

# Generation Z in the MENA region

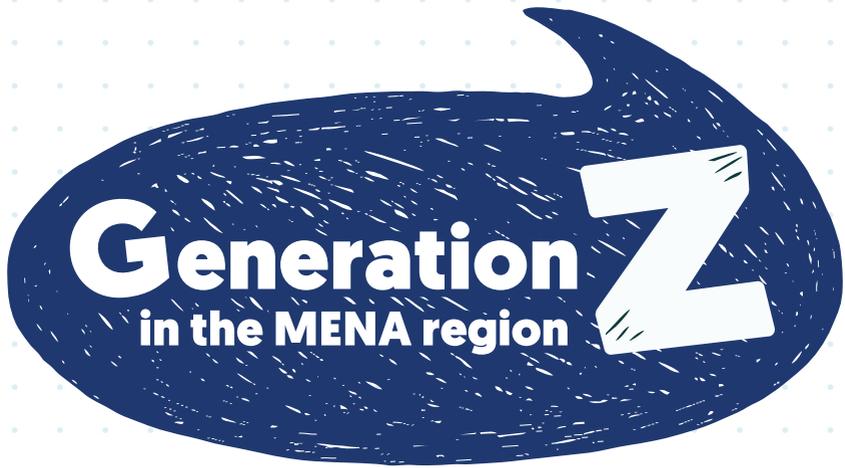
# Z

Similarities and Variances  
among Young Adults in  
Israel and Selected MENA  
Arab Countries

A joint project of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung  
and the Macro Center for Political Economics

*October 2019*





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# 1. Introduction

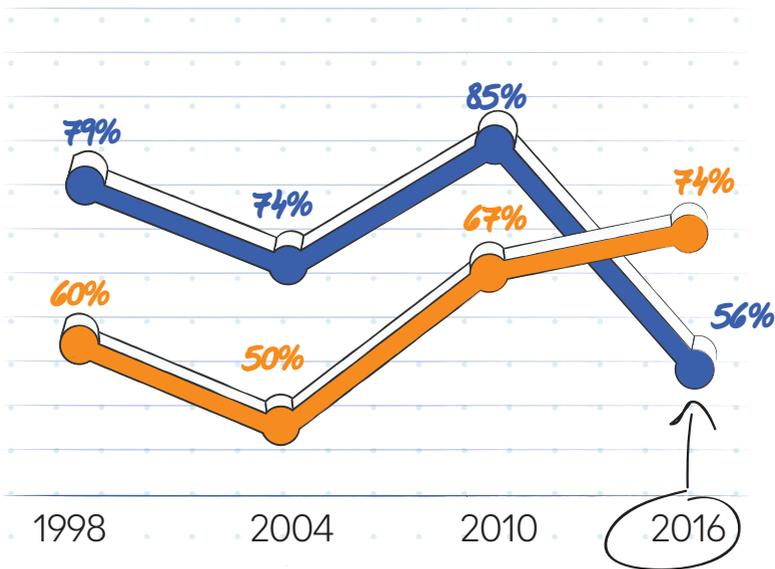
For the past 20 years, the Macro Center for Political Economics in cooperation with the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung has conducted a nationwide survey in Israel testing a wide range of social, demographic, and economic attitudes of young people in Israel. The last survey was conducted in 2016.

Among the main findings of that survey was that the degree of optimism among young Jews in Israel has decreased dramatically since 2010, while the level of optimism among young Arabs has been constantly rising since 2004.

In 2016, the optimism of young Jews regarding their personal lives in Israel was at its lowest level since 1998, and even lower than it was following the outbreak of the second Intifada. However, the degree of optimism of young Arabs is the highest recorded during those years.

In 2016, for the first time, young Arabs felt more confident of their ability to fulfill their personal goals in Israel [74% of the Arab youth], compared to Jews [56%].

**The Percentage of youth who are confident of their ability to fulfill their personal goals in Israel**



This fact, alongside the tremendous changes that have taken place in the MENA region in recent years, mainly due to the Arab Spring,

## this raises interesting questions:

1. How similar do young Israelis feel compared to young people in other countries in the region?
2. What are the main similarities among young adults in Israel and other MENA countries?
3. What are the main variances among young adults in Israel and other MENA countries?

On the same year that the Arab Spring erupted, demonstrations also took place in Israel as part of the Israeli social uprising of 2011. However, while in the Arab World, demonstrators demanded liberalization of the political system and more civil rights, in Israel protestors demanded more effective government intervention in lowering the cost of living.

**In 2017 a similar study, conducted for the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, examined the same questions in nine Arab countries – Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan Lebanon, Morocco, The Palestinian Authority, Tunisia, Syrian refugees and Yemen.**

This created a unique opportunity to conduct a quantitative comparison between the Arab countries and Israel. In particular, this research enabled us to conduct a thorough analysis of similarities and differences among young people in the Palestine Authority and in Israel, as well as to compare attitudes of young Israeli Arabs and Jews with those of Palestinians and of the rest of the Arab World.

The following research compares youth attitudes in Israel and the Arab countries mentioned. The first part of the report covers the following topics: **education, security and violence, civil values and personal goals.** Appendices to this research shed further light on the situation of young people in those countries and provide objective evaluations and comparative analysis based on data gathered from the World Bank, Youth Development Index and the World Values Survey.

## 2. Basis for Comparison

The 2016 survey of young people in Israel focused on people aged 15-18 and 21-25, examining a wide range of social, demographic, and attitudinal trends. The survey was conducted among a large representative sample of the youth of Israel, Jews and Arabs.

