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Public feelings and attitudes on the warfare in the North – Daily follow-up July 19th – August 13th 2006

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Main Findings

The Jewish Population

- Despite the continued fighting there was no significant decline in the perceived sense of individual security, however, individual and national morale declined gradually throughout the period.
- A solid (approximately 90 percent and higher) and stable consensus regarding the justification of the IDF action in Lebanon is accompanied by a sharp decline in the approval rating of the Government.
- Optimism among the Jewish population concerning the government's chances of achieving the objectives of the war.
- The multi-casualty event in Kfar Giladi marked the beginning of a decline in the approval rating of the Prime Minister and of a moderate decline in the approval rating of the Defense Minister, which gained momentum with the death of 15 reserve soldiers and the beginning of diplomatic efforts for a ceasefire.
- Trust in the armed forces throughout the war, and a decline in the level of trust in the Prime Minister and the Defense Minister.

- Growing support for a ceasefire among the Jewish population.
- Approximately half the Jewish population supported direct negotiations with Hamas throughout the fighting, and about a third supported direct negotiations with Hezbollah for the return of the abducted soldiers.

Comparison by nationality

- Throughout the war, perceived national and individual morale among the Arab citizens of Israel were lower than among Jews.
- Low approval rating among Arab citizens of Israel of the government's performance and of the justification of the fighting.
- During the fighting, the Arab citizens of Israel showed a low level of trust, in the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, and in the armed forces compared with the Jewish population.
- Support among the Arab citizens for direct negotiations with Hamas and Hezbollah.

During the first week of the Israeli operation in Lebanon, in July 2006, we embarked on a study of public war-related attitudes and feelings. To this end, we conducted a daily survey of representative samples of the entire Israeli population. Beginning on July 19, 2006 we conducted approximately 60 telephone interviews daily (except on weekends and holidays). The last day of the survey was August 13th (Sunday), the day the Israeli government accepted the UN Security Council resolution regarding a ceasefire, and 24 hours before the ceasefire came into effect. This was also the day on which it became known that 24 IDF soldiers were killed on Saturday in heavy fighting in the North, and that an IDF Yasur helicopter was shot down. The sampling error of the daily sample is approximately $\pm 6\%$, and the sampling error of the cumulative sample is approximately $\pm 1\%$.¹

This report is a summary of 14 daily telephone surveys (a total of 954 interviewees), conducted between July 19th and August 13th 2006. The survey addressed the feelings of the

population regarding national and individual morale; the sense of security and the concerns of the public; the extent of support for the fighting in Lebanon; performance rating of the government and the IDF; and direct negotiations with Hamas and Hezbollah for the return of the abducted soldiers.² We begin this report with a presentation of the results for Jews and then compare the attitude and feelings of Arab and Jewish Israelis.

Individual and national morale among the Jewish population during the fighting

■ Despite the continued fighting there was no significant decline in the perceived sense of individual security, however, individual and national morale declined gradually throughout the period.

The interviewees were asked to define their national and individual morale and their sense of personal security³.

1 A comparison with the findings of the Peace Index Survey (with comparable questions) revealed a great correspondence with findings of the daily survey, which strengthens the confidence in the validity of these findings. The Peace Index is a survey conducted once a month as part of the Peace Index of the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research and the Evans Program for Conflict Resolution Research of the Tel Aviv University. Data collection for the Peace Index is performed by the B.I. Cohen Institute. The comparison was carried out for the findings of the survey conducted on July 31st and August 1st.

2 Most of the attitudes were rated on 4-point a scale (“1” for the highest rating, “4” for the lowest), except for the confidence rating of the Prime Minister, Defense Minister, Home Front Command, and IDF, which were rated on a 5-point scale. To facilitate the reading of the charts, the values of the variables were converted to a uniform scale from 1-100, where the highest support is rated 100.

3 “On a scale of 1-4, how would you score national morale?”. Similar questions were asked regarding personal moral and one’s sense of personal security.

