

## Pre-Election Index 3, March 2019

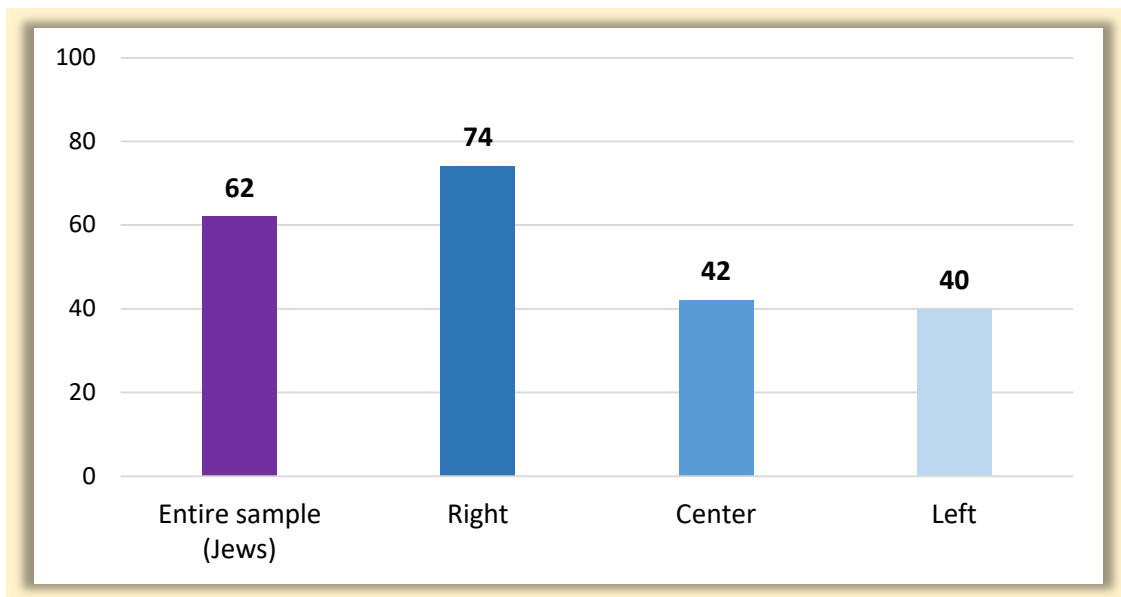
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This survey focused on three main issues: foreign and security affairs (the Golan and Gaza), the electoral process in general, and the public's preferences at present regarding the upcoming elections.

### Foreign and Security Affairs

**The people are with the Golan** - About two-thirds of the Jewish public (62%) thinks the U.S. recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights contributes to Israel's vital interests. Although the highest rate holds that view in all three of the large political camps, the gaps between the right on the one hand and the center and the left on the other are large.

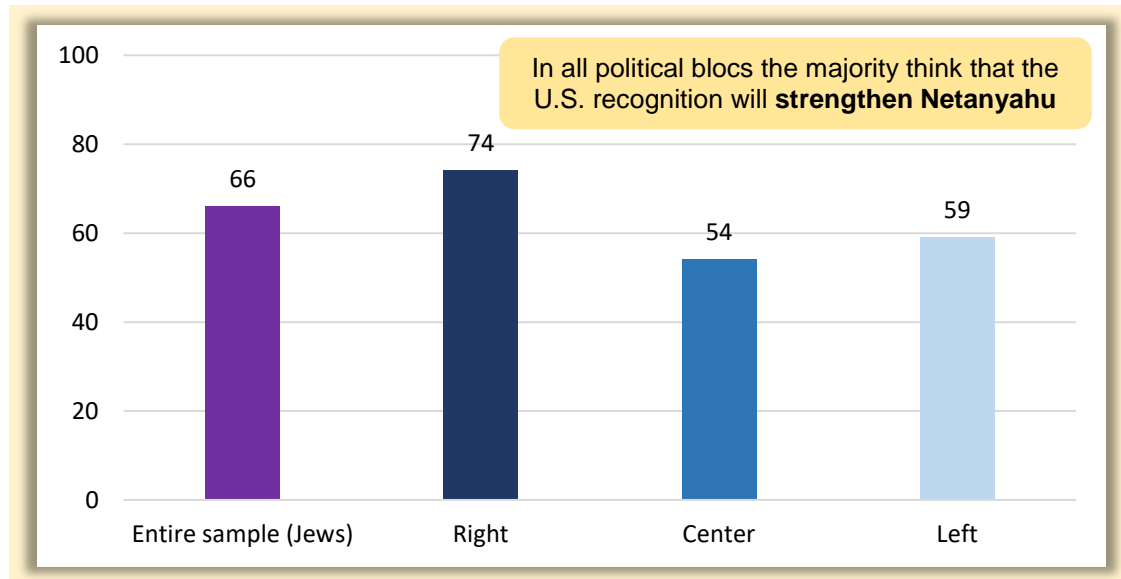
**Figure 1: The U.S. recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights contributes to Israel's vital interests (Agree, Jews by political bloc, %)**