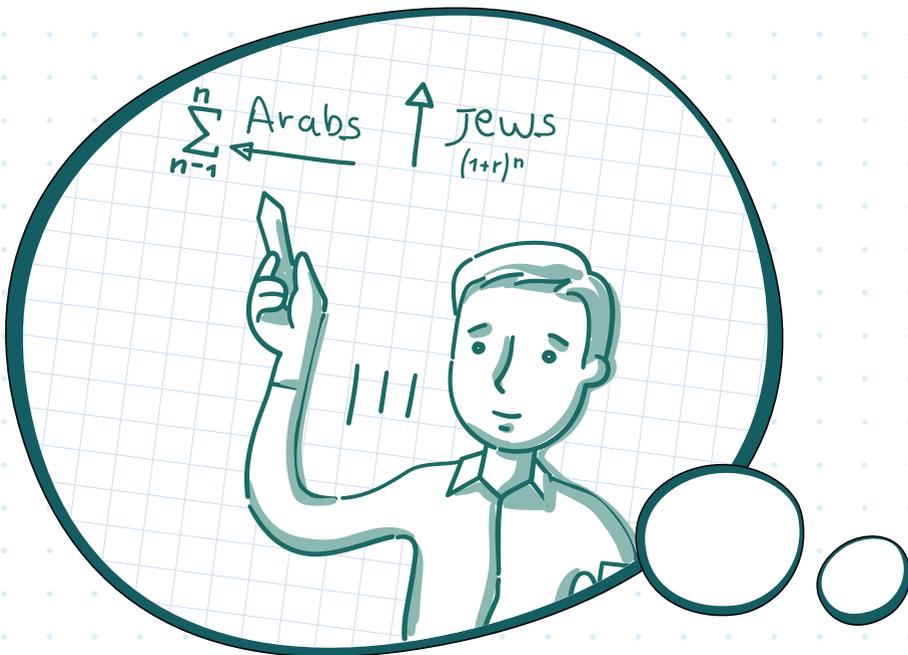
As presented in the previous chapter, in 2017, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung undertook a major survey project among youth, aged 16-30, throughout the entire Arab World. The project covered nine countries – Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, The Palestine Authority, Tunisia, Yemen and Syrian refugees.

The surveys were developed to address the relevant aspects of life and social attitudes for each society respectively, in Israel and the Arab World. **However, a number of questions were purposely repeated in both surveys in order to elicit a comparative picture where appropriate.** Five questions were repeated verbatim, while the wording of three further questions appropriate to the Israeli context was slightly adjusted.

The following chapters summarize the findings and insights, about what the youth of each society share – and where they are different. The analysis compares the Jewish and Arab youth populations to their counterparts in the Arab World, and **particularly to the Palestinian Authority – Israel's closest neighbors and for many Arab citizens, their**

**kin.** The chapter therefore perceives several trajectories of comparison: Jews relative to the Arab World, Arab citizens of Israel relative to the Arab World, Arab citizens compared to Palestinian youth, and Palestinians compared to both Jews and the Arab World.

The regional study included participants aged 16-30, while the Israeli study included those aged 15-18 and 21-24 [skipping ages 19-20, when many Israelis serve in the military]. In order to allow for a useful comparison, the regional database was filtered down to the relevant ages, and all the comparisons are between similar age groups.



### 3. Education

**The education enrollment rate in Israel and the Palestinian Authority is very similar, and is higher than the Arab World average. Nonetheless, as the median age of a BA student in Israel is 25, it is likely that education levels in Israel are higher compared to the presented Arab countries.**

One of the main differences to emerge from the data is a disparity in the percentage of youth who were students at the time of the survey. Based on the age of the participants, the student population would include high school and higher education students.

**The Israeli sample showed only a minor variation between Jews and Arabs, with Arab citizens reporting slightly higher rates of participation: 63%, compared to 60% of Jewish respondents. The Israeli overall average was 61%.** It is worth noting that many Jewish Israelis start their university studies at a later age than their counterparts - the median age of a BA student in Israel is 25. Therefore, the survey findings do not necessarily indicate that higher education enrollment rates of Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel are the same.

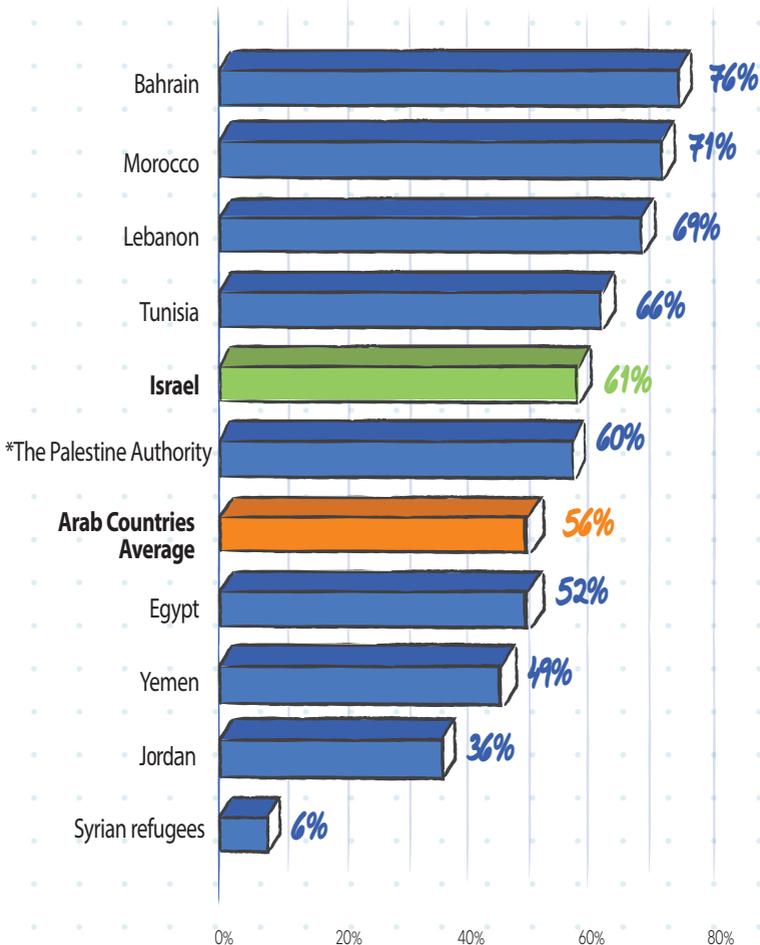
**In fact, in 2016, Arab students in the university comprised only 15.2% of all the students, while they constitute 20.8% of the population.**

The Israeli numbers are higher than the Arab World average of 56%. However, several Arab countries surpass both communities: in Bahrain 76% reported that they were currently students, in Morocco – 71%, in Lebanon – 69%, and in Tunisia – 66%. **Surprisingly, the Palestinian percentage is equal to the Israeli Jewish percentage – 60%.**

Israel's eastern and southern neighbors with whom it has peace treaties, Egypt and Jordan, had among the lowest rates: 52% and 36%, respectively. Syrian refugees reported that just 6% are currently students, clearly reflecting the deep disruption to their lives, rather than the situation in Syria prior to the war. As was shown in the previous chapter, Syria used to be one of the most educated Arab countries in the region, with 39.2% of the population enrolled in tertiary education. Similarly, Yemen's rate of 49% reported in the survey might have subsequently declined significantly due to the violence there.

While the overall average of respondents who reported being students in the Arab World was 56%, this rate is depressed by the very low rate among Syrian refugees. When the latter are discounted, the average rises to 60%, equal to the Israeli average.

