

Peace Index, July 2018

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July's Peace Index focused on three foreign issues (assessment in hindsight of the 2005 disengagement, the ongoing conflict along the Israel-Gaza border, and the progress toward victory of Assad's forces in Syria and how this development will affect Israel) and on several domestic issues (the Nation-State Law and its implications, civil marriage, and the legal status of the LGBT community in Israel).

The disengagement - a mistake: We asked: "In retrospect, do you think Israel's unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005 was a smart move or not a smart move from the standpoint of Israel's national interest?" The majority of the Jewish sample (56%) responded that the disengagement was not a smart move. It is worth noting that when we looked into the issue a year after the disengagement (in June 2006), we found that 50% saw it as a mistake at that time compared to 46% who thought the opposite. In other words, over the years the rate of those who assess the move negatively has risen to a certain extent though not dramatically, with a corresponding decline in the rate of those viewing it positively. At this stage, who thinks what? On the right a clear majority (75%) says the disengagement was not a smart move, compared to a clear majority in the center and on the left who say the opposite (center 61%, left 78%). In the Arab public 70% consider that the disengagement was a smart move in terms of Israel's interest.

Hamas's provocations are intended to draw Israel into a war: The recent diagnosis by Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman that the ongoing Hamas-encouraged provocations along the Gaza border are intended to draw Israel into a wide-scale military operation in Gaza is affirmed by a clear majority (70%) of the Jewish public. This majority is mainly composed of those who located themselves on the right and in the center, and agree with the defense minister (76% and 69% respectively). On the left a small majority (52%) indeed disagrees with Liberman, but a large minority (43%) agrees with him on this matter. Among the Arabs as well, a small majority, again 53%, disagrees with Liberman's diagnosis but 34% think as he does.

Considerable public support for a military operation if Hamas violates the ceasefire: Sixty-one percent of the Jewish public thinks that from the standpoint of Israel's interest, it should launch a wide-scale military operation against Hamas in Gaza if it violates the ceasefire. This majority is, however, largely composed of right-wingers, of whom 75% responded that if the ceasefire is violated the Israeli interest requires launching a sizable military campaign. On the left the majority (70%) thinks that even if the ceasefire is violated, an extensive military operation is not desirable at this time from the standpoint of Israel's interest, while the center is divided on this question with somewhat of an advantage for those who do not favor a military operation (50% vs. 43%). In the Arab public a large majority (69%) opposes launching a wide-scale military operation in Gaza even if the ceasefire is violated.

Uncertainty about the implications of Assad's victories: The Jewish public does not have a clear-cut position on whether President Assad's imminent victory in the Syrian civil war and success in entrenching his rule there is a positive or negative development with regard to Israel's interests. Some 43.5% say it is not a positive development, 34% consider it positive, and an especially large rate of 22.5% has no opinion on the matter. The Arab public, too, is divided on this question: 38% regard Assad's successes as a positive development from Israel's standpoint while 33.5% see them as a negative one. Twenty-nine percent do not have a clear opinion on the issue.

What should Israel do for victims of the Syrian civil war? Unlike the previous question, the Jewish public has firm positions on the question of the policy Israel should adopt toward victims of the Syrian civil war. A large majority (78%) favors providing medical aid and food, but an almost identical majority (80%) opposes allowing victims of the war in Syria to enter Israel even if their lives are in danger from Assad's troops. Likewise in the Arab public the majority (75%) favors providing humanitarian assistance (medicine and food) to victims of the Syrian civil war, but - unlike the Jewish public - the majority (66%) thinks they should be allowed into Israel if they face danger to their lives from soldiers of the Syrian army.

Segmenting the Jewish interviewees' responses to the question on humanitarian aid to victims of the Syrian civil war by self-location on the haredi-secular spectrum, we found that though in all the groups a majority is in favor of the aid, their rate among the secular is the highest while

among the haredim it is the lowest: secular - 85%, nonreligious traditional - 72%, religious traditional - 80%, religious - 75%, haredim - 61%.

We turn now to domestic issues.

The need at this time to legislate the Nation-State Law: The new Nation-State Law stipulates officially for the first time that Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people and only of the Jewish people. We asked: “In your opinion, was there or was there not a need for the law to make this declaration at this time?” In the Jewish public only about half (52%) think there was a need for the law at this time while 40% claim the opposite. In other words, there is no sweeping support for the new Nation-State Law. A segmentation of the responses to this question by political camp reveals that only among those defining themselves as right-wing was there a majority (69%) who saw the law as necessary at this point. Among those defining themselves as centrist and left-wing, only a small minority saw it that way (center 36%, left 11%). A segmentation by religiosity shows that it is only among the secular group that no majority exists for those who see a need for the new Nation-State Law at this time (there was a need: religious traditional - 72%, religious - 71.5%, haredim - 66%, nonreligious traditional - 63%, secular - 33%). Not surprisingly, a large majority of the Arab public (84%) thinks there was no need to legislate the Nation-State Law at this time.

