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## **A Comparative Perspective on the Regulation of Secular Core Studies in Haredi Schools**

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The issue of incorporating a secular core curriculum in Haredi boys' schools was explored in this study through two lenses. One is a normative lens, which analyzes the balance between children's rights, parental rights, and societal interests. The other is a socio-legal lens, which explores the lengthy trajectory of education legislation to the schools, the interaction between the legislation and the societal forces it encounters, and the agents who activate the legislation at various junctures. The socio-legal analysis focuses on the gaps between the regulation of Haredi schools and its implementation in four states:

Israel, New York, England, and the Flemish Community in Belgium. These case studies were selected because all the examined states have large Haredi communities that influence the political and public space, sanctify the study of Torah in boys' schools, and encourage girls to combine secular and religious studies. However, each state manifests its unique brand of relationship between the Haredi ideals and the socioeducational structure serving these ideals. These relationships are influenced by the diversity of Haredi ideologies and by the ways in which the state enables the education system to reflect this diversity.

I argue that a normative balance between rights and interests is insufficient for the purpose of examining the dilemma of regulating the teaching of secular studies in Haredi schools. The regulations should be based on a comprehensive understanding of the legal rules' trajectory from their legislation to their implementation in the schools. The four case studies presented in the article show that conditional funding policies, which use financial incentives to encourage Haredi schools to adopt a core curriculum, may be more effective tools to promote secular studies and educational choices in Haredi boys' schools than are policies that enforce a core curriculum but fail in their implementation. The case studies also demonstrate that conditional funding policies could generate choices by creating a substantial funding distinction between schools that choose to incorporate secular studies and schools that do not. It seems, therefore, that in certain cases the state should relinquish the notion of legal texts reflecting a balance between the various rights and societal interests, and should instead favor formulations that are more likely to achieve practical results, thereby expanding the number of Haredi children who realize their right to education and all its features.

As to the policy that regulates the Haredi education in Israel, I suggest focusing on strengthening the National Haredi Education and the Haredi high school yeshivas. I suggest implementing gradual conditional funding policies that would encourage the new National Haredi schools and Haredi high school yeshivas to establish themselves, and would enable a substantial reduction of parental fees in these schools. Such policies would reflect the significant changes that have been manifest in certain sectors of the Haredi population, for whom the state has failed to provide proper schooling alternatives.