic Jewish state governed by the Torah and Jewish law. 92% of secular Jews are dissatisfied, 82% of the "traditional - not so religious", 65% of the "traditional - close to religion". Even 44% of the Zionist Orthodox and 52% of the ultra-Orthodox are dissatisfied with government activities in religion and state.

In the second question, the Index examined the public's position on the partnership of the ultra-Orthodox parties in the Government Coalition. The question was formulated as follows: **"In most Coalitions in recent decades, the ultra-Orthodox parties were part of the Coalition and enjoyed great influence in the field of religion and state, just as in the current government. Do you support or oppose having a government without the ultra-Orthodox parties?"**

The answer to this question indicates, as expected, a direct link between dissatisfaction with the government's activities in the sphere of religion and state the public's desire for a government without the ultra-Orthodox parties. 66% of the public supports a government without the ultra-Orthodox parties, a stable result in recent years. Among the supporters are 87% of secular Israelis, 75% of "traditional - not so religious" Israelis, and 58%



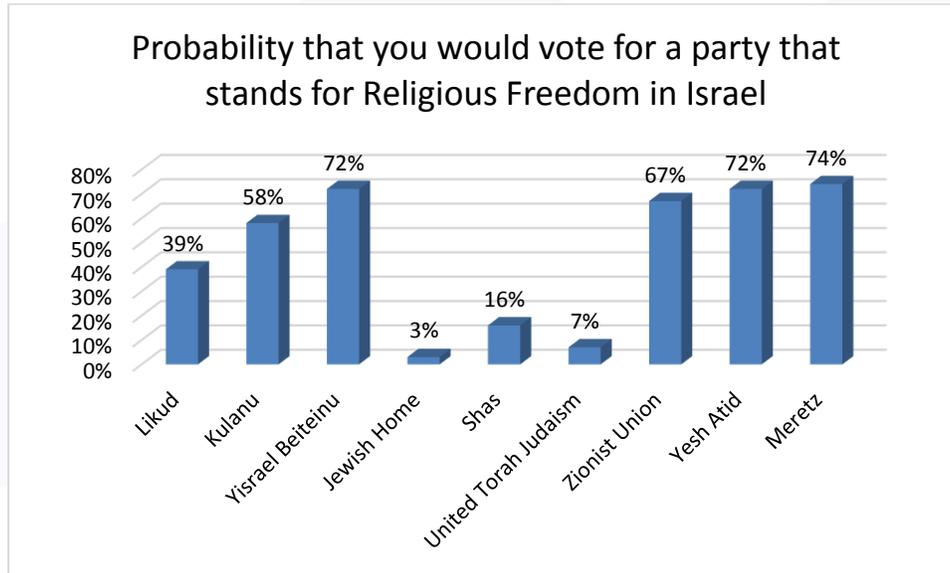
of the "traditional - close to religion" Jewish Israelis. 71% of the Zionist Orthodox and 95% of the ultra-Orthodox sectors oppose a government without the ultra-Orthodox parties.

Most of the voters for the civil parties in the Coalition support a government without the ultra-Orthodox parties. This is of course in contrast to the Government Coalition, which needs the political support of the United Torah Judaism and Shas parties. Sixty percent of Likud, 66 percent of Kulanu, 86 percent of Yisrael Beiteinu, and 45 percent of Jewish Home voters support a government without the ultra-Orthodox parties. As expected, 87% of Shas voters and 97% of United Torah Judaism voters oppose this. It is also important to note that 94% of Yesh Atid and 89% of Zionist Union voters want a Government without the ultra-Orthodox parties.

In light of the dramatic policy, budgeting, and legislative changes brought along by this government after the previous government, which did not include the ultra-Orthodox parties in the Coalition, and in light of the questions regarding and public attention given to the positions of the main opposition parties, Hiddush included a question to explore the impact of the public's views upon their votes. The question was formulated as follows: **"If an existing party, which is compatible with your political outlook on security and economic issues, announces that it is committed to the principles of freedom of religion and equality of civic burden and will work to advance these in the Knesset and the Government if it is in the Government Coalition - will this strengthen or weaken the probability that you would vote for it in the next elections?"**

67% of Zionist Union, 72% of Yesh Atid, 72% of Yisrael Beiteinu, and 74% of Meretz voters say yes! The percentage of voters for these parties who replied that this would weaken the chances that they would vote for a party that would commit to these principles: 20% of the Likud, 12% of Kulanu, 0% of Yisrael Beiteinu, 5% of the Zionist Union, and 9% of Meretz voters. It is interesting to see the distribution of positions of the voters for the Jewish Home party: 35% say it would increase the probability! 24% responded that it would reduce the probability, and 32% responded that this would not affect their votes.

48% of the adult Jewish public responded that such a commitment would increase the chances of them voting for such a party. 17% said it would reduce the chances, and 20% said it would not affect their vote. A total of 62% of secular Jewish Israelis and 56% of "traditional - not so religious" respondents said that such a commitment would increase the chances that they would vote for a party in the elections (only 8% and 13% respectively said this would weaken the chances). 30% of the Zionist Orthodox public and 58% of the ultra-Orthodox public responded that this would reduce the chances of their voting for a party. It is interesting to note that 27% of the Zionist Orthodox public responded that this would increase the chances of them voting for such a party, which is consistent with other findings that we've noted in our surveys and in the 2016 Index regarding the existence of a significant sub-sector of the Zionist Orthodox public, which supports the promotion of freedom of religion and equality and believes that the current government's actions are damaging religious Zionism (areas of kashrut and conversion, for example). This trend is most likely to increase if there the trajectory of Israeli politics does not shift.