The lack of a mention of equality in the Nation-State Law: We asked whether or not it should also have addressed the issue of equality, which is to be found in the Declaration of Independence but is absent from the new law. The majority of the Jewish interviewees (60%) think the law should also have included the component of equality. We segmented the Jewish interviewees’ responses by political camp and found that among those defining themselves as right-wing, half think equality should have been included in the law, in the center 74%, and on the left 91%.

The status of Arabic in the Nation-State Law: The new law also stipulates that the Arabic language will now cease to be an official language of the state of Israel and will only be a language with a special status. In the Jewish public 51% regard this change as good while 40%

hold the opposing view. On the right the majority (67%) favors diminishing the status of Arabic compared to 38% in the center and 13% on the left.

The Nation-State Law's impact on the Druze community: Finally, regarding the law's impact on the Druze community, whom the Israeli leadership repeatedly calls "blood brothers," a majority of the Jewish public (61%) believes the law will not affect (28%) or will slightly reduce (33%) this community's commitment to the country. Segmentation by political camp shows that on the right 72% think that the law will not affect or will slightly reduce this community's commitment to the country, in the center 57%, and on the left 36%. Only 25% of the Jewish community asserts the opposite - namely, that the passing of the law will reduce or even obviate the Druze community's commitment to Israel. The assessment by the majority of the Jewish public that the Druze community's commitment to the country will not be affected by the Nation-State Law may reflect one of two factors. One possibility is that the Jews are not paying heed to the Druze community's difficult feelings about the legislation, as expressed by its leaders in the last few days. The second possibility is that the Jews put total trust in this commitment, since the Druze leaders have also taken pains to say that despite the great insult they see in the law, their loyalty to the country will not be impaired.

The Nation-State Law and Diaspora Jewry: The law states that Israel "shall act within the Diaspora to strengthen the affinity between the state and members of the Jewish people" and also "shall act to preserve the cultural, historical and religious heritage of the Jewish people among Jews in the Diaspora." We asked whether this wording manifests - as the law's opponents have claimed - Israel's condescension toward Diaspora Jewry. The responses show that a small majority of the Jewish public (51%) sees this interpretation of the law as wrong while 33% take the opposite view, namely, that the law does express such condescension. We also asked whether the claim that "in the new Nation-State Law, Israel takes responsibility for Diaspora Jewry but tries to weaken the non-Orthodox denominations despite the fact that most Diaspora Jews are Reform or Conservative" is accurate or inaccurate. About half replied that the claim is inaccurate, 18% viewed it as accurate, and an especially high rate (24%) had no opinion on the matter.

Amid the fierce public debate now raging on the legal rights of people in same-sex couples, we devoted various questions to the issue, but first we presented a more general question having to do with all Israeli citizens.

Civil marriage: We asked: “Do you support or not support instituting civil marriage in Israel?” The answers show that the large majority of the Jewish public (64%) support marriage of this kind. On the right 52% support it, in the center 80%, and on the left 96%. A segmentation by respondents’ religiosity yielded the following distribution: secular- 94%, nonreligious traditional- 62%, religious traditional- 48%, religious- 14%, haredim- 9%. In the Arab public three-fourths oppose the possibility of civil marriage for all.

Religious marriages by Reform or Conservative rabbis: A similar pattern of responses emerged on the question: “Do you support or not support the recognition in Israel of religious marriages conducted by Reform or Conservative rabbis?” Fifty-nine percent of the Jewish interviewees answered this question positively, 35% negatively. A segmentation by religiosity revealed this distribution: secular- 88%, nonreligious traditional- 62%, religious traditional- 40%, religious- 9%, haredim- 2%. It is worth noting that in all the groups, the rate of support for civil marriage exceeds the rate of support for religious marriages conducted by Reform and Conservative rabbis.

Legal equality for same-sex couples: The liberal mindset on the marriage issue was also reflected in the Jewish public’s positions on the question of whether or not to grant same-sex couples equal rights to those of other couples: 68% support providing such equality. However, level of religiosity strongly affects the rate of support for equality of this kind: secular - 85%, nonreligious traditional - 76.5%, religious traditional - 60%, religious - 36%, haredim - 19%. In the Arab public the large majority (73%) opposes granting legal equality to same-sex couples. In addition, 69% of the Jewish public supports allowing same-sex couples to adopt children in Israel. Again, level of religiosity strongly affects the rate of support for adoption of this kind: secular- 83.5%, nonreligious traditional- 78%, religious traditional- 68%, religious- 45%, haredim- 13%.