In the Arab public the highest rate do not know (31%), while among those who do have an opinion on the matter - the highest rate think that the U.S. recognition harms Israel's interests (29%).

**The U.S. recognition and Netanyahu's chances in the elections** - About two-thirds (66%) of the Jewish public thinks the U.S. recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan boosts Netanyahu's standing in the current election campaign. In the Arab sample, despite the large rate of "Don't know" (27%), here too the highest rate thinks so. While on this issue the gaps between the political camps (Jews) are a bit smaller than in the previous question, the right is still far from the center and the left, which are close to each other.

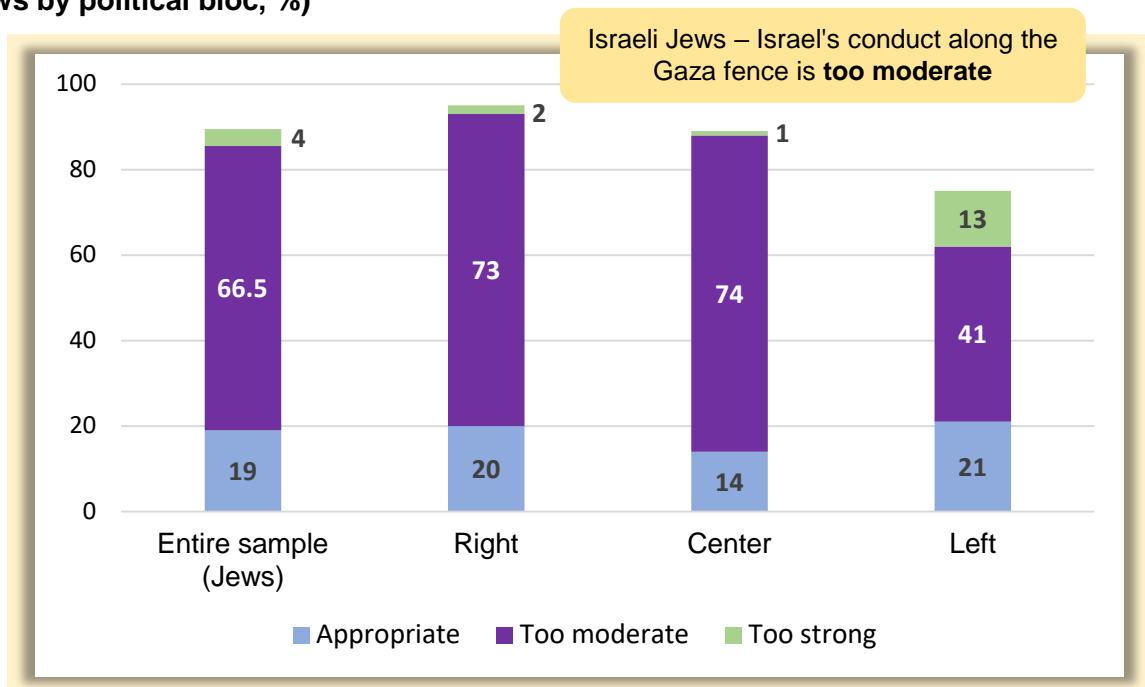
**Figure 2: The U.S. recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights will boost Netanyahu's standing in the current election campaign (Agree, Jews by political bloc, %)**



**Israel's policy toward the clashes along the Gaza border:** We asked: "It is now a year since the start of the clashes with the Palestinians along the Gaza fence. In your opinion, has Israel acted so far: appropriately, too moderately, or too strongly?" In the Jewish public the majority (66.5%) thinks Israel is acting too moderately on this issue. A segmentation by blocs (Jews) revealed small gaps between the right and the center and a larger gap between them and the left (though there too the most common answer was that Israel is not being tough enough!).