## Women's right to representation

**The majority of the public supports changing the law to require all parties, including the ultra-Orthodox parties, to have a minimum representation of women on their Knesset lists**

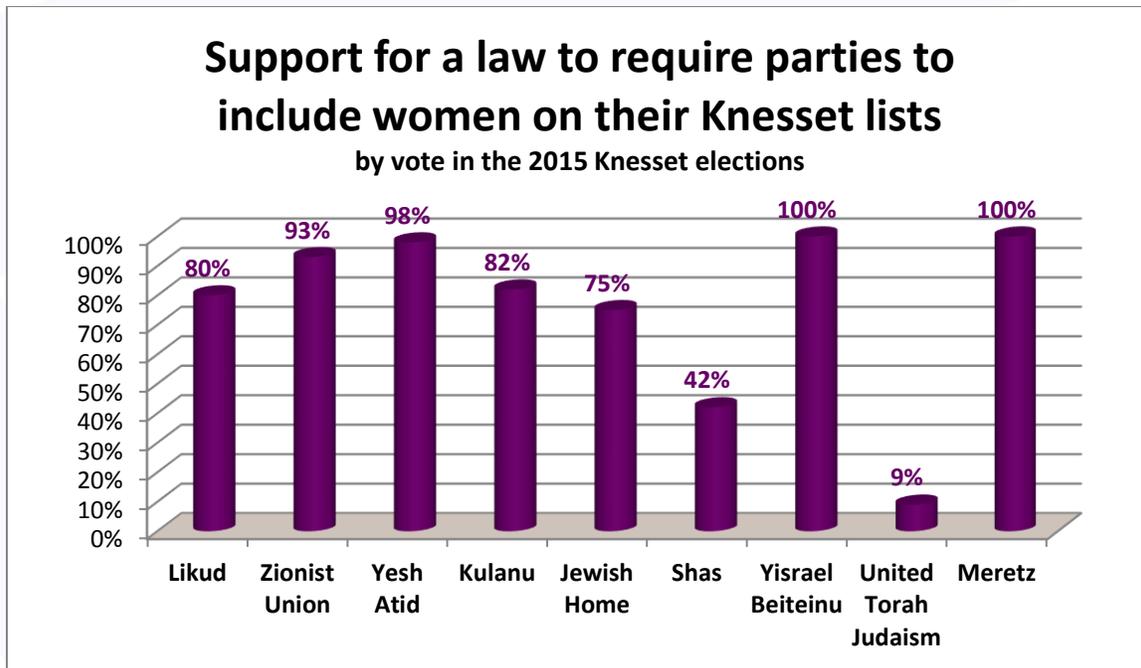
One of the issues on the public, political and legal agenda in recent years are the implications of religious views of gender equality. The 2017 Index includes a question on a matter, pending before the Supreme Court, which symbolizes the gap between the principle of equal societal status for women, which Israel boasts of, and the increasing exclusion of women in the name of religion in a variety of public spaces. The subject we examined is the policy of the ultra-Orthodox parties, which prohibit women from being equal members of their parties and exclude them from their lists of Knesset candidates. The question was formulated as follows: **"Do you support or oppose the position that the Parties Law should be amended to oblige all parties, including the ultra-Orthodox parties, to allow women to be party members and to include women in realistic places on their lists of Knesset candidates?"**

79% support such a change to the law and 21% oppose it. In 2014, this question was asked in a different form, exploring whether parties should be required to represent a minimum number of women. Then, only 51% supported it. In other words, given that this is indeed a different formulation of the question, this represents a 28% increase in support of requiring the representation of women in politics, including in the ultra-Orthodox parties.



91% of secular Israelis, 84% of "traditional - not so religious" Jews, 79% of "traditional - close to religion" Israelis, and 67% of Zionist Orthodox Jews support a law that would require women to be included on the parties' lists of Knesset candidates. 81% of ultra-Orthodox Jews oppose this. 87% of women support, compared to 70% of men.

80% of the Likud, 82% of Kulanu, 100% of Yisrael Beiteinu, and 75% of Jewish Home party voters favor representation for women. Even 42% of Shas voters support this.



## Nation-State bill

**The majority of the public favors anchoring the Israeli Declaration of Independence's promise of freedom of religion and conscience in the proposed Nation-State bill**

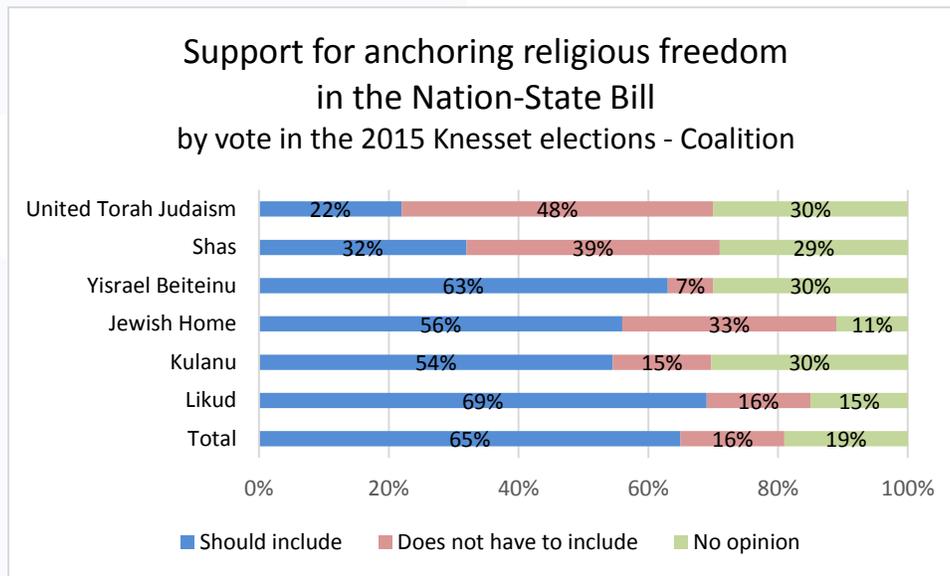
Recently, the initiative to enact the Basic Law: 'Israel - the Nation-State of the Jewish people' arose again before the Knesset. This legislative initiative has aroused much public, political, media, legal and international debate. Most of the dispute revolves around the question of the need for such legislation, its implications for Israel's minorities, changes it may introduce to the "Jewish and democratic" balance, the status of Jewish religious law, and the connection between the bill and the principles put forth in the Declaration of Independence.

The main purpose of this bill is to establish in law the fact that Israel is the national home of the Jewish people, and it also addresses questions of Jewish heritage and Jewish law. The Index this year includes a question, examining the extent to which the public supports anchoring the principle of freedom of religion in the Nation-



State bill. We therefore asked as follows: **"The proposed Basic Law: 'Israel - The Nation State of the Jewish People' is being debated in the Knesset and there is disagreement over how the law will establish the State's Jewish identity in relation to its democratic identity. In your opinion, should the law include or not include the promise of the Declaration of Independence for 'freedom of religion and conscience'?"**

A large majority of 65% (80% of those who expressed an opinion on the issue) believe that the Nation-State bill should include the anchoring of the Declaration of Independence's promise of freedom of religion and conscience. Only 16% (20% of those who expressed an opinion) opposed this (19% did not express an opinion). Support for the inclusion of the principle of freedom of religion and conscience was expressed by 79% of secular Israelis, a large majority of the "traditional - not so religious" (67%), as well as the "traditional - close to religion" (62%).