Figure 1: National and Individual Morale, and Sense of Personal Security

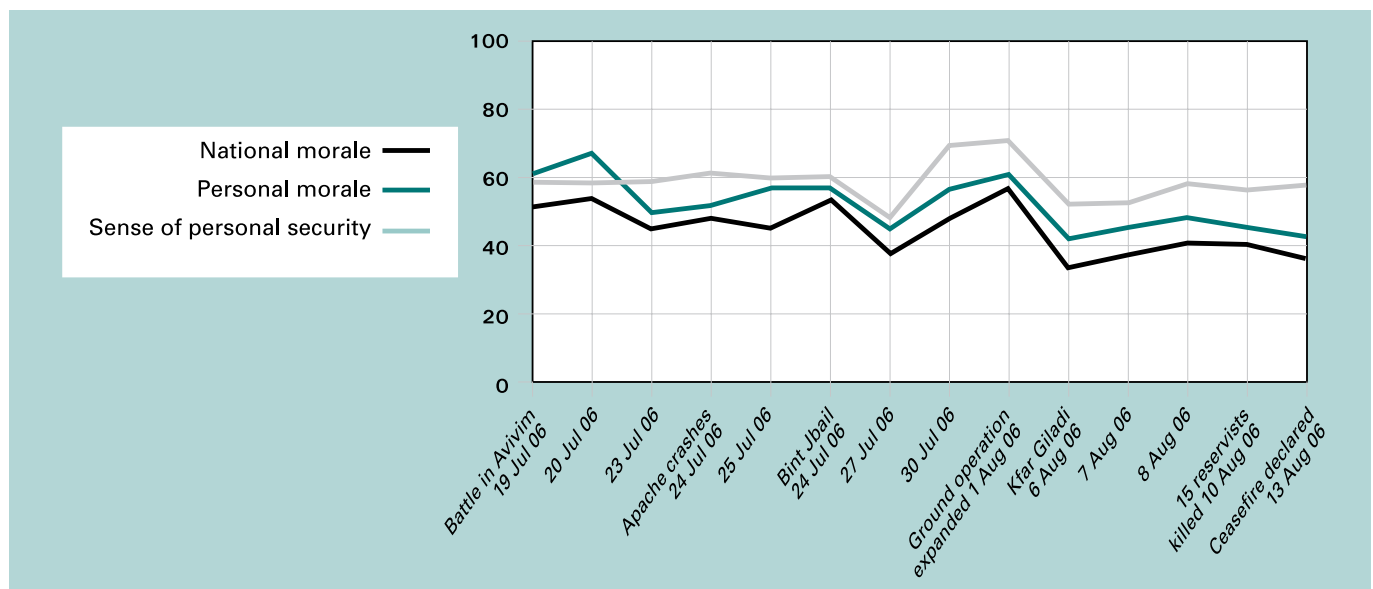


Figure 2: Justification of the War and Approval of Government's Performance

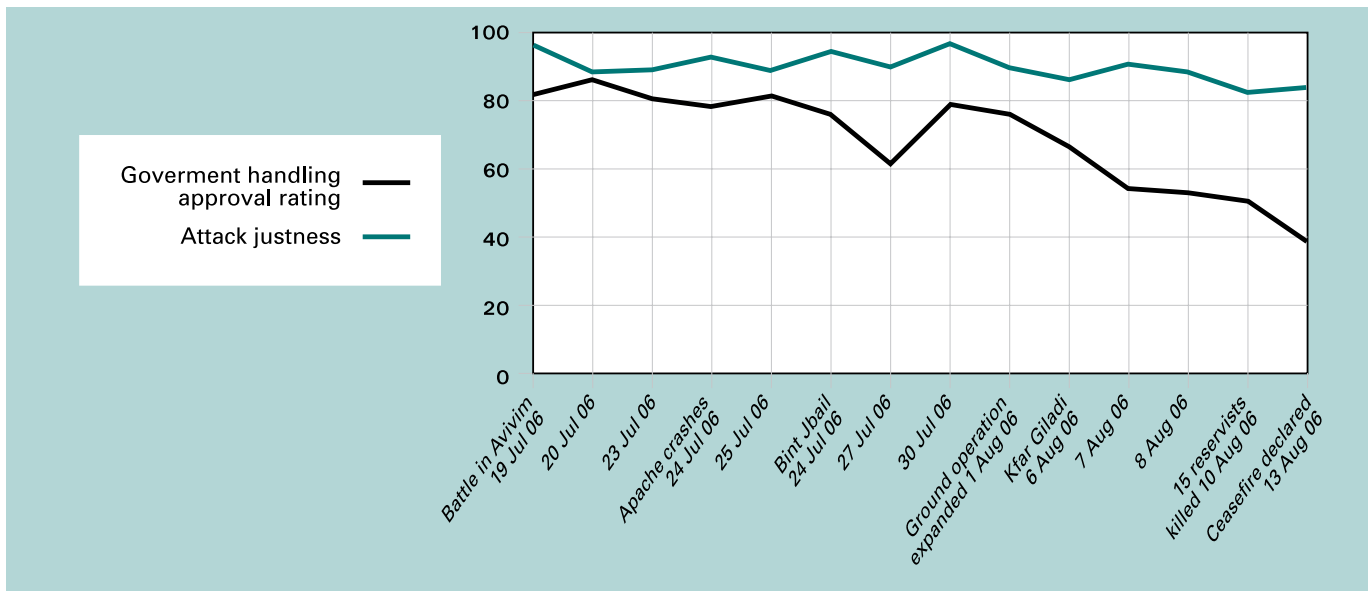


Figure 1 presents the average daily ratings throughout the periods. Approximately two thirds of the interviewees reported a good sense of personal security, and approximately half reported a good individual and national morale. The individual morale was consistently higher than the perceived national morale.

In July 21st-22nd there seems to be a decline in the national and individual morale, apparently because of the events of that weekend in which many soldiers were killed in the battle in Avivim and an IDF helicopter crashed. The decline was stemmed, and later morale rebounded for several days. On July 27th there was a sharp decline in the national and individual morale, and even some decline in the sense of personal security, most likely because of the impression left by the difficult day in Bint Jbail and Maroun er Ras in which 9 IDF soldiers were killed (July 26th), but immediately thereafter morale climbed back and returned to its earlier levels. Individual and national morale declined after August 6th (the devastating incident in Kfar Giladi in which 12 reserve soldiers were killed, and the missile attack on Haifa that killed 3 civilians). Subsequently, it rebounded slightly but did not reach its initially high level. The sense of personal security fluctuated during the period but showed no declining trend.

The rebound phenomenon seen in Figure 1 is familiar also from Peace Index surveys. For example, the General Peace Index for July 1997 showed a decline compared with the

preceding months (most likely because of the terrorist attack in the Mahane Yehuda market on the day the index was conducted) but in the following months it returned to its original level.

Attitudes toward government policy during the war among the Jewish population

- A solid (approximately 90 percent and higher) and stable consensus regarding the justification of the IDF action in Lebanon is accompanied by a sharp decline in the approval rating of the Government.

Figure 2 presents the mean justification by respondents of the Israeli attack on Lebanon and their approval rating of the government's performance.⁴ The chart indicates that throughout the fighting the high justification of the attack on Lebanon was stable despite the loss of life on the home front and on the battlefield. However, the highly positive public approval rating of the government's performance, which was stable in the beginning, consistently declined from the end of July until the day the government accepted the Security Council resolution regarding the ceasefire.

⁴ "Do you believe that the Israeli attack on Lebanon is justified or unjustified?"; "Do you believe that the government's handling of Lebanon in the last few days is right or wrong?"

Figure 3: Level of Optimism Regarding the Chances to Achieve the Three Objectives of the War