In the Arab public, again a high percent (30%) do not know, while among those with an opinion on the issue the highest rate (48%) think Israel is acting too strongly.

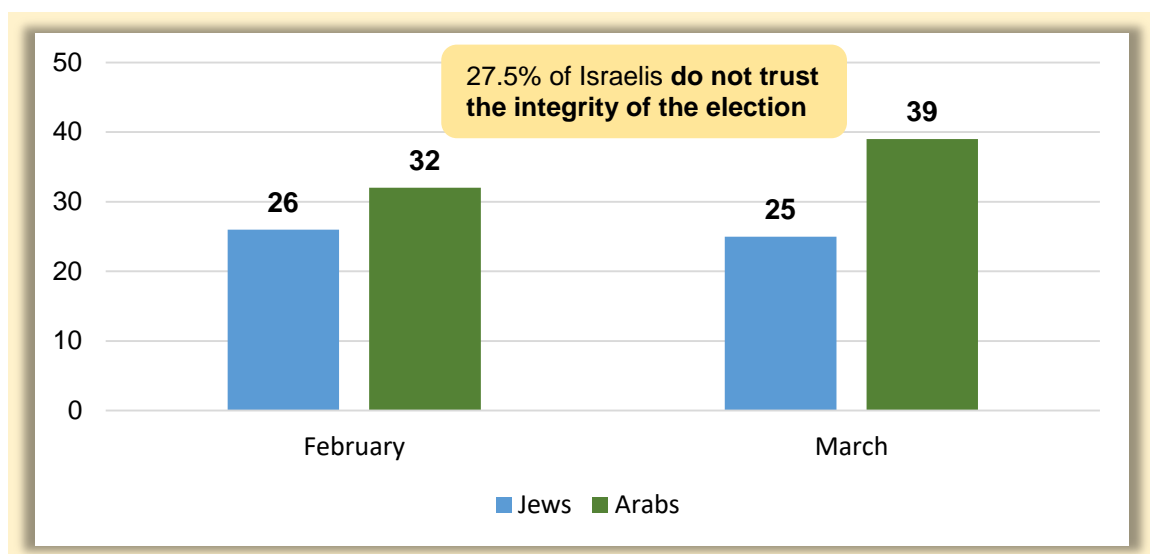
**Figure 3: Israel's conduct over the past year in the clashes along the Gaza fence (Jews by political bloc, %)**