**percentage of survey respondents who are students, by country**



\* In this research The Palestine Authority refers to data obtained both in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip

**There is a notable difference between Israel and the Arab World in relation to the rates of student population by gender.** On average, the Arab World shows a very slightly higher rate of men studying than women: 57% compared to 55%, respectively.

**In Israel the trend is reversed: in both the Arab and the Jewish communities a higher proportion of women report being students than men, also by a small margin.**

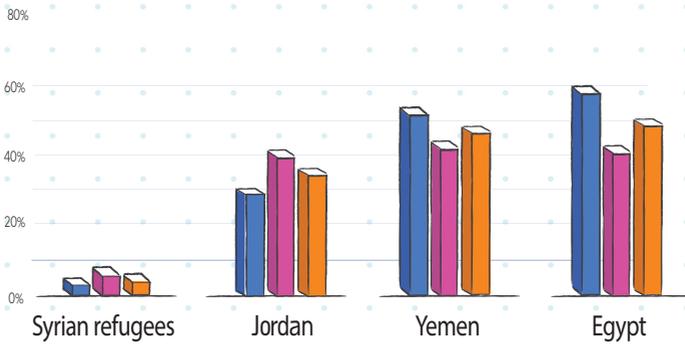
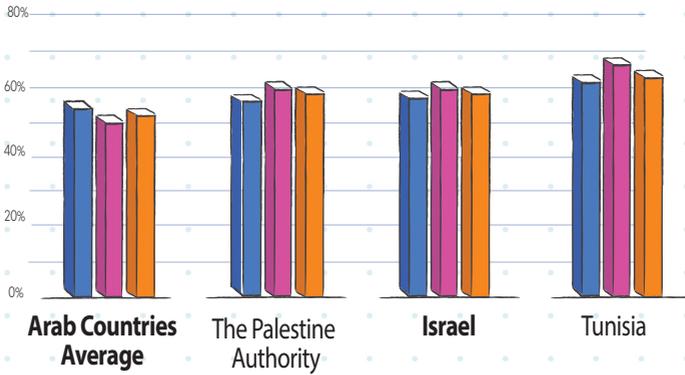
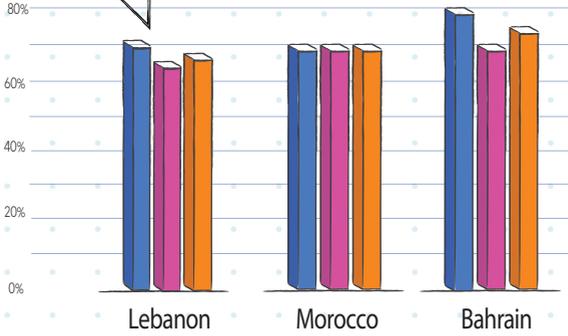
Interestingly, this trend is shared by Palestinians, where women report at an equal rate that they are students, as Jewish Israelis. Thus, in the facet of education, The Palestinian Authority, Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews are more similar to each other than to the Arab World, both in terms of overall rates and the trend in participation of women. At the same time, the Arab World average contains variations between states – in fact in Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and even Syrian refugees, more young women report being students than young male respondents.

In the Arab World, secular respondents are more likely to attain higher education: 60% of those who define themselves as secular are students, as compared to 53% of those who are somewhat religious, and 52% of the most religious respondents. In some places this gap is pronounced: in Egypt, 70% of the least religious respondents were students, but just 47% of the most religious.



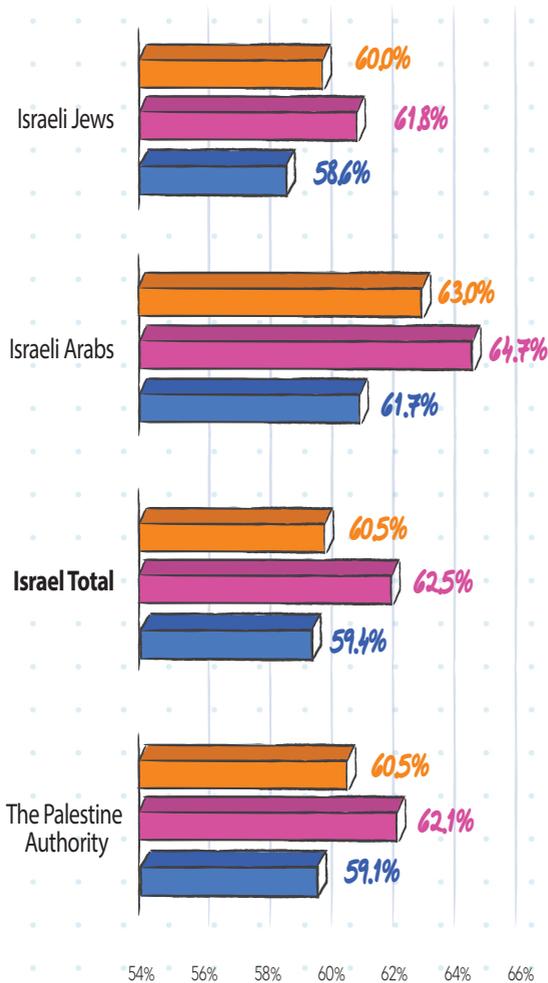
# Percentage of respondents who are students, by country and gender

 Women
  Men
  Total



## Percentage of respondents who are students in Israel and The Palestine Authority, by gender and ethnic group

 Women
  Men
  Total

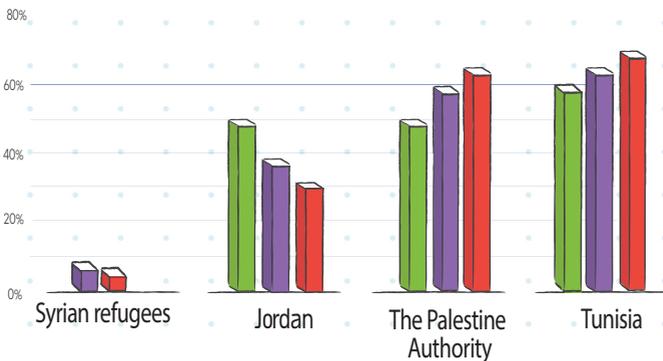
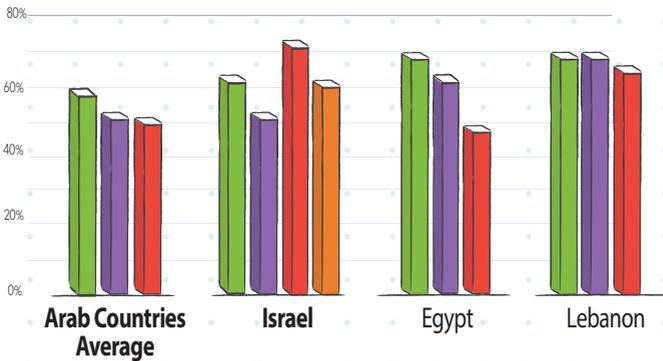
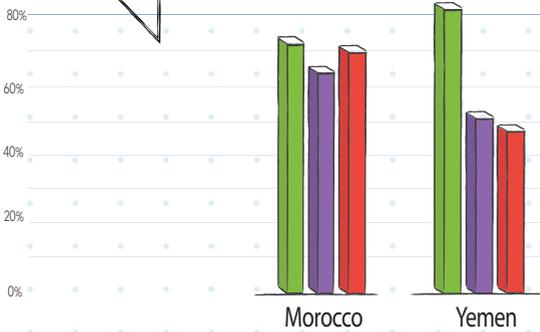


