

## **The International MA Program in Conflict Resolution and Mediation**

The Gershon H. Gordon  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
Tel Aviv University

### **Peace Index- May 2020**

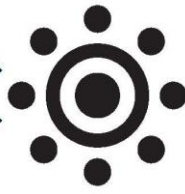
- **Regarding the corona crisis, about half of the Israeli public believes that the economic-social costs do not justify the government policy adopted to deal with the crisis.**
- **Independent business owners, and to a lesser extent, the elderly are perceived as those who were forced to pay too high a price in dealing with the corona crisis in contrast to salaried workers and young people who are perceived as those who paid a fair price.**
- **The Ministries of Health, Finance and Education, as well as the police, are not viewed as having succeeded in balancing between the health needs and the economic-social needs of the Israeli public.**
- **Trust in Netanyahu and Ganz are at a serious low point. In addition, half of the public do not trust the state attorney general and they are divided evenly between those who express trust in the Supreme Court and those who express lack of trust.**
- **The public are in disagreement about the establishment of the rotation government. The High Court of Justice ruling that enabled Netanyahu to form a coalition and the shortening of the governmental term to three years were met with opposition by about half of the public. At the same time, a large majority opposes the inflated size of the government.**
- **The two-state solution is still relatively the most favored solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while the solution involving annexation of the territories and granting limited rights to the Palestinians receives support from less than a third of the public.**

### **Prof. Eppie Yaar and Dr. Nimrod Rosler**

In the past few months, as most public attention among both the Israeli and the international public has been directed towards the coronavirus, the first part of the May peace index was devoted to questions about the effects of the virus on the public. In addition, considering the establishment of the government and Netanyahu's legal situation, the second part was devoted to questions about these topics alongside the permanent questions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

### **Government policy towards the struggle against the coronavirus**

We first asked to what extent government policy in the struggle against the coronavirus justifies or does not justify the economic and social costs involved, for the Israeli public. As can be seen in the distribution of replies to question number five in the data collection, more than half of the total public (53%) feel that the economic and social costs that the public was forced to pay were not justified, in comparison to 40% who thought that they were justified. When we continued to ask about the extent to which the price paid by various groups in the population was fair or not,



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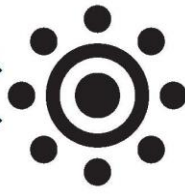
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the data to questions seven and eight indicate that the self-employed were viewed by the public as being the most disadvantaged group as a result of government policy, and the elderly were disadvantaged, but less so. The economic and social costs paid by salaried employees and the youth were considered fairer, with no significant difference between them.

We also tried to check the extent to which various institutions were considered as having acted to advance or not to advance a correct balance between health and economic-social needs of the Israeli public during this period. The findings to questions nine and ten testify to great dispersal in the evaluations of the public about the functioning of the Ministries of Health, Finance and Education, and the police in balancing between the needs. The most conspicuous finding, in our opinion, is the low percentage of respondents who considered that the struggle against the virus took place with a balance of needs. At the head of the “scale of equality” was the police (24%) and at the bottom, the Health Ministry (8%). As expected, this ministry was considered by a great majority of the public (73%) as devoting most attention to advancing health needs, while neglecting economic-social needs. In addition, striking in negativity was the Ministry of Education, as 34% of the public thought that it did not act to advance either of the needs. As may be expected, the Finance Ministry was perceived as acting more than any of the other institutions to advance economic-social needs (41%), but neglected health needs.

### **The political and legal systems**

Considering the establishment of the government and the roles of the legal institutions in coming to critical decisions pertaining to the political system, we tried to examine the public’s level of trust in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his alternative, Benny Ganz, in the Supreme Court and in the state attorney general. In general, the replies to questions 11-12 indicate that the level of trust by the general public in its political and judicial leaders is in crisis. Regarding the political leaders, the level of lack of trust in them is considerably higher than those who do trust them, as, from this standpoint, Ganz’s level of trust (71% distrust) is worse than that of Netanyahu (60% distrust). Even though representatives of the judicial leadership have nothing to be proud of, their position is better than that of the political leadership. The status of the attorney general in terms of public trust (52% - lack of trust in contrast to 34% - trust) is worse than that of the Supreme Court (46% trust and an identical level of distrust). As expected, there are significant differences between levels of trust among Arab respondents and those of Jewish respondents in the survey, as the trust levels among Arabs is considerably lower those of Jews: 8% compared to 40% respectively express trust in Netanyahu; 12% compared to 22% express trust in Ganz; 38% compared to 47% express trust in the Supreme Court while 20% in comparison to 37% state that they trust the attorney general. In terms of parties, among Blue-White voters, 30% express lack of trust in Ganz, 93% express lack of trust in Netanyahu, 80% express trust in the Supreme Court, and 65% feel trust in the attorney general. In contrast, among Likud voters, 82% feel trust in Netanyahu, 86% express lack of trust for Ganz, 82% feel distrust in the two judicial bodies. It is clear, therefore, that most Blue-White voters put their trust in the judicial framework but have lost faith in their leaders, compared to most Likud voters who follow their leaders in expressing harsh criticism of the legal system.