**The Electoral Process**

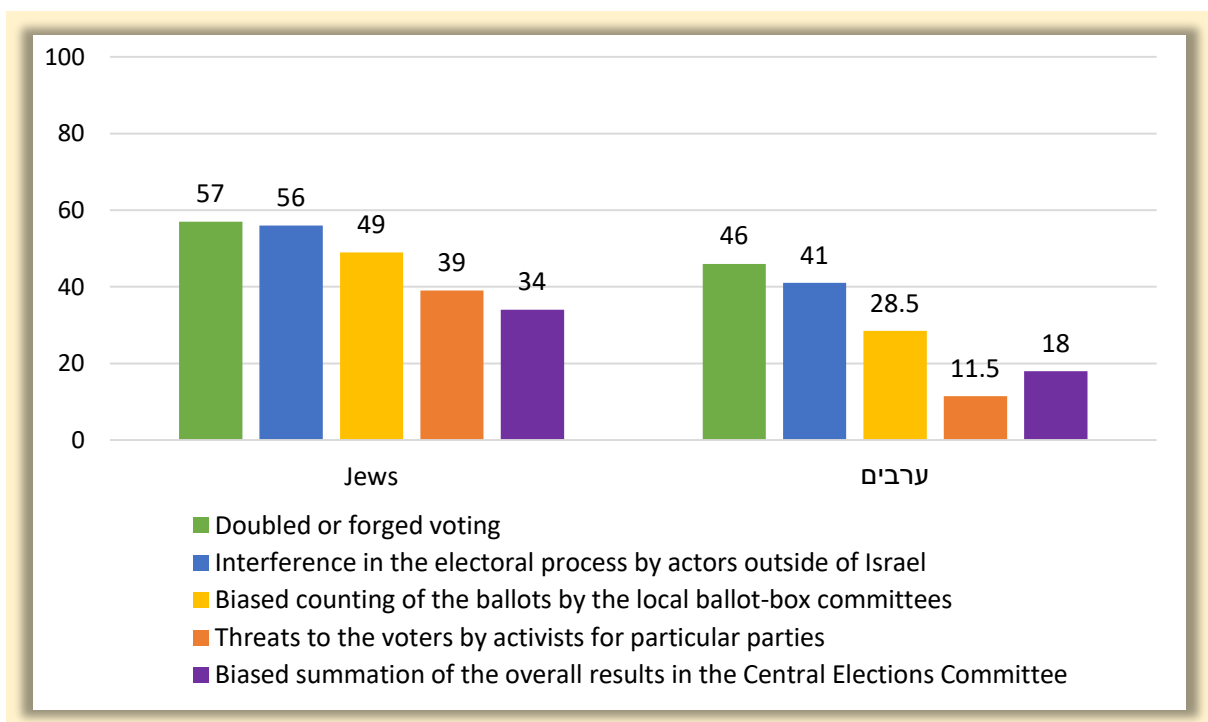
**The integrity of the elections** - In light of last month's surprising finding that a large amount of interviewees do not have trust in the integrity of the upcoming Israeli election, in this survey we repeated the question: "To what extent do you have or not have trust in the integrity of the Knesset elections, meaning that the results to be announced will accurately reflect how the public voted?" A similar result emerged among the Jews, while among the Arabs the rate of those who do not trust the elections' integrity rose considerably.

**Figure 4: Trust in the integrity of the elections, February and March (Little or no trust, Jews and Arabs, %)**



This time we also wanted to know what could throw off the elections. We presented five possibilities **only to those who do not trust the elections' integrity**, and they could choose more than one answer. Among the Arabs, two answers stood out especially: a) Double or forged voting; b) Interference in the electoral process by actors outside of Israel. Among the Jews, the three main factors that could compromise the elections' integrity were: a) Double or forged voting' b) Interference by foreign actors; c) Biased counting of the results in the local ballot-box committees.

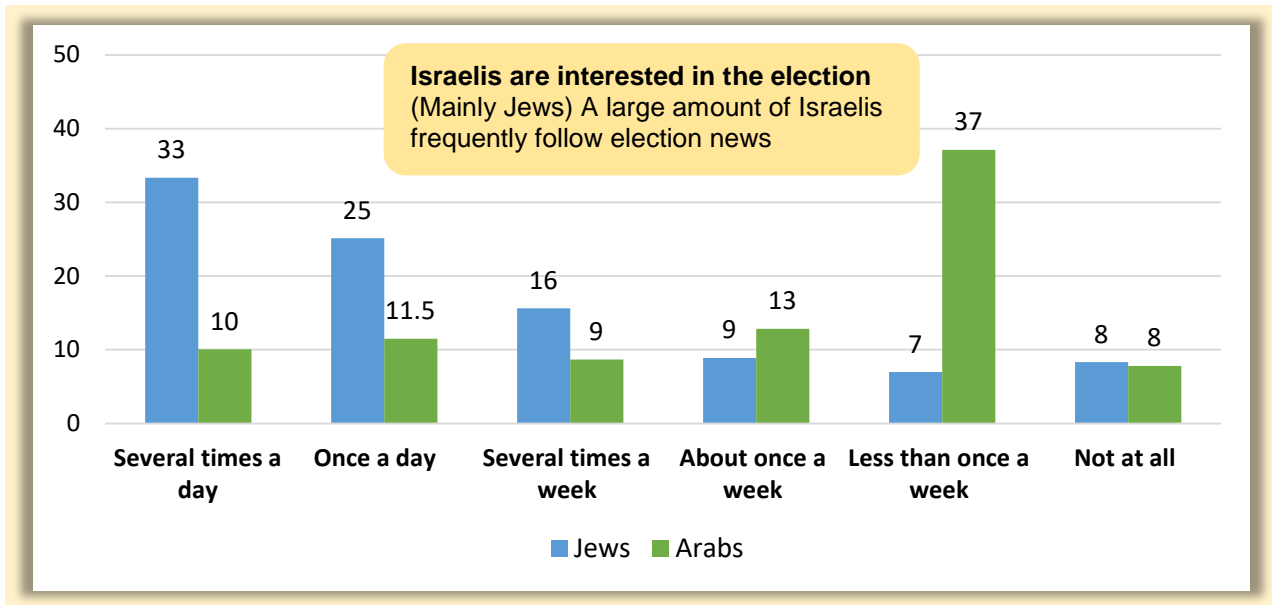
**Figure 5: What could compromise the integrity of the elections? (Little or no trust in the integrity of the elections, Jews and Arabs, %)**