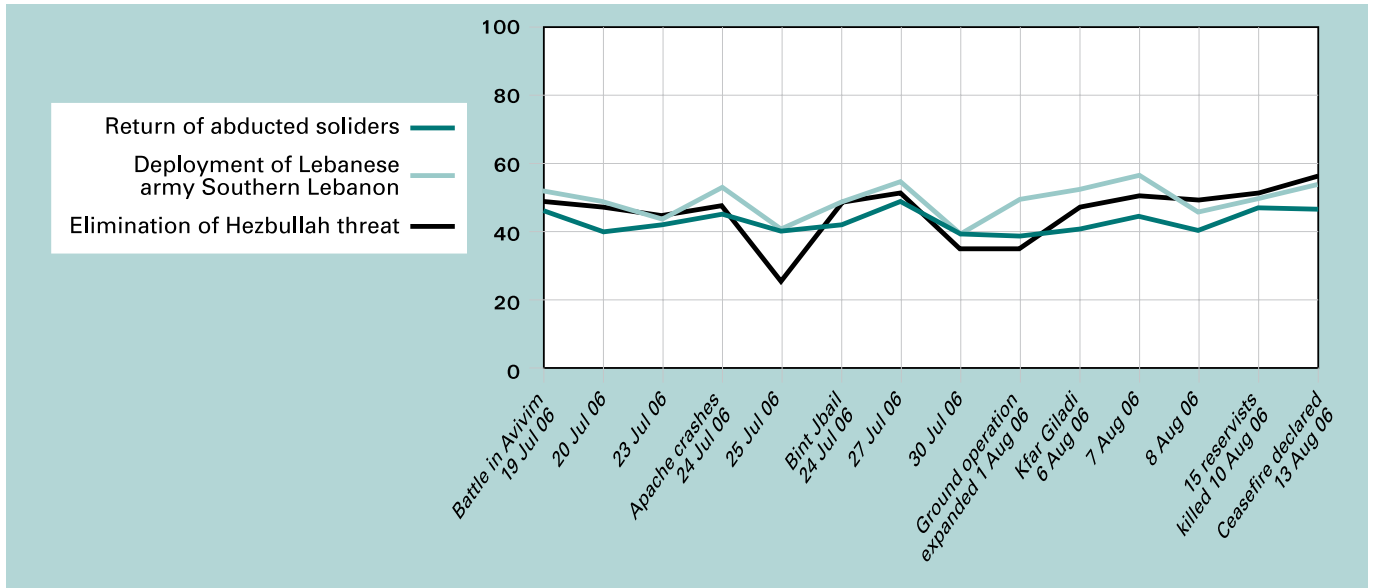
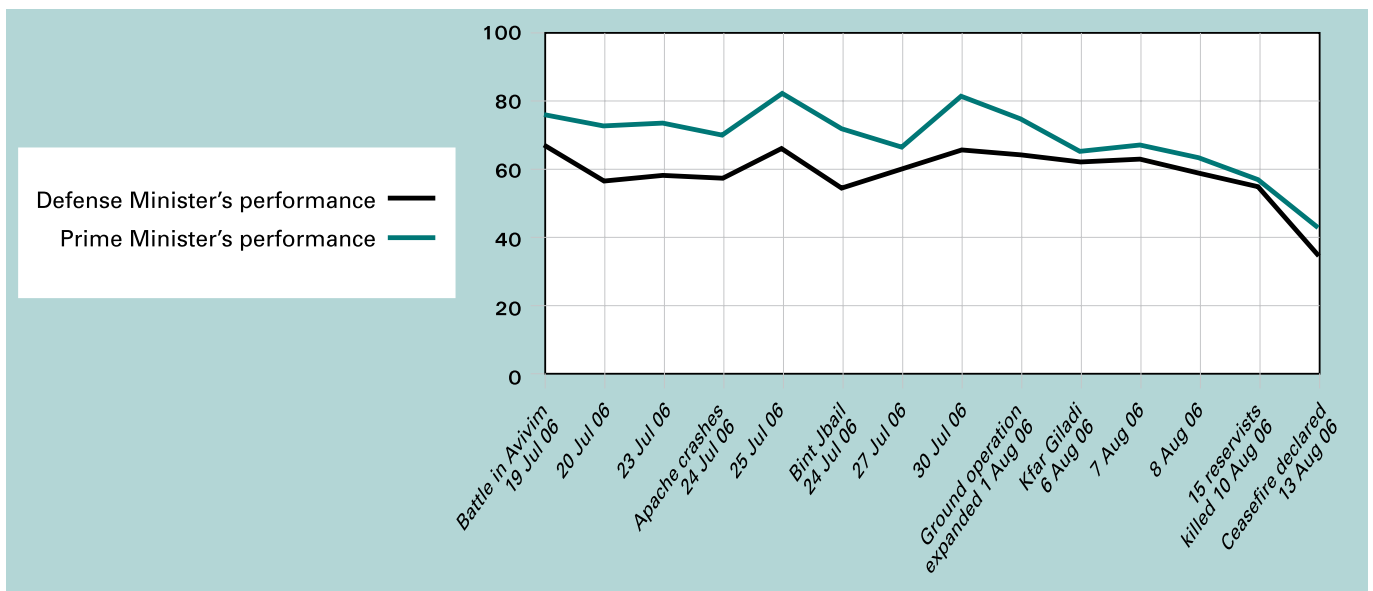


Figure 4: Evaluation of the Prime Minister’s and the Defense Minister’s Performance