**Palestinians by contrast exhibited the opposite trend: 50% of the least religious reported being students at present, in comparison to 55% of the somewhat religious and 64% of the religious.** The only other country to share this trend was Tunisia, where 60% of the least-religious and 72% of the most religious were students. Israeli Arabs were not asked about their level of religious observance.

Yet Israeli Jews show a different variation, not a direct correlation: among secular respondents, 63% were students. Traditional Jews (masorati) – often a sociological category as much as a level of observance – exhibited a lower rate of 52%. Among national religious youngsters, 75% were students, as were 61% of the ultra-Orthodox – just slightly less than the most secular, but higher than the traditional group. Thus, religious young people in Israel have high rates of student participation.



# Percentage of respondents who are students, by level of religiosity



## 4. Security and Violence

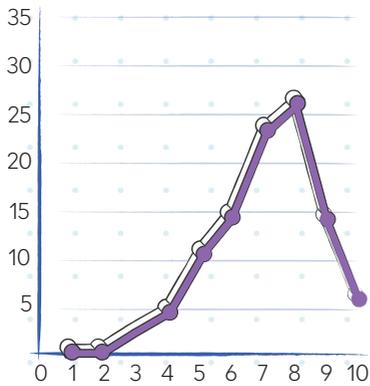
The survey questioned the participants' overall sense of life security. This question included a broad description that included “school, employment, family, and your economic situation” – and asked people to rate how secure they felt broadly about their personal lives.

**Once again, Jews and Arabs in Israel reported different levels, with Arab youth showing a mean average score of 8 on the same 1-10 scale – this was the highest score among all the countries tested except Tunisia. Jews reported a level of 7.2.**

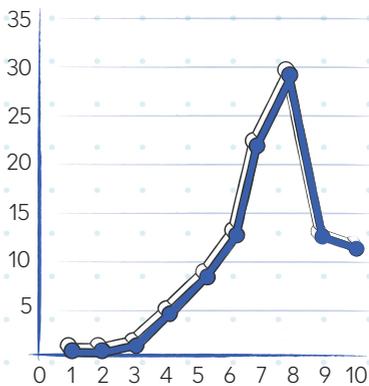
**More notably, a third of Arab women in Israel marked their situation as completely safe (10), as did a quarter of Arab Israeli men. In Jewish society in Israel the numbers were significantly lower** [10.7% of men and 6.6% of women]. The proportion of people in each society who gave any “safe” score between 6 and 10 is also telling. 90% of Arab Israeli youth scored their perception of general life security within this range, while only 84% of Jewish youth gave a secure rating. **This means that, in all the different groups in the Israeli society only a small proportion - 13% - said that they did not have life security (marked 5 or less).**

**Level of life security in Israel, percentage of respondents in each category on a 1-10 scale, by gender and ethnicity**

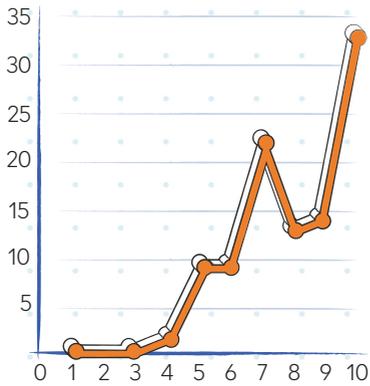
JEWISH WOMEN



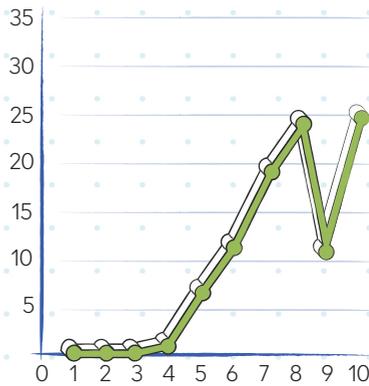
JEWISH MEN



ARAB WOMEN



ARAB MEN

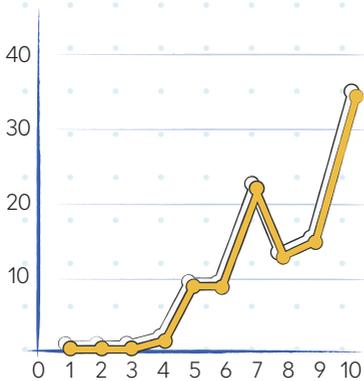


**However, both the Jewish average and the Arab average in Israel are significantly higher than the average perception of life security among Palestinian youth.** As can be seen, 37.1% of Palestinian men reported not having life security, and 25.1% of women [scored 5 or less]. **All in all, only 68% of Palestinian assigned a high score to their security, significantly lower than the scores for both Jewish and Arab Israelis, and only slightly above the Arab World average of 67%.** However, it is worth mentioning that 14.1% of Palestinian women said they felt completely safe, more than double than the percentage for Jewish women in Israel.

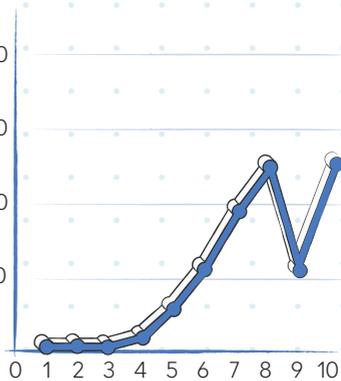
The Israeli score was higher than that of Bahrain [average of 7] and similar to that of Jordan, which assigned a high score of 7.4 as well. **Not surprisingly, the community with the least sense of security in the Arab World was that of Syrian refugees, who ranked last, with a 4.6 average.** A full 75% of the Syrian refugees gave a low score, between 1-5, to their sense of overall security in life.