**Interest in the elections** - We wanted to know at what frequency people follow the reports about the elections. Fittingly for a public that is considered very politically aware, we found that among the Jews a majority (58.5%) follows them once or several times a day. Another 16% follow the reports about the elections several times a week, an identical number follow them at a lower frequency of once a week, and 8% do not follow the media reports at all.

In the Arab public fewer people follow the reports; only 22% follow them at a frequency of once or several times a day, 21.5% at a frequency of once or several times a week, while the highest rate (37%) follow them only once in a while. This gap apparently reflects the Israeli Arabs' sense of remoteness from the Israeli political arena.

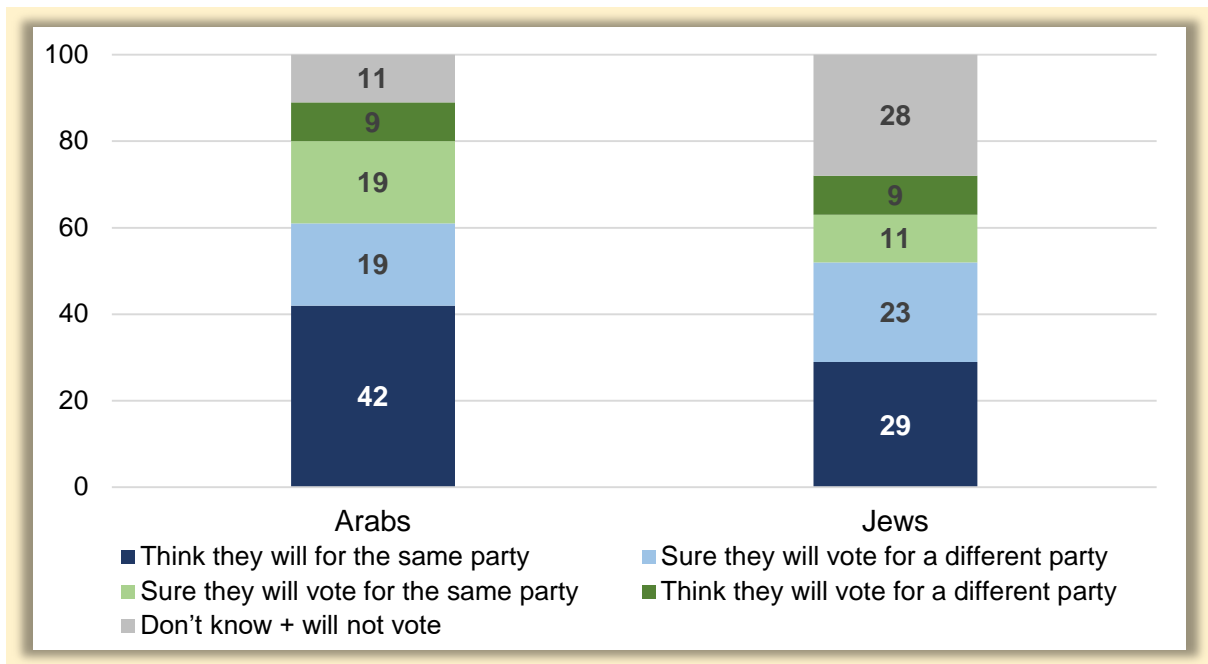
**Figure 6: Frequency of following media reports about the elections (Jews and Arabs, %)**



**How the minimum electoral threshold affects voting** - One of the difficult dilemmas facing voters in each election campaign is whether to vote for a party they favor and would want to vote for but that, according to the polls, does not stand to pass the minimum threshold of votes. We asked: “If the surveys say the party you thought to vote for might not pass the minimum threshold of votes, will you vote for that party or consider voting for a different party?” A large majority (61%) of the Jews responded that they are sure or think they would vote for the party they favored in the first place and not for a different party. We found a similar intention among the Arabs (52% would vote for the party they wanted in the first place), though again there was a high rate of “Don’t knows” (15.5% compared to 8% among the Jews).