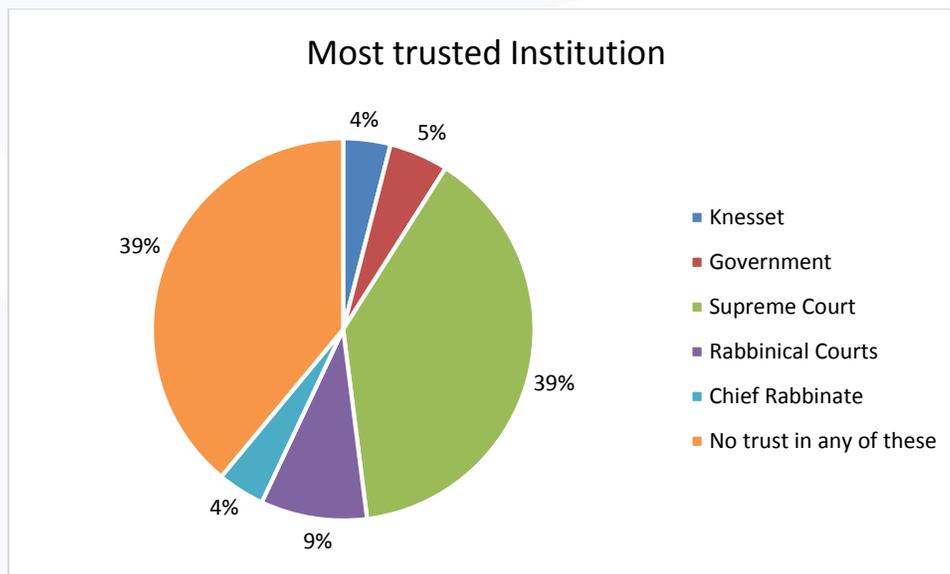
## The degree of trust in public institutions

### The Supreme Court enjoys the greatest trust, the government - the least

Repeatedly, some government leaders have attacked the Supreme Court, particularly on matters of religion & state, security and budget. Their criticism is on two levels: a rejection of the court's views, decisions, and motives; and the denial of the legitimacy of the court's intervention in Government and Knesset decisions. The recent criticism is masqueraded by a democratic pretense that Government authorities have won the trust of the people and represent them, whereas the Justices do not represent anyone, and therefore they should be restrained and not poke at the wheels of government. The dispute over the Court's positions is, of course, legitimate and generally acceptable, although it raises questions about the attitude of these government figures towards the principle of the rule of law, the basic laws, and the values of democracy and proper administration.



However, with regard to the de-legitimization of the Supreme Court, in presenting themselves as representatives of the public's will against a court that does not represent anyone and acts contrary to public opinion, Hiddush decided to examine whether these claims reflect the public's position, or whether they simply aim to undermine the authority of the court and public trust in it. As is well known, the Chief Rabbinate has also tried to stifle the court, and therefore **we posed a question to examine which institution enjoys the greatest level of public trust, among the relevant institutions, and which enjoys the lowest level of trust. We included the Knesset, the Government, the Supreme Court, the Rabbinical Courts and the Chief Rabbinate. We also offered respondents the possibility of answering that they did not trust any of these.**



A high and worrying percentage [39%] responded that they do not have trust in any of these institutions, but among those who expressed confidence in the state institutions, a clear and unequivocal picture emerged: The public placed its trust in the Supreme Court and not in its critics, who claim to represent the public. Not only do those who undermine the authority of the Supreme Court not represent the public, but they do not even represent their voters!

The following are the levels of trust as measured in the index, which present a compelling picture: the Supreme Court - 39%, the Rabbinical Courts - 9%, the Government - 5%, the Knesset and the Chief Rabbinate - 4%.

There is no doubt that alongside the clear picture provided by the Index regarding the Supreme Court enjoying a level of public trust that far exceeds that of the political system and the religious establishment, the Index also reveals a deep breach in the public's trust in its institutions, which is particularly severe among the traditional and immigrant publics. No less problematic is the fact that the lack of trust in these institutions, including the Knesset and the government, is so high among voters for the Coalition parties. Another aspect of these findings



is that the distrust of the ultra-Orthodox and Zionist Orthodox public in the Supreme Court is rooted not only in the Supreme Court as a State institution, but rather in a deeper ambivalence towards the rule of law and the legitimacy of Israel's civil law in comparison to religious Jewish law.

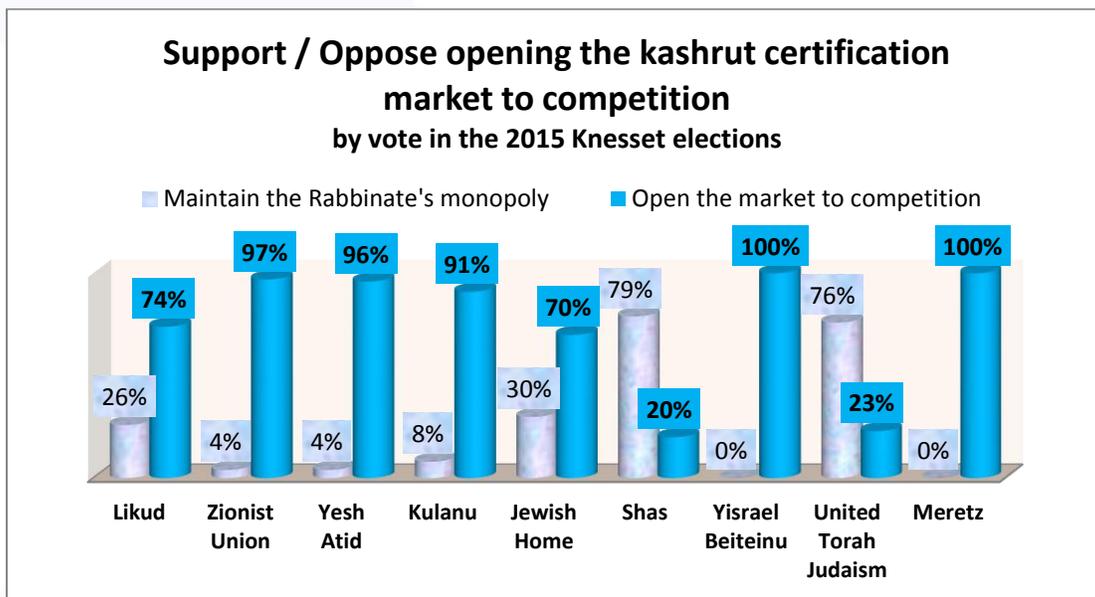
The distribution of responses to this question according to voting patterns in the last Knesset elections and according to levels of religious observance is enlightening and can be viewed in the full report.