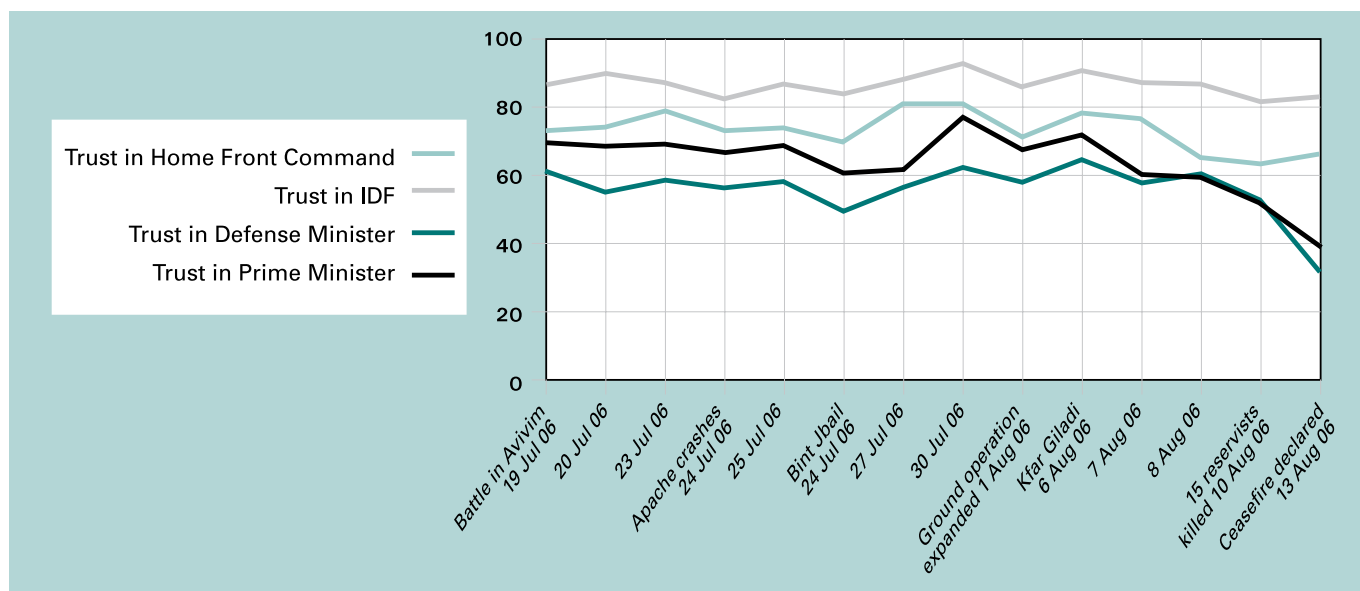
■ Optimism among the Jewish population concerning the government’s chances of achieving the objectives of the war: return of the abducted soldiers, deployment of the Lebanese armed forces in the south, and elimination of the Hezbollah threat.

The interviewees were asked to indicate the level of optimism they felt regarding the objectives of the government: return of the abducted soldiers, deployment of

the Lebanese army in Southern Lebanon, and elimination of the Hezbollah threat.⁵ Figure 3 shows that about half the Jewish population was optimistic throughout the fighting with regard to the government’s chances of achieving the

⁵ “According to the Prime Minister’s speech, Israel has set three main objectives for ending the attack on Lebanon: return of the kidnapped soldiers, deployment of Lebanese armed forces in the south, and elimination of the Hezbollah threat. How optimistic are you regarding the chances of attaining each of these objectives?”

Figure 5: Level of Trust in the Home Front Command, the IDF, the Prime Minister, and the Defense Minister



objectives of the war, and there was even a certain rise with regard to the deployment of the Lebanese army and the elimination of the Hezbollah threat, most likely as a result of the ceasefire agreement taking shape in the UN Security Council (diplomatic activity that began on August 6th) and its acceptance by the Council and the Israeli Government (August 13th).

■ The multi-casualty event in Kfar Giladi marked the beginning of a decline in the approval rating of the Prime Minister and of a moderate decline in the approval rating of the Defense Minister, which gained momentum with the death of 15 reserve soldiers and the beginning of diplomatic efforts for a ceasefire.

