

Peace Index – April 2013

Prof. Ephraim Yaar and Prof. Tamar Hermann

- **Closing socioeconomic gaps above all.** The April survey was conducted slightly before the details of the new annual budget were revealed, and reveals a large gap between the public's preferences and those of the government (the government's preferences are evidenced by the budget that was formulated, which focuses on reducing the deficit). The findings indicate that in the public's view, the most important issue for the government to address is closing socioeconomic gaps. Thirty-nine percent of the Jewish public put this issue in first place; considerably trailing it, in descending order, were: the Iranian threat (16%), public order and violence (14%), reducing the state budget deficit (12%), negotiations with the Palestinians (10%), integrating the Haredim (7%), and protecting the environment (2%). A segmentation of the respondents by income groups showed that for all groups, closing the socioeconomic gaps was the top priority. The Arab public also ranked that issue most important (32%); however, tied for second place were renewing negotiations with the Palestinians and reducing the budgetary deficit (19% each). From there, in descending order of importance, the results were: public order and violence (16%), the Iranian threat (10%), and protecting the environment (4%).
- **An unpopular finance minister.** It will be interesting to see how the planned budget cuts will affect the public standing of Finance Minister Yair Lapid. The current survey indicates that even before the cuts were made public, Lapid was not at the height of popularity: the rate of those satisfied with his performance was a little over a third (38%), only slightly higher than the rate of those unsatisfied with his performance (31%), while the rest of the respondents (about a third!) had no opinion on the matter. In the Arab public, Lapid's standing was worse: 51% were unsatisfied with his performance, 15% were satisfied, and 33% had no opinion.
- **The Palestinians marginalized.** Amid the other issues assessed by the public, advancing the negotiations with the Palestinians is seen as having low importance by the public. Only a tenth of the Jewish public sees this as the first or second most important issue that the government should address. This finding is certainly linked to the widespread assessment (70%) that the chances of resuming the negotiations with the Palestinians are moderately or very low. It is also related to the prevailing opinion (48%) that the responsibility for the stalemate is mainly on the Palestinian side; only 6.5% of Jewish respondents place the responsibility on the Israeli side, while 42% view the two sides as equally responsible. In the Arab public, about a third sees high

chances for resuming the talks in the near future compared to 65% who do not have such an expectation. Not surprisingly, positions on the question of responsibility among Arab respondents differ from those of the Jewish public: 36% of Arab respondents assign most of the responsibility to the Israeli side, only 12% view the Palestinians as mainly responsible for the stalemate, and 50% blame both sides equally.

- **Security is doing well; the economy is weak.** Even though the Iranian threat comes in second among the issues the Jewish public would want the government to focus on, in general it appears that this public is not especially worried about the security dangers facing Israel. In response to the question “To what extent do you feel protected when it comes to the military-security sphere?,” 63% of the Jewish public responded that they feel very or somewhat protected (the total among Arab respondents was 52%). However, the sense of economic stability is weak throughout the Israeli public: only 38% of the Jews (32% of the Arabs) answered that they feel very or moderately stable economically, while 27% of the Jews (37.5% of the Arabs) responded that their economic situation is not very or not at all stable. About one third of both publics positioned themselves in the middle. As mentioned, these findings were obtained before the new economic policy was made public. Presumably the public’s sense of economic stability will decline even more in light of the new budget cutbacks .
- **Long live Open Skies. Down with Dankner!** Despite claims made by airlines and workers committees about the economic and employment dangers of opening the skies in accordance with the agreement between Israel and the European Union, both the Jewish and Arab publics overwhelmingly support (77.5%) the government’s decision to adopt the open-skies policy aimed at lowering the prices of flights to and from Israel. There was also wide support (67% of the Jewish public, 64% of the Arab public) for canceling Bank Leumi’s agreement to forego part of Nochi Dankner’s debt to the bank. These findings apparently indicate that the Israeli public opposes concessions to bodies that exploit their power to protect their own narrow interests at the expense of the interest of society as a whole, whether workers unions or tycoons.
- **The Women of the Wall are controversial.** Given the recent prominence of this issue, we explored public opinion regarding the right of the Women of the Wall to pray at the Western Wall wearing prayer shawls and phylacteries. Opinions in the Jewish public are divided, with a tilt toward supporting the right of the women to pray as they see fit: 48% recognize this right while 38% oppose it. A segmentation of the answers by self-definition of religiosity yielded the picture one would expect: there

was absolutely no support among the Haredim for the right of the Women of the Wall to pray as they do; among the religious, support was 27.5%; among the traditional religious, support was 26%; among the non-religious traditional, support was 53%; and among the secular, support was 63.5%. When we presented the respondents with the district court's ruling that the women's prayer at the Western Wall does not violate the "custom of the place" and there is no justification for preventing them from praying there, the rate of support for allowing them to pray as they see fit rose to 56%, while the rate of opposition fell to 34%. Rather surprisingly, support for the Women of the Wall was somewhat higher among men than among women in response to both questions.