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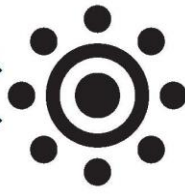
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We also asked about various decisions made regarding the establishment of the new government. Although about half of the public (52%) is opposed to the High Court of Justice decision to allow a prime minister accused of a criminal act to form a government, which paved the way for the establishment of the present government, the public is divided in its opinion regarding support for the rotation government with 45% support and 42% opposition. The government was established on the basis of two additional factors about which the public expresses little support: a change in the Basic Law of the government mandating a three-year term rather than four years gains support from a third of the public, while about half are opposed (47%); and the establishment of a rotation government including 36 ministers is only supported by 17%, as a large majority (73%) is opposed. While the rotation government has the support of half of the Jewish public, it is only supported by 22% of the Arab public and 57% of this public opposes its establishment. It is interesting to note that among the Jewish public the rotation government gained support from a great majority of moderate rightwing respondents (70%) and then, a similar rate of support among the rightwing (55%) and the center (53%), but little support (34%) from the leftwing. Another item of data which should be noted is that, despite the trust expressed by Blue-White voters for the Supreme Court, a sizable majority of them (87%) oppose its decision that enabled Netanyahu to form a government.

Finally, we asked: “To what extent do you believe or not believe that the rotation agreement will be honored by Benjamin Netanyahu? About half of the public (51%) do not believe that the agreement will be honored while 39% do believe that it will. Although in the Jewish public, opinions were divided (49% do not believe and 42% do believe), in the Arab public, there is agreement among 64% of the population that the agreement will not be honored by Netanyahu while only 20% do believe. Among the Jewish public, rightwing respondents (84%) and moderate right (87%) believe that Netanyahu will honor the agreement, in contrast to center respondents (70%) and leftwing respondents (84%) who do not believe that this will occur.

### **The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:**

Considering Netanyahu’s declarations about annexing part of the territories and the struggle being carried out around this issue, it is interesting to examine the results of the survey regarding solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As in previous surveys, none of the solutions presented gains the support of a clear majority of the Jewish public, while the solution most supported – the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside of the State of Israel received the support of 44% (similar to what it has received in previous surveys). Following this possibility in descending order, with support rates almost identical, are annexation of the territories under Israeli rule with limited rights for Palestinians – 34% (a rise of 6% in comparison with the previous survey), continuing the present situation – 33% (a rise of 2%), and establishing a binational state with full rights for Palestinians – 15% (a rise of 3%). Among the Arab public, the two-state solution is preferred (62%) and following that, a binational state (50%), while the two other possibilities lag behind by a large margin: continuing the present situation (25%) and annexation (16%).



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**Which of these solutions do you believe has the best chance of being realized in the foreseeable future?** Among the Jewish public, 50% believe that the existing situation will continue (a rise of 3% in comparison to the previous survey), and following that, with a significant gap are the following solutions: the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel – 19% (21% in the past), annexation of the territories with limited rights for Palestinians – 15% (16% in the past), and the establishment of a binational state – 4% (3% in the past).

### Negotiation Index:

**General sample: 45.1** (A decrease of 1.5 points in comparison to the last survey).

**Jewish sample: 43** (An increase of 0.2 points in comparison to the last survey).

The negotiation index is calculated by weighing two questions: Level of support for negotiation with the Palestinian Authority, and level of trust that negotiation with the Authority will lead to peace in the coming years.

*The Peace Index is conducted by Dr. Nimrod Rosler and Prof. Eppie Yaar of the International Program in Conflict Resolution and Mediation of Tel Aviv University. The survey was conducted on the internet by the iPanel company on 18-23 May 2020, among 600 respondents, a representative sample of the entire adult population (ages 18 and over) in Israel. Maximum margin of error for the entire sample is +/-4.1% at a confidence level of 95%.*

### The Diagram of the Month: To what extent do you trust each of the following people?