In order to complete the picture, we asked another question regarding the list of institutions: **"Which institution do you have the least trust in?"** Among the adult Jewish public, this is the list of institutions with the highest levels of public distrust: the government - 23%, the Chief Rabbinate - 19%, the rabbinical courts - 18%; the Supreme Court - 16%, and the Knesset - 13%.

In comparing the findings of the institutions with the most trust to those with the least trust, it is clear that the Supreme Court is the only public institution with a positive gap, which means that many more view it as the most reliable institution [39%] than see it as the least trustworthy institution [16%]. With regard to all the other institutions listed, more of the public perceives them to be least trustworthy than perceives them to be most trustworthy.

## Kashrut certification

80% in favor of abolishing the Rabbinate's monopoly on kashrut



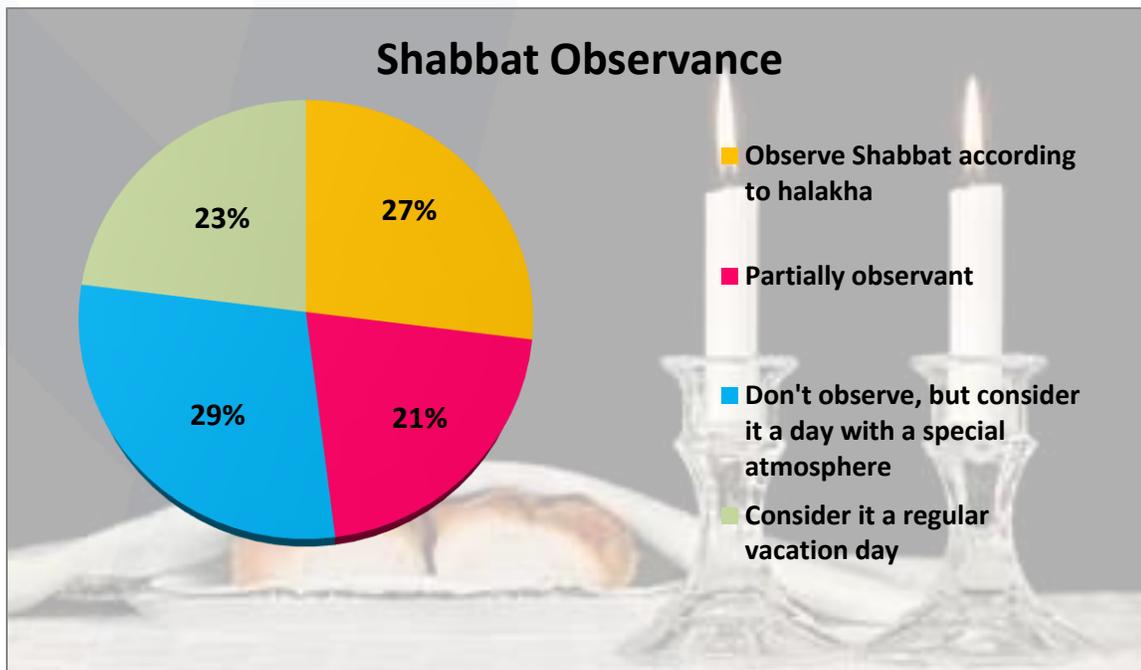


Cancelling of the Chief Rabbinate's monopoly in the area of kashrut certification continues to enjoy broad social consensus, and has continued to rise: 80% favor the opening of the kashrut certification market to competition. Among secular Jews, 95% support the opening of the kashrut certification market, of which 80% favor opening it to non-Orthodox professionals. 96% of "traditional - not so religious" Israelis support this, and 56% of them favor opening the market to non-Orthodox professionals. 67% of "traditional - close to religion" Israelis support this, and about half of the Zionist Orthodox sector does too. 73% of ultra-Orthodox are in favor of maintaining the monopoly of the Chief Rabbinate.

## Shabbat

The public's position is clear: we want public transportation on Shabbat

A large majority of the Israeli public attributes importance to Shabbat. However, only 27% observe the Sabbath according to religious Jewish law, and 23% regard it just as a day off.



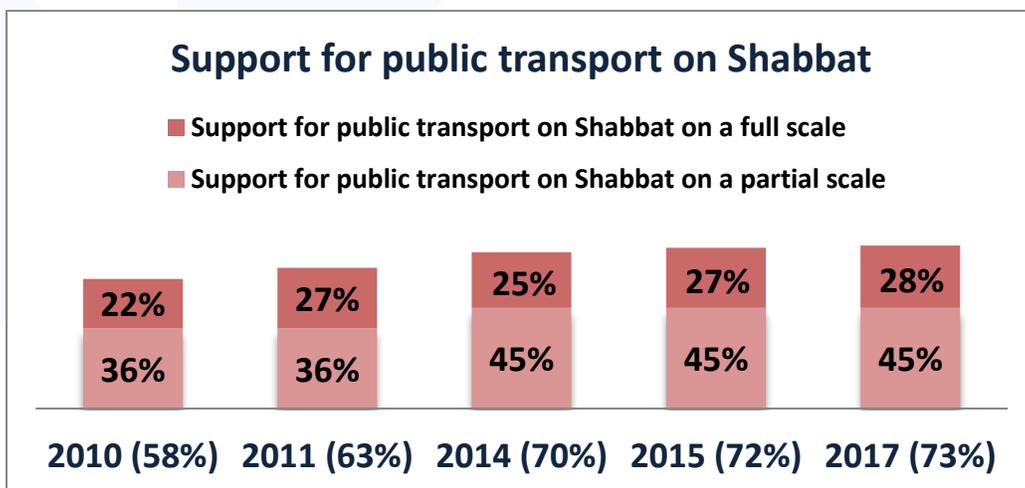
73% of the Jewish public in Israel supports public transportation on Saturdays and holidays on a full or partial scale. Of these, 45% support the operation of public transportation "on a limited scale along central lines, and at a lower frequency, perhaps by shared cab service [rather than buses]" and 28% support allowing for "full-scale public transportation, just like weekdays." On the other hand, 27% oppose this, of which 19% favor the



continuation of the current situation (with almost no public transportation on Shabbat) and 8% want to do away with what is already in place today.