At the same time, among the interviewees who said they were planning to vote for one of the parties that according to the latest polls may not pass the electoral threshold, on average over a third said that presumably they would not vote for that party or would not vote at all - for example, 40% of those intending to vote for Geshet and 38% of those intending to vote for Kulanu.

**Figure 7: Voting intentions regarding a party that may not pass the minimum threshold (Jews and Arabs, %)**



**Trust in polls** - Two factors could explain this adherence to the “mother party”: party loyalty, which according to previous studies is not particularly high at present, or, alternatively, a lack of trust in the poll outcomes. We looked into the second factor and found that, among the Jewish interviewees, the majority does not trust polls at all or trusts them only to a small extent. Among the Arabs the level of trust in polls is greater.

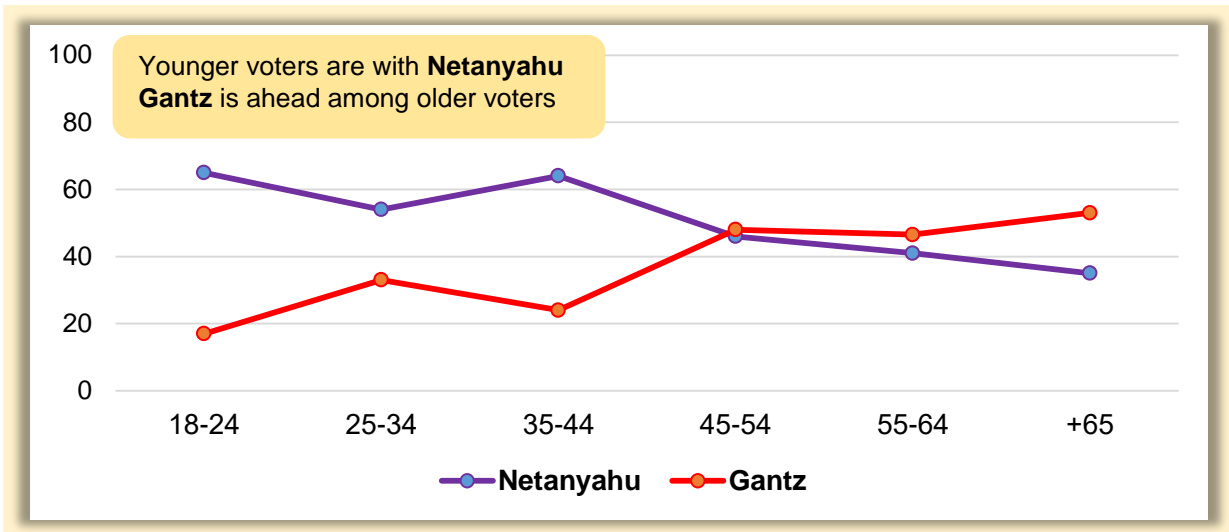
Don't know	A lot or quite a lot of trust in polls	No trust at all or only a little trust in polls	
4.5	40.5	55	Jews
17	48	35	Arabs

**Expectations about the Current Election**

This time as well we repeated a question we asked three months ago: “Which government would you want to be formed after the elections?” At this time the clear preference among the Jews is for a right-wing government led by Benjamin Netanyahu (39%). Among Jews there has been a clear increase in the percentage preferring this government (in December it was 34%) and a decline in the preference for a center-right government under his leadership (in December 36% compared to 12% at present). We also found that as the age of the interviewee increases, their preference for Gantz rises and their preference for Netanyahu declines.

Among the Arabs the preference has remained almost the same: 47% for a center-left government in December and 51% today.