**Level of life security, percentage of Israeli Arab and Palestinian respondents on a 1-10 scale, by gender and ethnicity**

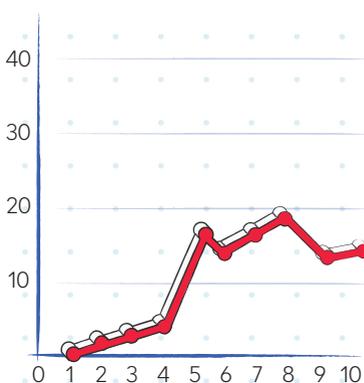
**ISRAELI ARAB WOMEN**



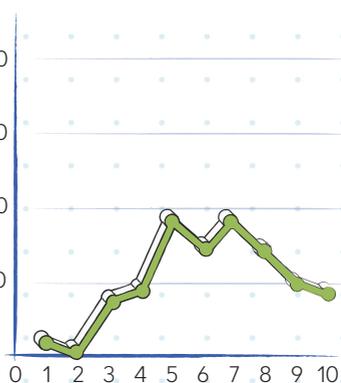
**ISRAELI ARAB MEN**



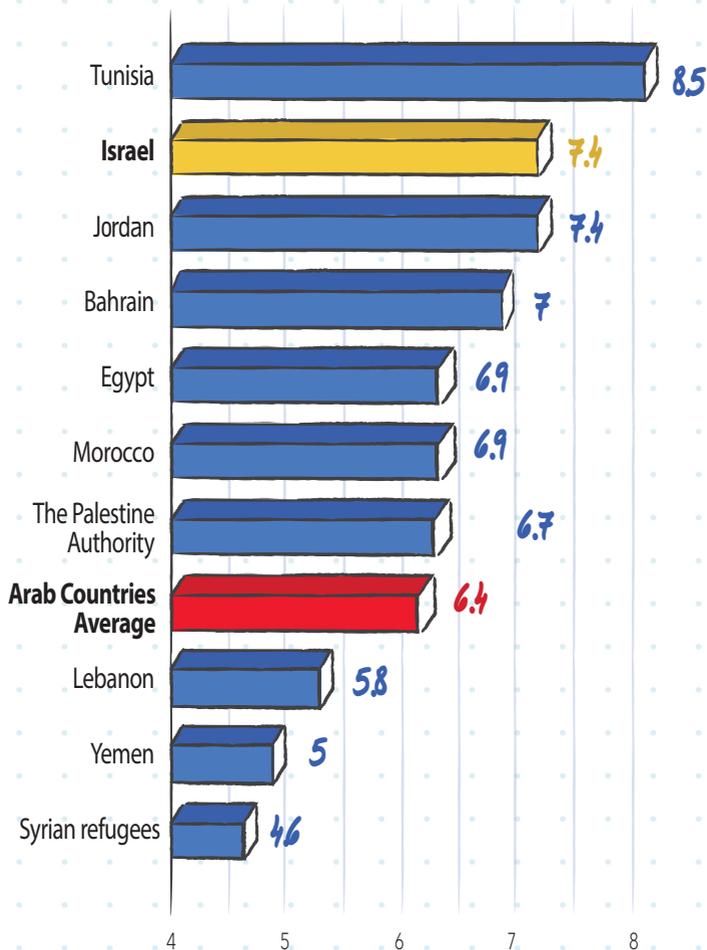
**PALESTINIAN WOMEN**



**PALESTINIAN MEN**



## Level of life security, mean average (1-10), by country



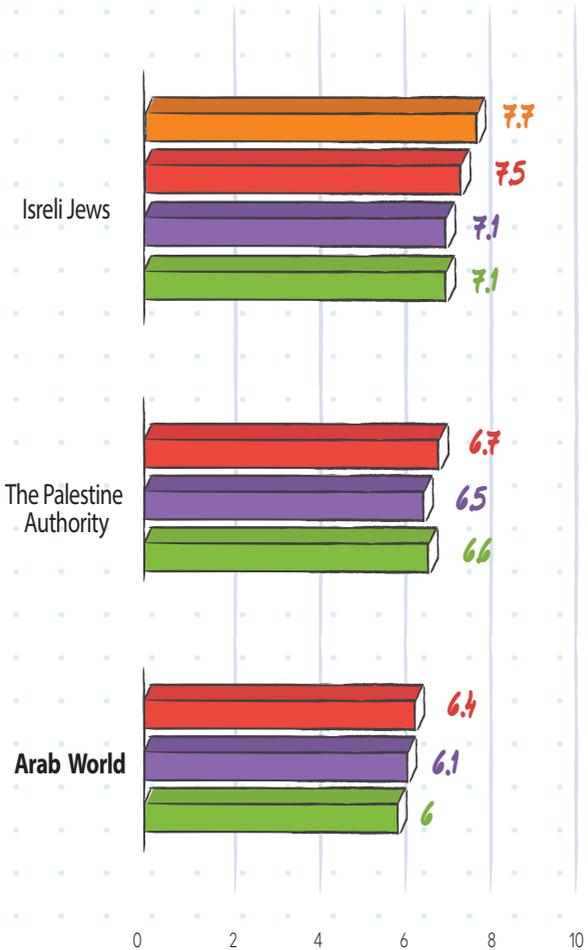
**The difference between male and female youth was slight but notable here as well: in the Arab World as a whole, more women felt secure in the various general areas of their lives than men.** Young women throughout the Arab World had an average score of 6.5, slightly higher than the young male average of 6.3. Palestinians exhibited one of the larger gaps on this measure: 75% of young women said they felt secure [between 6-10] in the various areas of their lives, compared to 63% of young men. Correspondingly, the average score among Palestinian young women was higher too – 7, compared to 6.3 on the 1-10 scale.

**Yet, as mentioned above, among Israeli Jews and Arabs, the reverse was shown to be true: slightly more young men than women felt secure,** by a margin of three points each: 85% to 82% among young Israeli men and women, respectively, and 92% to 89% among young Arab men and women, respectively. Thus, in this dimension, Israeli citizens in general differ from the Arab World and from Palestinians.

**Among the more interesting findings is the difference in general life security based on religious observance. Among Palestinians, the Arab World as a whole, and Israeli Jews, the most religious communities indicated higher levels of the top scores for security in general areas of life;** however, the gap between the groups was relatively small.