This has been an annual Index question since 2010. Since then, there has been a consistent rise in public support for public transportation on Shabbat, from 58% in 2010, to 63% in 2011, to 70% in 2014, to 73% in 2016 and in this most recent index. The majority of voters for the civil Coalition parties, support full or partial public transportation on Shabbat: 70% of Likud, 82% Kulanu, 93% of Yisrael Beiteinu, and 55% of Jewish Home party voters support this. Among the voters for the ultra-Orthodox parties, 97% of the Shas voters and 93% of the Jewish religious voters objected.

It is interesting to note that most Jewish Home voters support allowing for public transportation on Shabbat, which is consistent with Hiddush's other survey findings and those found in other polls. A large proportion of the Jewish Home voters are not necessarily religious, and their support for this party is based on its positions on security and territories. Further, there is a trend that is becoming increasingly clear: a growing segment of liberal Orthodox people who observe religious Jewish law but recognize the right of others to live as they please without religious coercion.



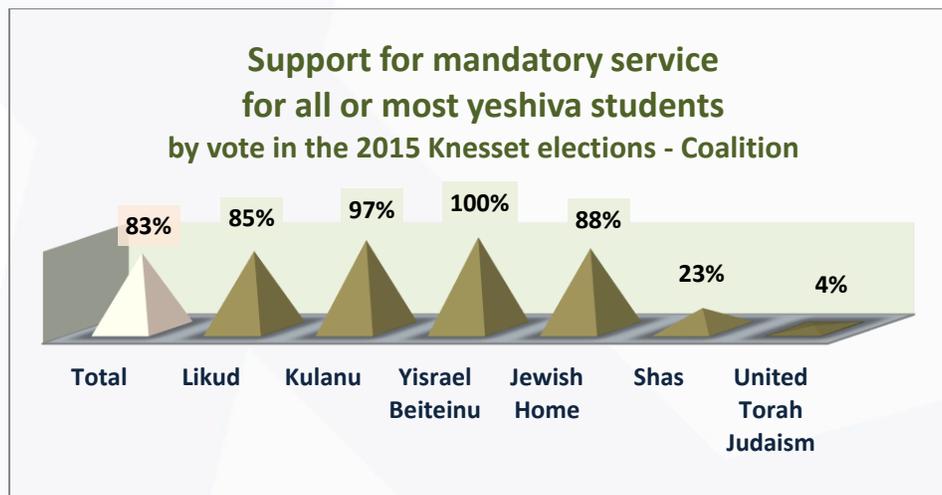


## Enlistment and equality of civic burden All Haredim must be do military or national service

83% of the Jewish public maintain that all yeshiva students should be required to serve in military or perform national service. Of those, 33% believe yeshiva students should be required to at least perform national service, 14% believe that there should be a quota of military exemptions, and 36% believe that all should be recruited for full-time regular military service.

The support of a large majority of the adult Jewish public in Israel for yeshiva students performing military or national service has been stable since this question was first asked in 2010 and has ranged from 80% (2010) to 87% (2011). Compared with 2016, there was an increase in the percentage that indicated that some or all ultra-Orthodox Israelis should be recruited for military service from 46% to 50%. On this issue too, women hold a more determined position when it comes to enlisting all Haredim to full service: 42% of women support this, compared to 29% of men.

Among the voters for the civil coalition parties, which passed the Law for the abolition of criminal sanctions (in effect, making military service purely theoretical) at the demand of the ultra-Orthodox parties, 85% of Likud, 97% of Kulanu, 100% of Yisrael Beiteinu, and 88% of Jewish Home party voters support this. In other words, the leaders of the ultra-Orthodox parties believe that no yeshiva student who wishes to study in a yeshiva should be obligated to serve in the military or perform civilian service, but the Index clearly shows that on this issue, in particular, the civil Coalition parties act not only against Israel's national interest and the principle of equality, but also in complete contradiction to the will of their voters.



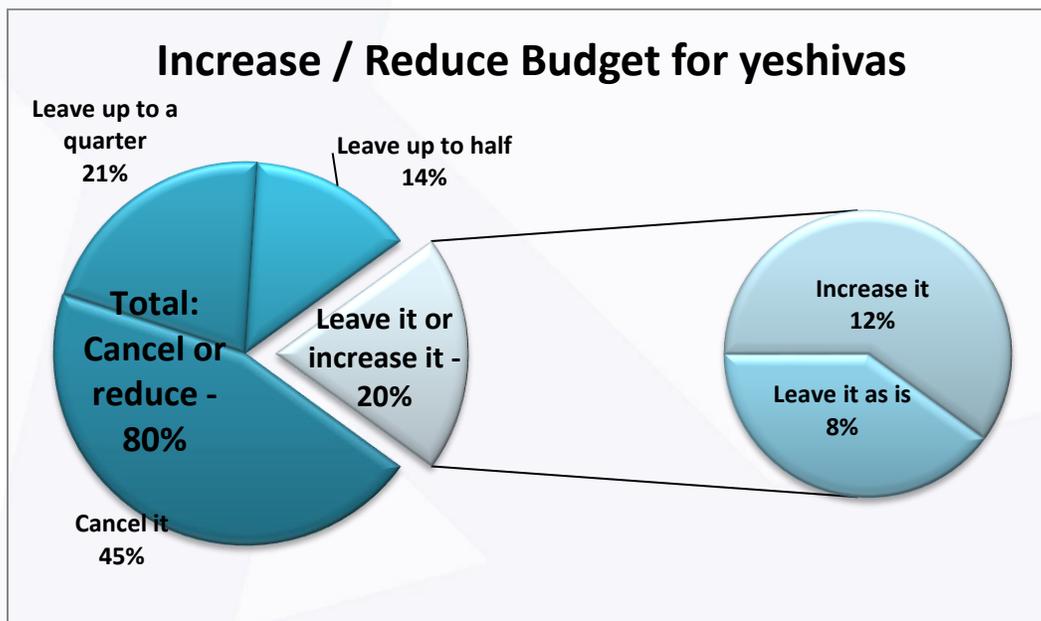
## The government budget for yeshivas

### 80% of the public wants to do away with or cut the budget for yeshivas

In March 2017, the government approved increased budgetary funds for yeshivas, bringing this budget line to an all-time high level of state financial support for yeshivas. [The budget now stands at 1.224 billion NIS per year]. This last increase broke the record for the third time in less than a year: At the beginning of 2016, the yeshiva budget stood at 984 million NIS. In June 2016, following a demand by the ultra-Orthodox parties, the budget was increased to 1.119 billion NIS. In November 2016, the budget was increased again to 1.17 billion NIS as part of the Coalition agreements, and in March 2017 the budget was increased based on the claim that the number of students grew. [It should be noted that, as expected, this increase in the number of students studying in yeshivas is due to the increase in government subsidies and has resulted in a reduction in the number of yeshiva students in the workforce in the first quarter of 2017.]