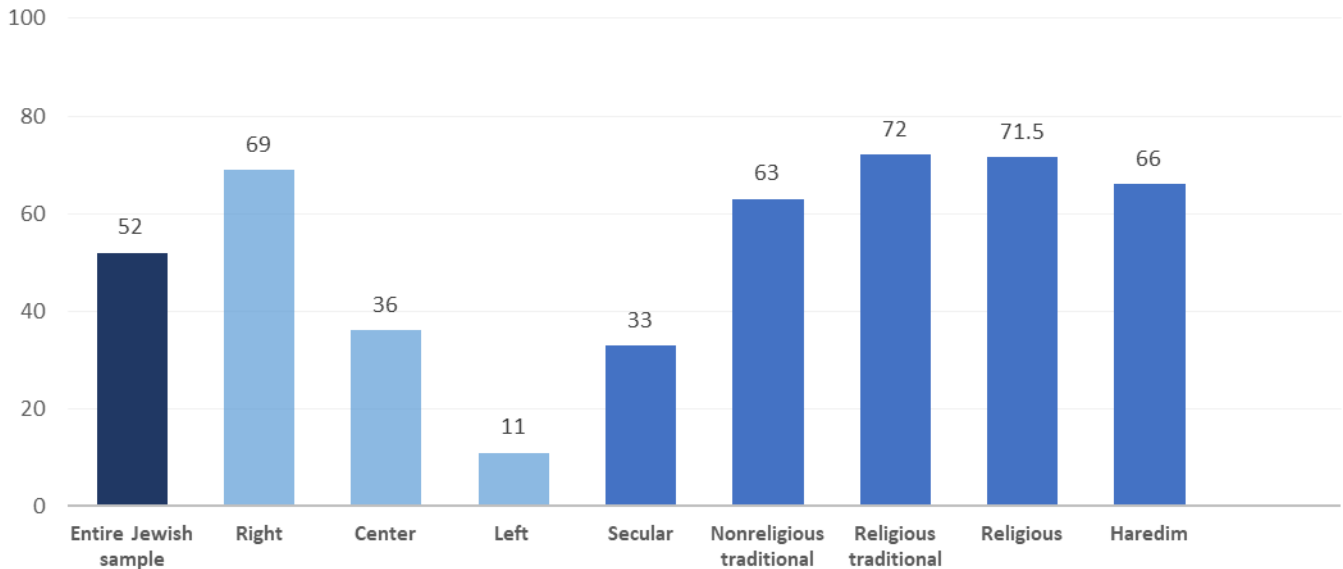
This may be connected to the fact that about two-thirds of the Jewish interviewees reported that they personally know people living in same-sex couples. We analyzed the readiness to grant legal equality of rights to same-sex marriages according to personal familiarity or non-familiarity with such couples. In the Jewish sample the rate of support for such equality of rights among those who know single-sex couples comes to 80%, while among those who do not know such couples it stands at only 45.5%. That is, in general, familiarity strongly affects the position on this question. We also looked into whether familiarity with single-sex couples plays a part in the above-noted connection between positions on equal rights for same-sex couples and the religiosity variable. We found that familiarity did not significantly alter the gaps between the religious subgroups, probably because the rate of familiarity is much higher among those who favor legal equality than among those who oppose it.

In the Arab public 80% oppose granting same-sex couples the right to adopt children, and the gaps between those who know such couples and those who do not are not dramatic.

Will Netanyahu keep his promise on the Surrogacy Law issue?: Finally, the survey shows that Netanyahu's promise to act soon to change the law so as to enable surrogacy in Israel for male couples as well does not win great trust among the Jewish public: 63% said they do not believe his promise. Segmentation by voting reveals that only among the Likud voters does a majority - also not large - believe Netanyahu's promise (53%).

Negotiations Index: 41.7 (Jews -41.2)

Diagram of the month: The Nation-State Law recently passed by the Knesset declares officially for the first time that Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people and only of the Jewish people. In your opinion, was there or was there not a need for the law to make this declaration at this time? (% , there was a need, Jews by political camp and religiosity)



The Peace Index is a project of the Evens Program for Mediation and Conflict Resolution at Tel Aviv University and the Guttman Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research of the Israel Democracy Institute. This month's survey was conducted by telephone on July 24-26, 2018, by the Midgam Research Institute. The survey included 600 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%. Statistical analyses were done by Ms. Yasmin Alkalay. <http://www.peaceindex.org>