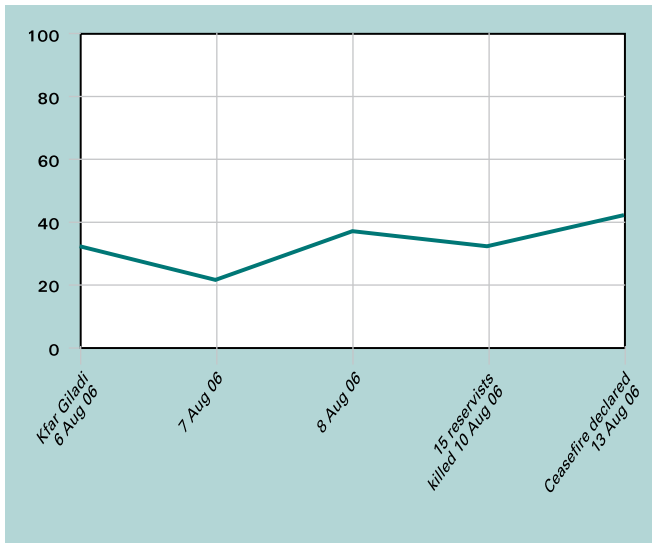
Figure 4 shows that until the Prime Minister’s announcement of a “partial” cessation of fighting (July 31st) the approval rating of his performance was stable and very high. The approval rating of the Defense Minister’s performance was also high at first. Subsequent to the announcement, the approval rating of the Prime Minister began a decline that gained momentum through the end of the period. The approval rating of the Defense Minister, which was stable throughout most of the period, declined after the events of August 10th in which 15 reserve soldiers were killed in fierce battles.

■ Trust in the armed forces throughout the war, and a decline in the level of trust in the Prime Minister and the Defense Minister.

In addition to rating the performance of the Prime Minister and of the Defense Minister, the interviewees were asked to rate their trust in the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, the IDF, and the Home Front Command. Trust levels are presented in Figure 5, which shows that despite the sharp media criticism of the handling of the campaign already during the fighting, the public continued to express very high levels of trust in the IDF and a high level of trust in the Home Front Command (which declines slightly with the rise in missile attacks), throughout the fighting period.

Until the devastating incident in Kfar Giladi, the interviewees expressed a high level of trust in the Prime Minister and a somewhat lower level of trust in the Defense Minister. The decline in the trust in both began after the Kfar Giladi incident and intensified with the landing of long-range missiles in Beit Shaan and Haifa (August 9th) and the death of 15 reserve soldiers (August 10th), and with the government’s acceptance of the ceasefire agreement formed by the Security Council.

Figure 6: Proportion of Jews Supporting Ceasefire



■ Growing support for a ceasefire among the Jewish population.

In light of the resolution drafted by the United States and France to be presented to the UN Security Council, as of August 6th the interviewees were asked about the extent of their support for a cessation or continuation of the fighting⁶

⁶ “With which of the following statements do you agree more: 1) The fighting in Lebanon must continue despite the continued missile attacks and casualties; 2) It is necessary to agree to a ceasefire

(a total of 282 interviewees responded to this question from the day it was first asked). Figure 6 shows that the support for a ceasefire increased slowly but consistently throughout this period.

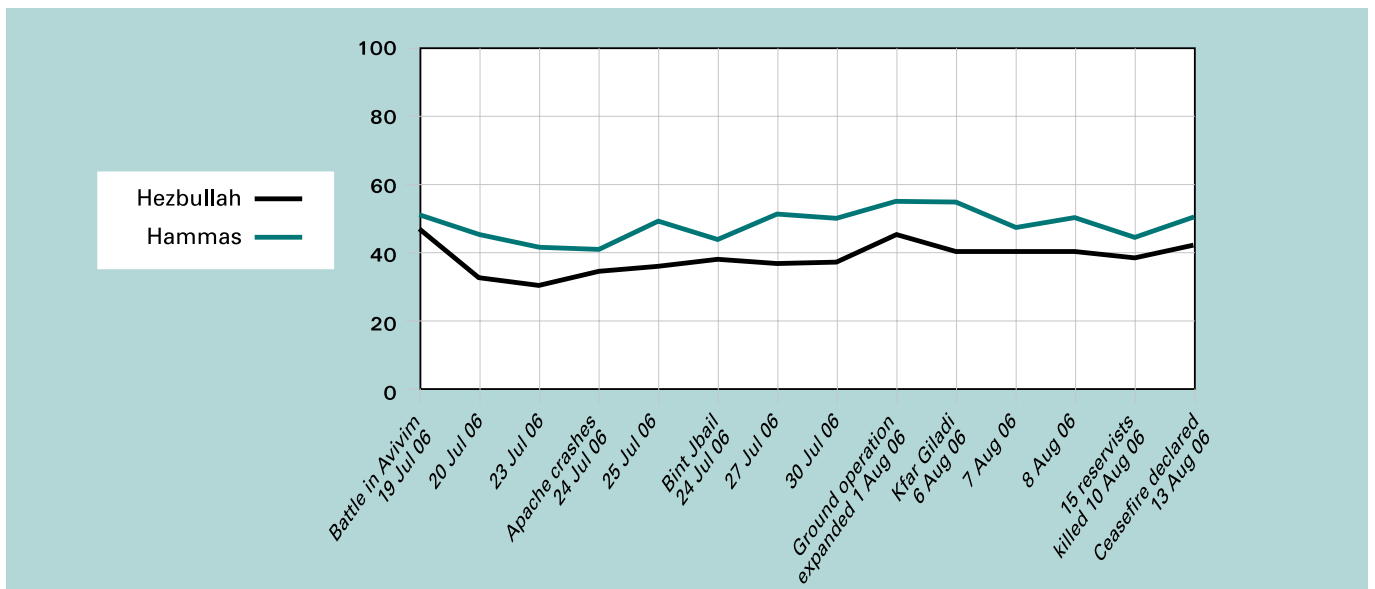
Attitudes among Jews regarding direct negotiations with Hamas and Hezbollah for the return of the abducted soldiers