**Level of life security, mean average (1-10) by level of religious observance**



The Middle East is an arena of conflict. Since 2011, many, if not all, countries in the Arab World survey experienced turmoil related to the Arab Spring, and at least Egypt, Yemen, and of course Syrian refugees experienced significant levels of violence. Lebanon lies in close proximity to the violence in Syria and to the threat of conflict with Israel; Bahrain experienced violence during the early years of the Arab Spring, but this had mostly subsided by the time of the survey in 2016. Tunisia and Morocco were generally not afflicted by the violence of the Arab Spring. Palestinians, of course, live under a military occupation; while there was no official war during the time of the survey, there was a wave of stabbing attacks during the two years from late 2014 through 2016, which was addressed with determination by Israel.

The survey asked a question about violence in general and did not address specific conflict situations; rather, the youth were asked to rank their level of security regarding exposure to violence, from 1-10 – where ten is the most secure and one was the least secure. Among Israelis, the question asked about “personal” exposure to violence, in an attempt to prevent people from referring to psychological **perceptions of** violence without actually experiencing it themselves. The scores from 1-10 were presented as an average.

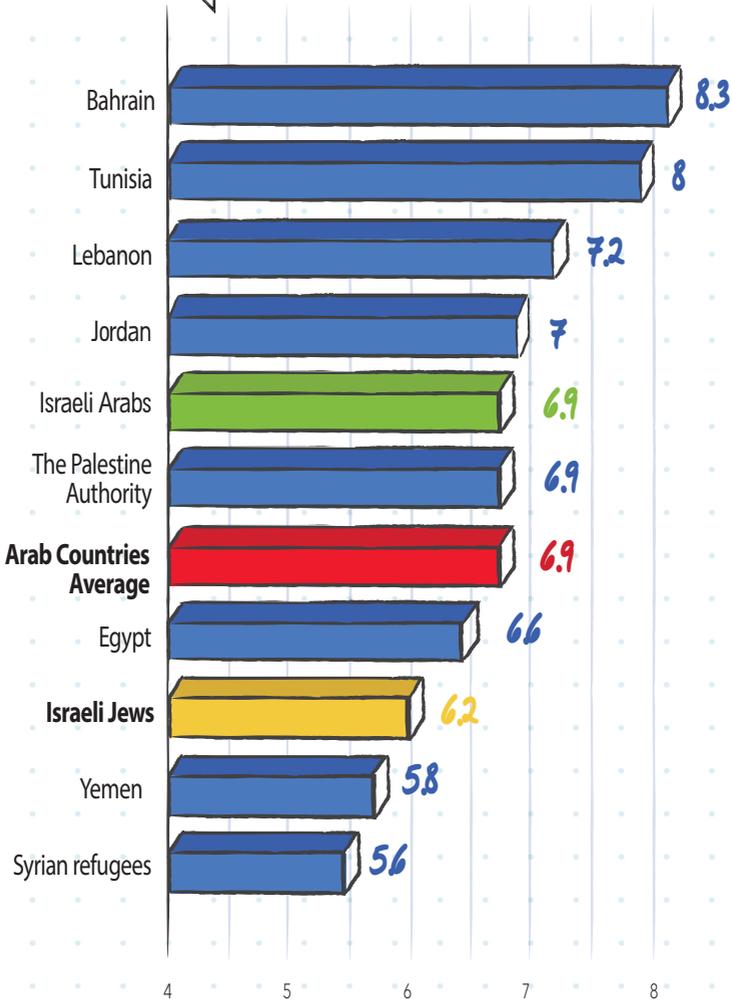
In Bahrain and Tunisia, youth respondents showed the highest levels of perceived security with relation to exposure to violence: 8.3 and 8, respectively. Lebanon, a country coping with instability but not direct violence, showed the third-highest score, with 7.2.

Both Jordan and the Palestinians scored lower, with 7 and 6.9 respectively; Egyptian young people assigned a slightly lower score than Palestinians, 6.6. Yet both are actually slightly higher than the Israeli average of 6.4. Within the Israeli average, Arab youth reported higher levels of security – 6.9 compared to Jews, 6.2. **This is counterintuitive, considering the highly publicized levels of violence among the Arab community, particularly due to insufficient policing and the proliferation of illegal weapons. Yet it is possible that the lower perception of security with relation to exposure to violence among Jews could still reflect the sense of insecurity due to the stabbing attacks and a broad state of conflict, even if only a tiny proportion of people experienced them personally.**

Yemen, where a war has been essentially ongoing, and the Syrian refugees reported the lowest levels of security with relation to personal exposure to violence – with an average of 5.8 and 5.6, respectively.



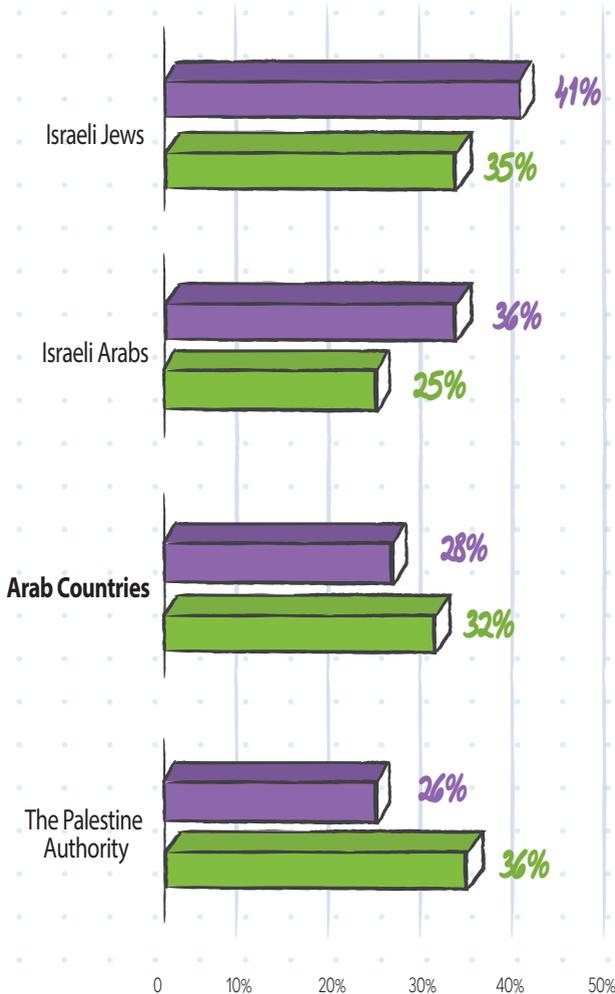
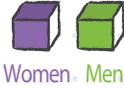
**Level of security regarding exposure to violence, mean average of security (1-10), by country**



Each country differed in terms of the genders' perceptions of exposure to violence. In Egypt, for example, more women reported low levels of safety (with a score of 1-5 out of 10) regarding violence than men (37% of women and 24% among men gave a low score); among Syrian refugees the rates were high among both genders, but, once again, more women reported low levels of security regarding violence, than men (53% of female youth and 47% of males, and gave a low security rating). **Yet, as an average, the Arab World showed slightly higher levels of insecurity for men than for women** – 32% of young men reported high levels of exposure to violence, in comparison to 28% of young women.