- **The effect of the terrorist attack in Boston.** In the realm of foreign relations, this month we examined how the Israeli Jewish public perceives the effect of the recent terrorist attack at the Boston Marathon on the positions of the U.S. administration and the American public toward Israel's security needs. Regarding the administration, a considerable majority of Israeli Jews (67%) think the event will make no difference one way or the other. Among the remaining respondents, however, far more (27%) think the attack will make the U.S. administration more attentive to Israel's security needs than expect the U.S. to be less attentive (2%). As for American public opinion, the Israeli Jewish public sees the incident as having a much more positive influence as far as Israel is concerned: 48.5% think the attack will strengthen support among the American public, 44% expect it to have no effect in either direction, and 3% believe it will have a negative effect. In the Arab public, the prevailing assessment is also that the American administration will be attentive to Israel's security problems to the same extent after the attack as before (46%). However, 44% think the attack will increase the administration's attentiveness to Israel's security problems. The Israeli Arab public's reading of the map regarding U.S. public opinion is almost identical to that of the Jewish public.

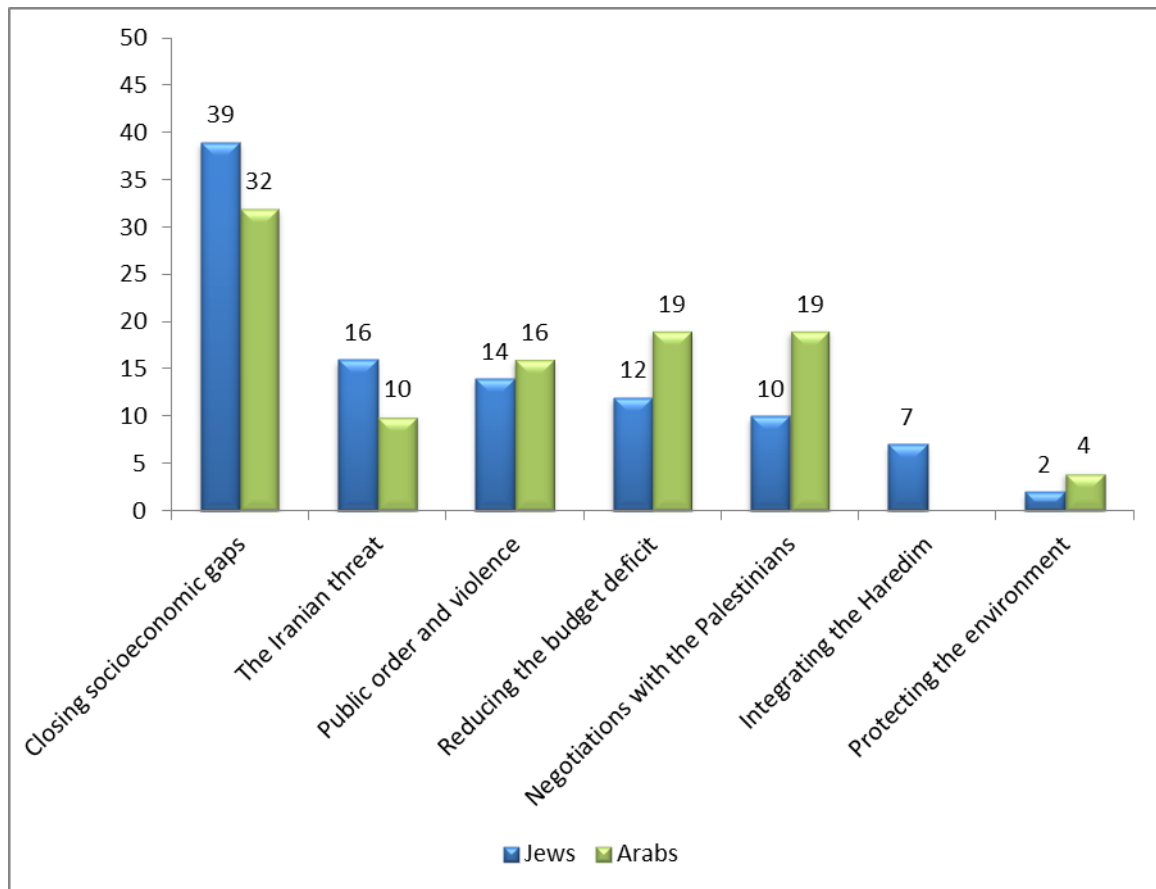
The Negotiations Index for April, 2013

The Peace Index project includes ongoing monitoring of the Israeli public's attitudes towards peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The monthly Negotiation Index is comprised of two questions, one focusing on public support for peace negotiations and the other on the degree to which the public believes that such talks will actually lead to peace. The aggregated replies to these two questions are calculated, combined, and standardized on a scale of 0–100, in which 0 represents total lack of support for negotiations and lack of belief in their potential to bear fruit, and 100 represents total support for the process and belief in its potential. Each month, the

Negotiations Index presents two distinct findings, one for the general Israeli population and the other for Jewish Israelis.

Negotiations Index: General sample 48.5; Jewish sample 46.4

Graph of the month: Among the following issues, in your opinion which is the most important for the new Israeli government to address?



The Peace Index is a project of the [Evans Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution](#) at Tel Aviv University and the [Israel Democracy Institute](#). This month's survey was conducted by telephone on April 28–30, 2013, by the Midgam Research Institute. The survey included 600 respondents, who constitute a representative national sample of the adult population aged 18 and over. The survey was conducted in Hebrew, Arabic, and Russian. The maximum measurement error is $\pm 4.5\%$ at a confidence level of 95%. Statistical processing was done by Ms. Yasmin Alkalay.