80% of the Jewish public and 88% of the non-ultra-Orthodox public hold that the yeshiva budget should be canceled (45%) or cut to a quarter or half of its current size (35%). Only 8% think it should stay as is, and 12% believe it should be increased as much as possible.

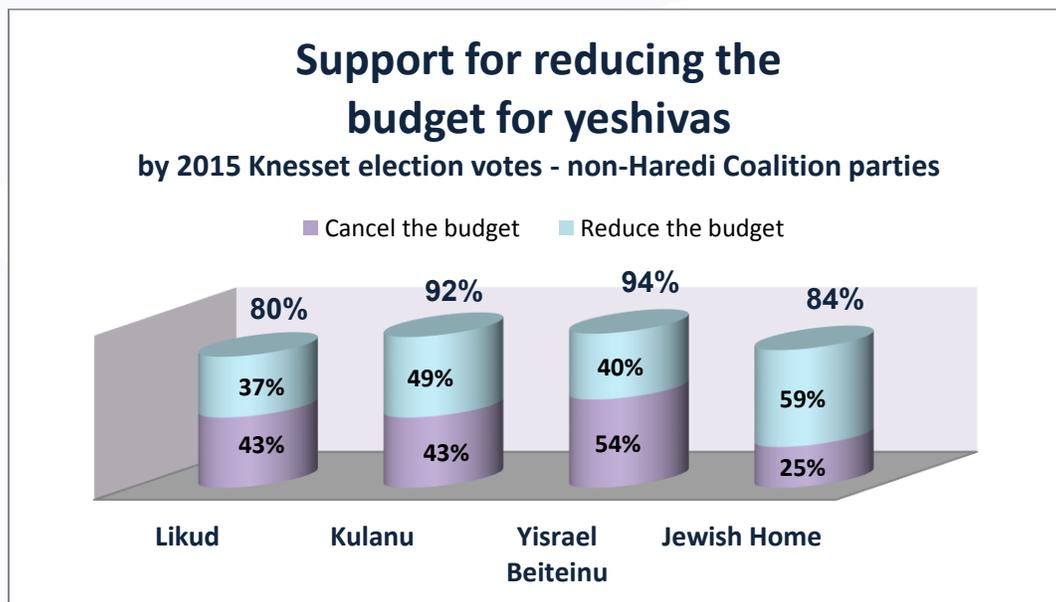
Compared with 2016 Index, there was an increase in the percentage of Jewish Israelis who are of the opinion that yeshiva budget should be completely abolished - from 39% to 45%. There was also a decrease in the percentage of those who held that some of it should be left - from 40% to 35%, respectively. This dynamic is undoubtedly related to the public's growing resentment over the fact that the ultra-Orthodox parties dictate their will to the entire Government Coalition, in contrast to what the public has always considered necessary, the basic value of equality, and the national interest.





Just as in regards to the matter of conscription of yeshiva students, the gap between government policy on yeshiva budgets and the will of the majority of voters for the Coalition parties is clear. Among voters for the civil Coalition parties, support for the cancellation or reduction of the yeshiva budget is high: 80% of Likud, 92% of Kulanu, 94% of Yisrael Beiteinu, and 84% of the Jewish Home voters. 60% of Shas voters and 85% of United Torah Judaism voters believe that the budget should be increased.

In this regard, also, the position of women is more determined than that of men, and while 50% of women believe that the yeshiva budget should be abolished completely, only 39% of men believe this.



## Education - the core curriculum

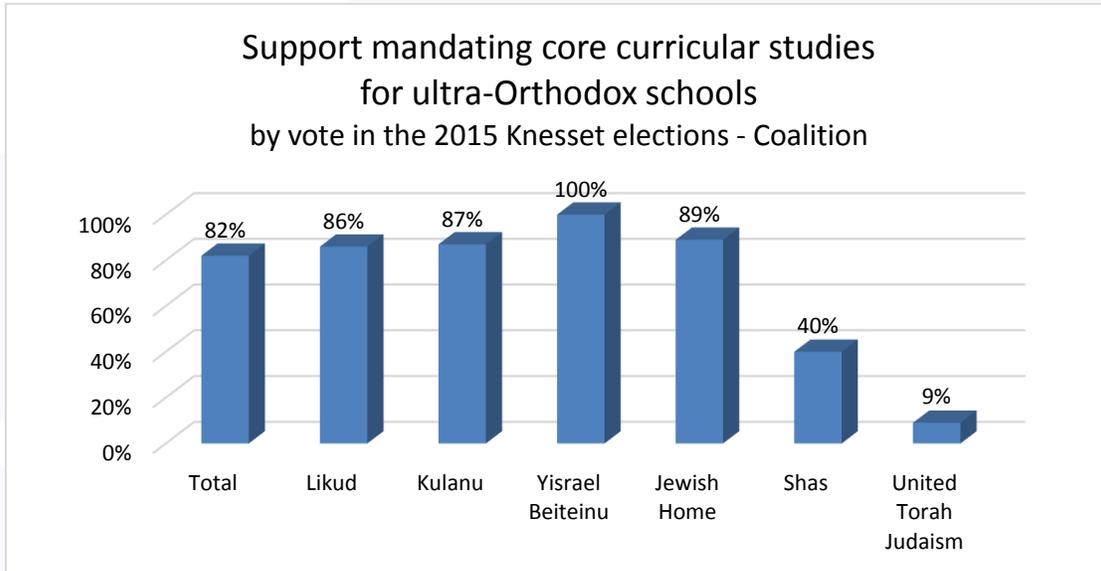
82% of the Jewish public: government funded ultra-Orthodox schools should be required to implement state core curricular studies

82% of the Jewish public supports **requiring ultra-Orthodox schools to teach mathematics, English, science, and civics**. In this regard, this is a stable position and no shift has occurred in the past three years. Among the supporters of obligatory core curricular studies - 94% of the secular Israelis, 91% of "traditional - not so religious", 83% of "traditional - close to religion", 74% of Zionist Orthodox, and 14% of ultra-Orthodox Jews. Women are also more likely to support this (87%) than men (76%).