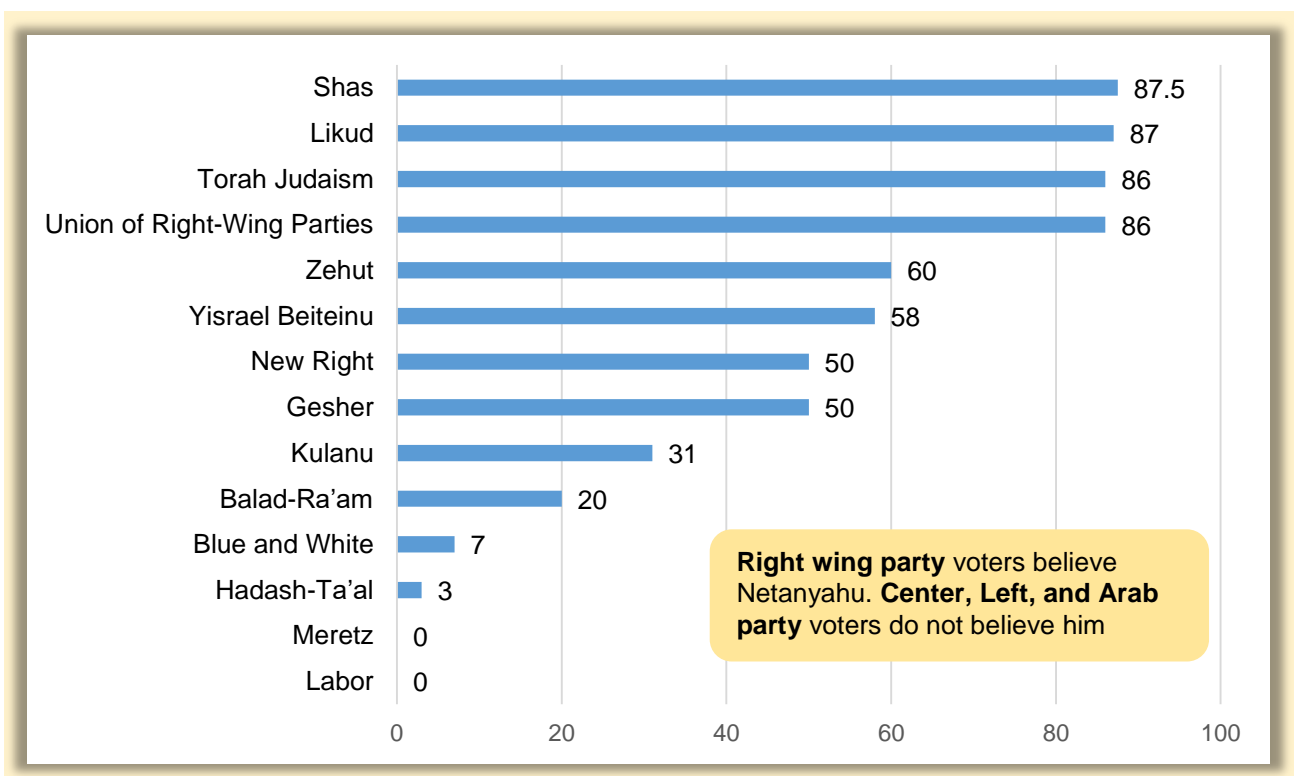
**Figure 8: Who would you want to be the next prime minister? (Jews by age, %)**



**Netanyahu and the submarine deal** - We asked the interviewees whether they believe or do not believe Netanyahu's claim that he did not get a shekel from the submarine deal. Among the Jews the responses are split almost half and half: 45% believe Netanyahu and 47.5% do not. We segmented the answers by political camp (Jews) and found, as expected, that among the left and the center the majority does not believe the prime minister while on the right the majority does believe him.

Among the Arabs a large majority (73%) does not believe Netanyahu's claim.

**Figure 9: Believe Netanyahu's claim that he did not get money from the submarine deal, according to stated voting intention in the 2019 election (%):**



The survey is a project of the Guttman Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research at the Israel Democracy Institute. This month's survey was conducted by telephone and internet by the Midgam Consulting and Research Institute on March 24-25, 2019. The survey included 603 respondents who constitute a representative national sample of the adult population of Israel aged 18 and over. The maximum measurement error for the entire sample is  $\pm 4.1\%$  at a confidence level of 95%.

For the full data file see: [www.dataisrael.idi.org.il](http://www.dataisrael.idi.org.il)