**However, Israeli Jews showed a trend similar to that of Egypt and Syrian refugees, where more women gave a low-security rank (41%) than men (35%). The same was true of Israeli Arabs:** 36% of women gave a low score, and 25% of men – an 11-point difference that is among the largest gaps in the survey in that track. Palestinians, however, reverted to the Arab World trend of higher insecurity regarding violence among men: 36% gave a low-security score, compared to 26% among women – also a considerable 10-points gap.

## Percentage of respondents reporting low levels of security, by gender



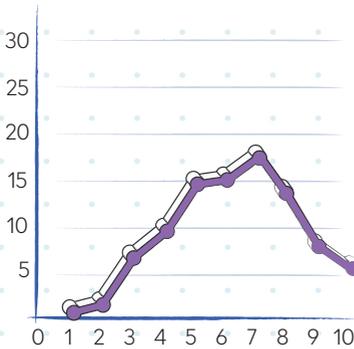
**Beyond the question of physical security, respondents were also asked about material security.** While the Arab World survey focused on a range of basic life conditions including access to food and shelter, these questions were not asked in Israel. Instead, **both surveys asked about a general sense of economic security.**

**Interestingly, on a 1-10 scale, the Arab Israeli youth reported the highest levels of perceived economic security of all countries included in the survey – higher also than Israeli Jews.** More significantly, 28% of the Arab respondents in Israel reported that they felt totally secure economically, while only 7.2% of the Jewish respondents felt the same way. The **finding stands in contrast to the reality that Arab citizens of Israel are poorer on average than the Jewish population. Noticeably, Arab women, who are ranked among the poorest populations in Israel, felt greater economic security, compared to Jewish men, a group that enjoys unprecedentedly low unemployment and a high level of labor market participation.** Between the groups themselves, Arab and Jewish, there is no noticeable difference between women and men.

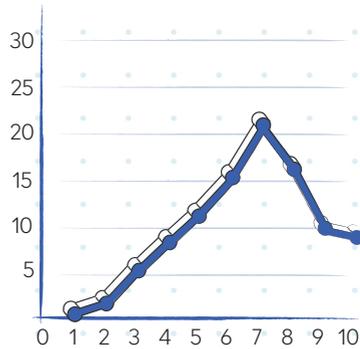


**Level of economic security in Israel, percentage of respondents in each category on a 1-10 scale, by gender and ethnicity**

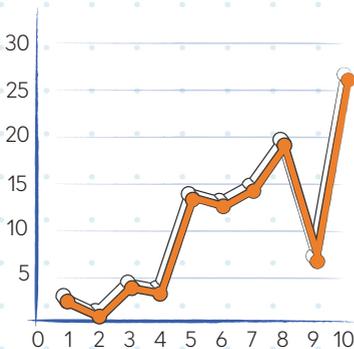
JEWISH WOMEN



JEWISH MEN



ARAB WOMEN



ARAB MEN



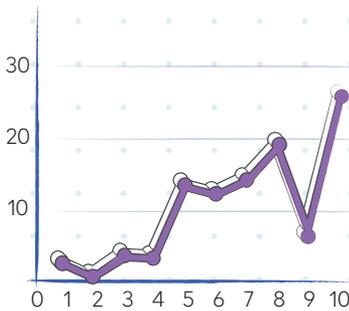
The Israeli average stands in contrast to the Palestinian youth sample, who scored over a full point lower – the 5.7 average makes The Palestinian Authority the fourth-lowest [out of ten countries] on the question of perceived economic security. As can be seen, both Palestinian men and women ranked their economic security much lower compared to Arab people living in Israel. 54.2% of Palestinian men and 38.8% of Palestinian women reported not having economic security [a ranking of 5 or less]. On the other hand, only 13% of Arab Israeli men and 21.6% of Arab Israeli women, reported not having economic security [a ranking of 5 or less].

The Palestinian score was very close to that of Lebanon [5.6], and well ahead of that Yemen [4.5]. Once again, Syrian refugees displayed the most desperate results, with an average score of 3.2 [where one indicates the lowest level of economic security]. Two countries exceeded the Jewish Israeli average: Bahrain [6.8] and Egypt [6.7]. Morocco [6.5], Tunisia [6.2], and Jordan [6.2] followed closely. **The fact that these scores were equal to or higher than the Israeli Jewish average, despite the fact that Jewish Israelis have significantly higher GDP per capita, indicates that the perception of economic security may diverge from actual income levels. It could also be that youth are not as aware of, or responsible for, economic realities as adults.**

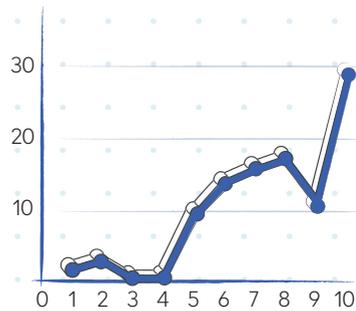


**Level of economic security, percentage of respondents for Israeli Arabs and Palestinians on a 1-10 scale, by gender and ethnicity**