■ Approximately half the Jewish population supported direct negotiations with Hamas throughout the fighting, and about a third supported direct negotiations with Hezbollah for the return of the abducted soldiers.

Finally, the interviewees were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed that the government should hold direct negotiations with Hamas and Hezbollah for the return of the abducted soldiers. Figure 7 shows that approximately half the Jewish population supported direct negotiations with Hamas, and approximately a third supported direct negotiations with Hezbollah for the return of the abducted soldiers. Throughout the fighting period support for direct negotiations with Hamas was greater than support for direct negotiations with Hezbollah.

on both sides and act in the diplomatic arena.” The figure presents the proportion of interviewees that chose the second category.

Figure 7: Support for Direct Negotiations with Hamas and Hezbollah for the Release of Hostages



Differences between Israeli Arabs and Jews

In the following section we compare the average feelings and attitudes of Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel. Due to the small sample size we are unable to estimate daily changes in the feelings and attitudes among Arabs over time. Therefore, we conduct the comparison of the sample as a whole ignoring the temporal dimension.

Figure 8: National and Individual Morale, and Sense of Personal Security, by Nationality

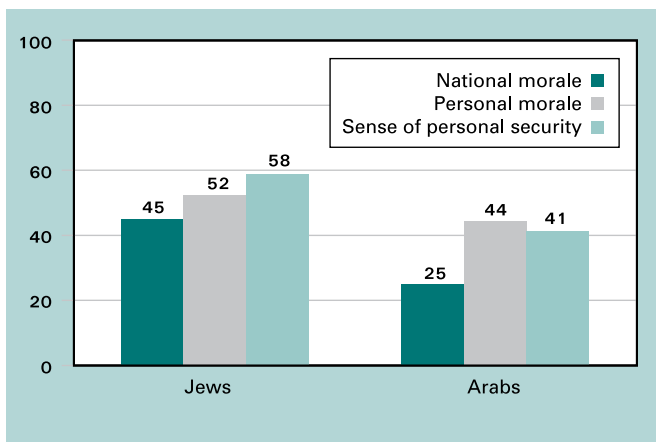
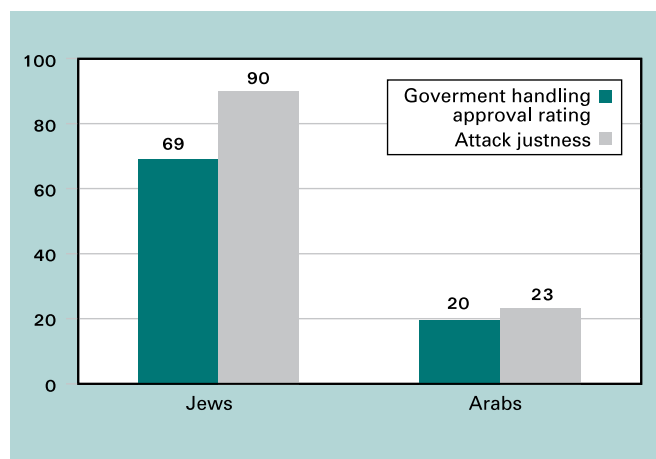


Figure 9: Justification of the Israeli attack and the Approval of Government's Performance, by Nation



Throughout the war, perceived national and individual morale among the Arab citizens of Israel were lower than among Jews