86% of Likud voters favor obligating ultra-Orthodox schools to implement core curricular studies, as do 87% of Kulanu, 100% of Yisrael Beiteinu, 89% of Jewish Home, and 40% of Shas voters. Only 9% of United Torah Judaism



party voters support it. Among the opposition parties - 94% of Zionist Union, 96% of Yesh Atid, and 94% of Meretz voters support obligatory core curricular studies in the ultra-Orthodox sector as well.



In exploring the public's position on enforcement of core curricular studies, a majority supports denying funding to schools that do not teach the core curriculum. 72% hold that funding should be denied to schools that do not teach the core curriculum [40% support only denying funding to these schools, and 32% believe that running a school without implementing the core curriculum should be a criminal offense punishable by heavy fines.]

Over time, we see an increase in the percentage of those who support the most severe sanctions [denying funding **and** prosecution] from 24% in 2010 to 32% today. Further, we see an increase in the percentage of those who support taking measures against schools that do not teach core curricular studies [denying funding and/or prosecution] from 62% in 2010 to 72% today.

Among the voters for the coalition parties - 68% of the Likud, 79% of Kulanu, 95% of Yisrael Beiteinu, and 72% of the Jewish Home voters favor applying economic and/or criminal sanctions.

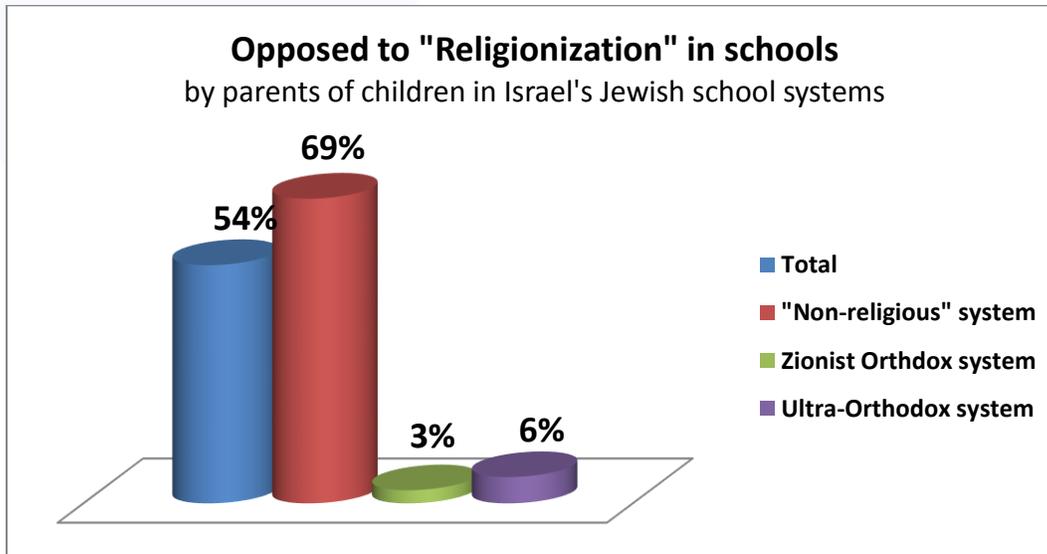


## Education - "Religionization" in the education system

### Parents of children in the 'non-religious' state school system: oppose religionization and support the establishment of a "Secular State Education Council"

One of the burning issues in the summer of 2017 in the field of religion and state was the subject of the religionization - a process that is expressed by strengthening the religious components in secular Jewish education. While Minister of Education Naftali Bennett says dismissively that "there is no religionization, nor schmeligionization" in the non-religious public education system, 58% of the Jewish public claims that there is. What is even more significant - 69% of the parents of children in the state public non-religious school system say that there is a process of religionization. Among parents of children who study in the Zionist Orthodox education system (73%) or the ultra-Orthodox education system (68%), most parents do not think there is religionization.

We examined this subject from several angles: 1. Does the public maintain that there is a process of religionization; 2. Insofar as there is a process of religionization - whether the public supports or opposes it; 3. Is the opposition to Jewish studies in principle or to the way in which they are transmitted in the public non-religious education system (specifically, what are the public's views regarding the inclusion of Jewish heritage content on condition that it is presented pluralistically); 4. As far as the current situation in the public education system is concerned, is part of the solution to protecting secular education an establishment a "Secular State Education council," similar to the Council that supervises and protects Zionist Orthodox public education.

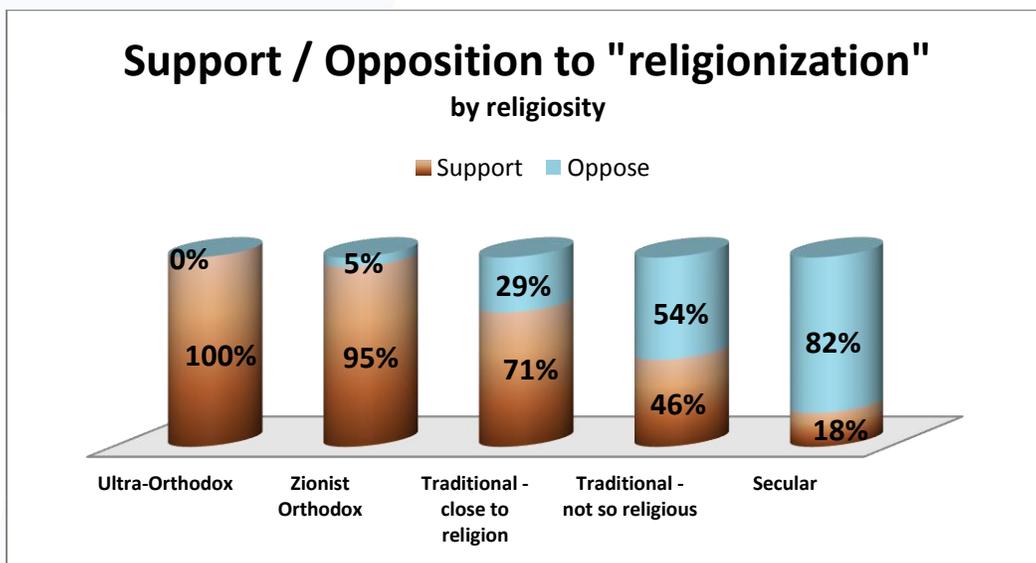




The findings are instructive and present a more complex picture than is reflected in the media, especially when we isolate and observe the views of those who have children in the public non-religious school system from the rest of the respondents.

As we have noted, despite the vigorous denials of the Education Minister and the Director General of the Ministry, the public, especially the parents, do not believe them and reject their claims. Among parents of children in the "non-religious" state school system, about 70% oppose the process of religionization, and do not accept the claims of those who try to justify it or to minimize the harm it causes. Perhaps the most important finding of all is the broad support for the inclusion of Jewish content in the state education system, provided it is presented with a pluralistic approach. In other words, there is no objection to Jewish studies, but rather to the narrow-mindedness and the attempts at brainwashing by teachers, study materials, National Service volunteers, and Orthodox Jewish evangelizing organizations that are brought in from outside the schools with generous funding from the Ministry of Education to "strengthen the Jewish identity" of students in "secular" Jewish schools.

It turns out that one's perception of reality is largely dictated by religious identity, namely, not only regarding state support for the policy of religionization, but also the very question of whether it exists. While 77% of secular Israelis believe that there is religionization, as do 56% of the "traditional - not so religious" - 64% of the "traditional - close to religion", 74% of the Zionist Orthodox, and 80% of the ultra-Orthodox do not believe that there is religionization in Israel's "non-religious" schools. Among parents of children studying in the state non-religious education system, 69% agree that there is a phenomenon of religionization!



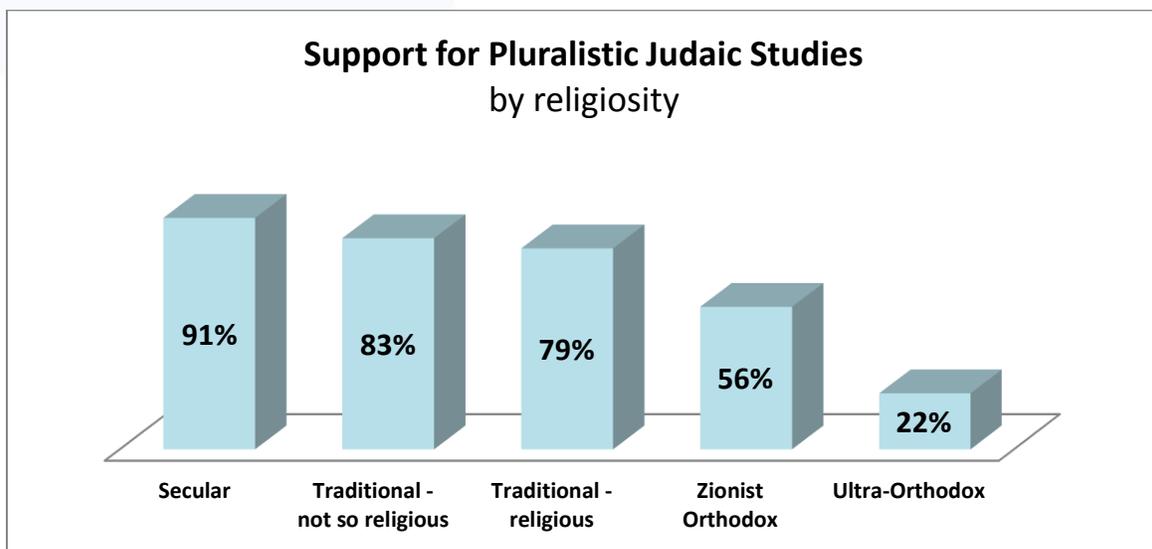


54% of respondents object to the process of religionization, but when examining the position of parents of children in the "non-religious" state education system it turns out that the rate of opposition to religionization among them is 69%! When we analyzed the responses to this question in relation to the responses to the previous question, it emerged that among those who believe that there is a process of religionization - 77% oppose it, and among those who did not agree that there is a process of religionization, 73% support it.

As mentioned above, it turns out that the main objection is to Jewish evangelization, which is identified with the process of religionization that exists today, according to most of the respondents, especially parents of children in the "non-religious" state school system and the secular public. However, this objection should not be confused with the matter of one's relationship to Jewish heritage, if it is taught in the State education system in a way that respects the Jewish identities of its students and their families, their ways of life, and a pluralistic worldview.

78% of the public expresses support for pluralistic Jewish education, which exposes students to the wealth of Jewish interpretations and approaches, including secular, Orthodox and non-Orthodox concepts! Among the group most relevant to this question and to the public struggle over the issue of religionization - among parents of children in the non-religious public education system - 87% agree!

The fact that 59% of the parents of children in the Zionist Orthodox school system also agree indicates that even within the public religious education system there is a high level of dissatisfaction with the way that Judaism is presented to their children, and there is openness to a more pluralistic approach than exists today.





The last question in the series of questions related to the phenomenon of religionization in the state education system dealt with the way in which secular education should be protected - to what extent does the public support the establishment of a Secular State Education Council, similar to the Council of Religious Education, which the Minister of Education must receive approval from for the contents of education and appointments.

60% of the public supports the establishment of such a Council. This figure is even more significant when we examine the distribution of positions and the identities of those who support this process. 82% of secular Israelis support the establishment of a formal framework to protect their children's education, similar to the protection provided by the Council of Zionist Orthodox Education.

There is an increase in support for the establishment of a Secular State Education Council - from 51% among the general public (68% of the secular population) in 2016 to 60% among the general public (82% of the secular population) in 2017. There is no doubt that this reflects both increasing awareness and concern among the public, especially the secular public, about the scope of the phenomenon, the increasing public opposition to all aspects of government policy regarding religion and state, and the growing support for freedom of religion and conscience.

The feeling of a large majority among the parents of the non-religious public education system is that there is a need to defend the integrity of secular education against the religious political forces that control the Ministry of Education. It is hard not to recall the demand to establish the Council for Zionist Orthodox Education in the 1950s by the Zionist Orthodox public, which was unwilling to rely on the political powers of the time for their children's religious educations, given that the secular labor party controlled the education system.

## The 2017 Israel Religion & State Index

The Religion and State Index is a prestigious annual public opinion survey conducted by the Rafi Smith Institute for Hiddush - Freedom of Religion and Equality, which monitors Israeli public opinion in the arena of religion and state and its trends, in order to serve as a tool for decision makers, NGOs, researchers, and, of course, the general public in Israel and in the Diaspora. The 2017 index is based on a representative sample of 800 persons representing the adult Jewish population of Israel (ages 18 and over). It was conducted by telephone between July 19 and July 23, 2017. The possible sampling error is 3.5%.

The Religion and State Index is being published for the ninth time, thanks to a generous grant from the Bergman Family Foundation.