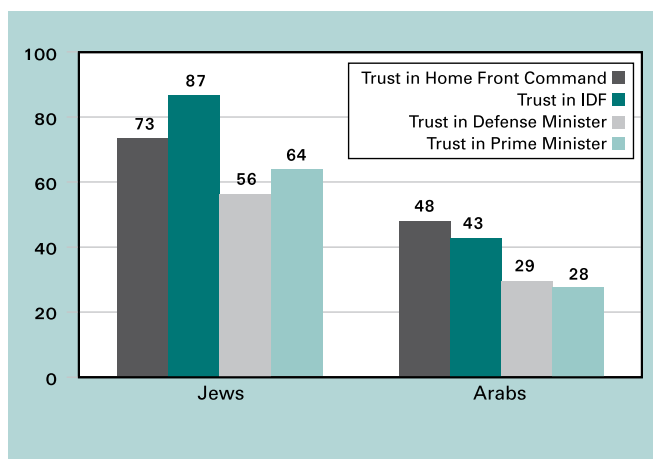
Figure 8 presents the differences between the groups in individual and national morale and in the sense of personal security during the fighting period. The chart clearly shows the lower values of the three indexes among Arabs citizens relative to those seen for Jews. Most apparent is the difference in national morale, which is significantly lower among Arabs.

Attitudes toward the government's policy during the war

Low approval rating among Arab citizens of Israel of the government's performance and of the justification of the fighting.

The justification of the Israeli attack was conspicuously lower among Arabs as was the evaluation of the government's performance. These are mirror images of the ratings seen for the Jewish population, which rated very highly the justification of the fighting (90 percent) and the government's performance (approximately 70 percent), as shown in figure 9.

Figure 10: Level of Trust in the Home Front Command, the IDF, the Prime Minister, and the Defense Minister, by Nationality



■ During the fighting, the Arab citizens of Israel showed a low level of trust, in the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, and in the armed forces compared with the Jewish population.

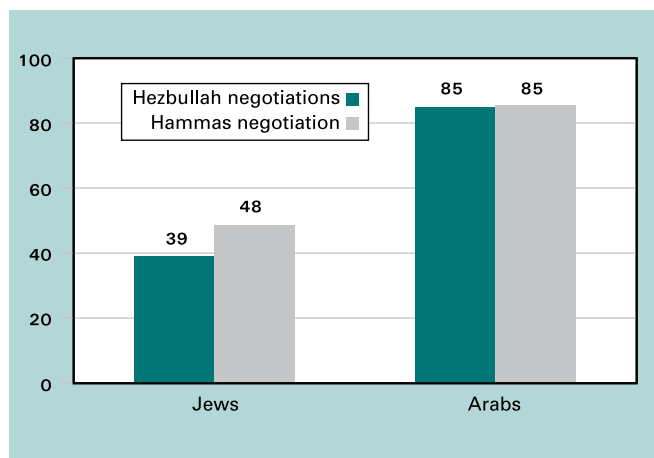
The trust of the Arab citizens of Israel in the armed forces (IDF and Home Front Command), the Prime Minister, and the Defense Minister is interesting especially in light of the criticism directed at these authorities during the war for their preparation of the home front with respect to the Arab population for the prospect of missiles landing in their residential areas (lack of shelters, lack of alarm systems, etc).

Figure 10 presents the trust rating of the interviewees in the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, the IDF, and the Home Front Command by nationality. It is clear that the trust of the Arab citizens of Israel in the IDF and the Home Front Command is lower than that of the Jewish population. The trust of the Arab citizens in the Prime Minister and in the Defense Minister are similar (and low), whereas the Jewish population expressed greater trust in the Prime Minister than in the Defense Minister.

■ Support among the Arab citizens for direct negotiations with Hamas and Hezbollah.

Finally, compared with the Jewish population, the Arab citizens supported direct negotiations with Hamas and Hezbollah for the return of the abducted soldiers. The support for direct negotiations was the same for both organizations (whereas among the Jewish population there was higher support for direct negotiation with Hamas than with Hezbollah).

Figure 11: Support for Direct Negotiations with Hamas and Hezbollah for Release of Hostages, by Nationality



The B.I. and Lucille Cohen Institute for Public Opinion Research

The B. I. Cohen Institute for Public Opinion Research at Tel Aviv University combines the academic development of the theory and methodology of surveys with conducting independent public opinion surveys of the highest scientific level. The Institute is part of the Faculty of Social Sciences and works in cooperation with the Statistics Laboratory operating under the auspices of the Department of Statistics.

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