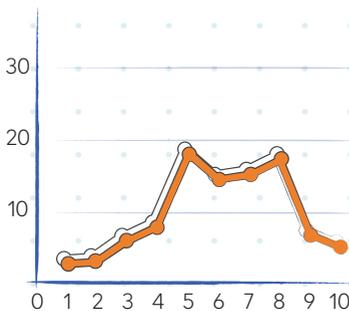
ISRAELI ARAB WOMEN



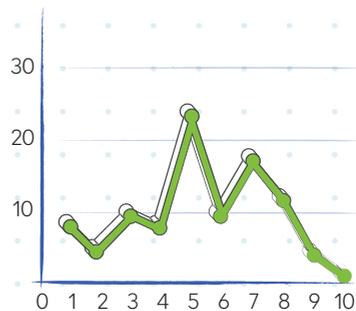
ISRAELI ARAB MEN



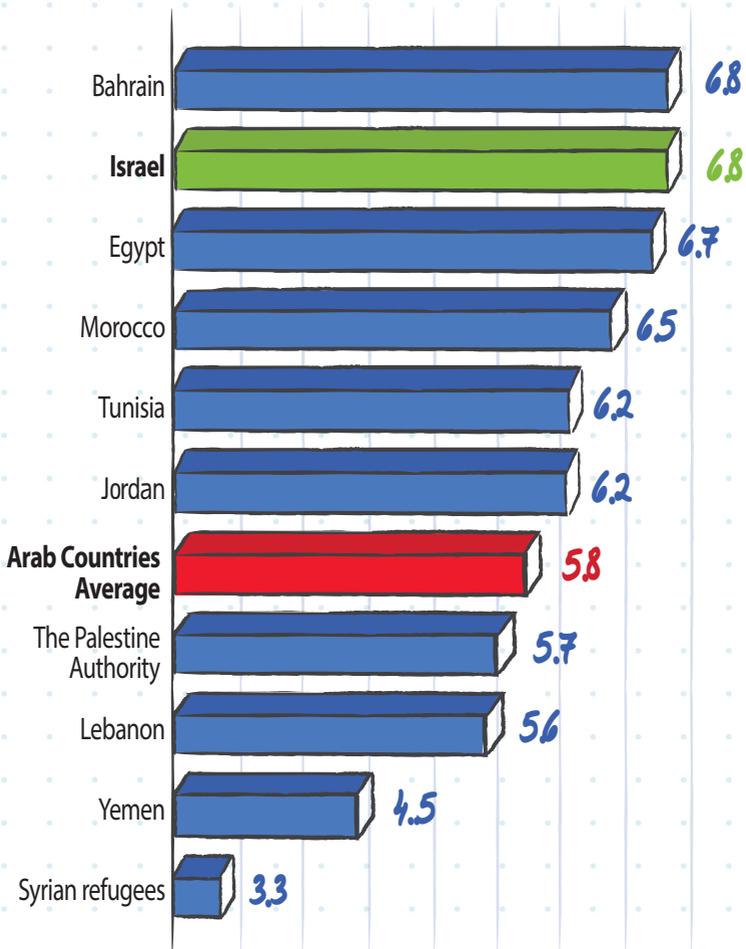
PALESTINIAN WOMEN



PALESTINIAN MEN



## Level of economic security, mean average (1-10), by country



## 5. Civic Values

Five years after the start of the Arab Spring, the surveys investigated whether young people support civic values related to democracy and liberal societies. **Both the Israeli and Arab World surveys addressed two fundamental values: freedom of expression and minority rights.** Respondents were asked to rate how important each value was on a scale of 1-10, where ten implies they are of the utmost importance.

**Overall, there was strong support for freedom of expression across the different countries.** The lowest average score was in Bahrain, with an average of 6.8 [out of ten] – still within the upper range. However, all other countries showed average scores ranging from 7.4 to 9.1.

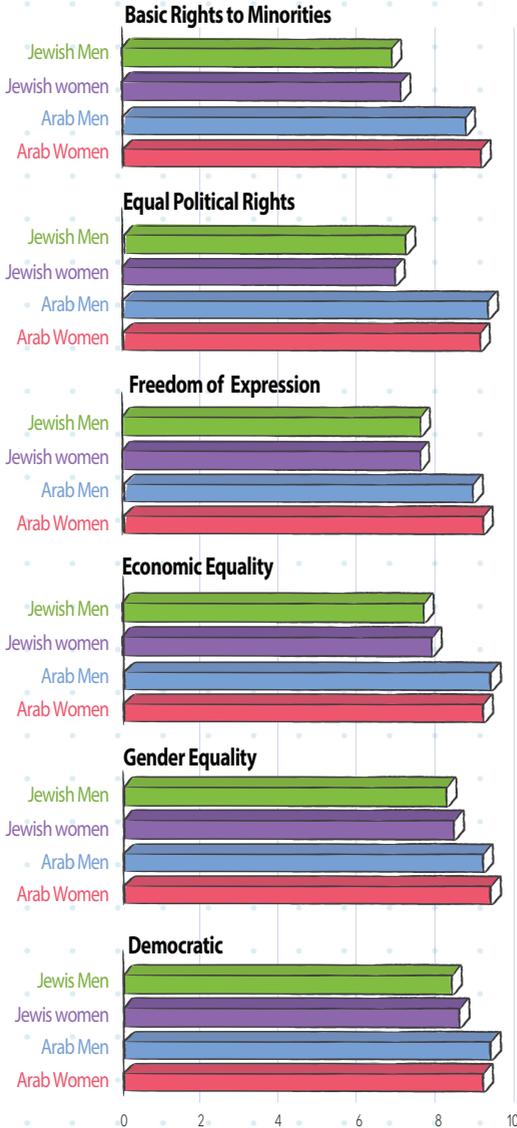
**Arab Israeli youth prized freedom of expression at higher rates than all other populations**

– at an average of 9.4. The importance of free expression to Arab Israeli youth is unmistakable: 81% rated this at the top level of importance, a score of 10.

**Their response stands in**



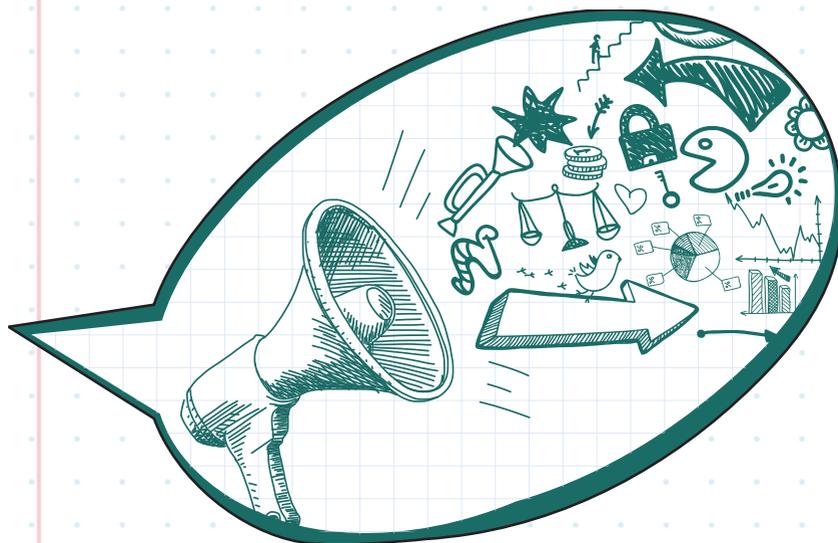
powerful contrast to Jewish Israelis – just under one-third of them assigned the highest score of importance to this dimension.



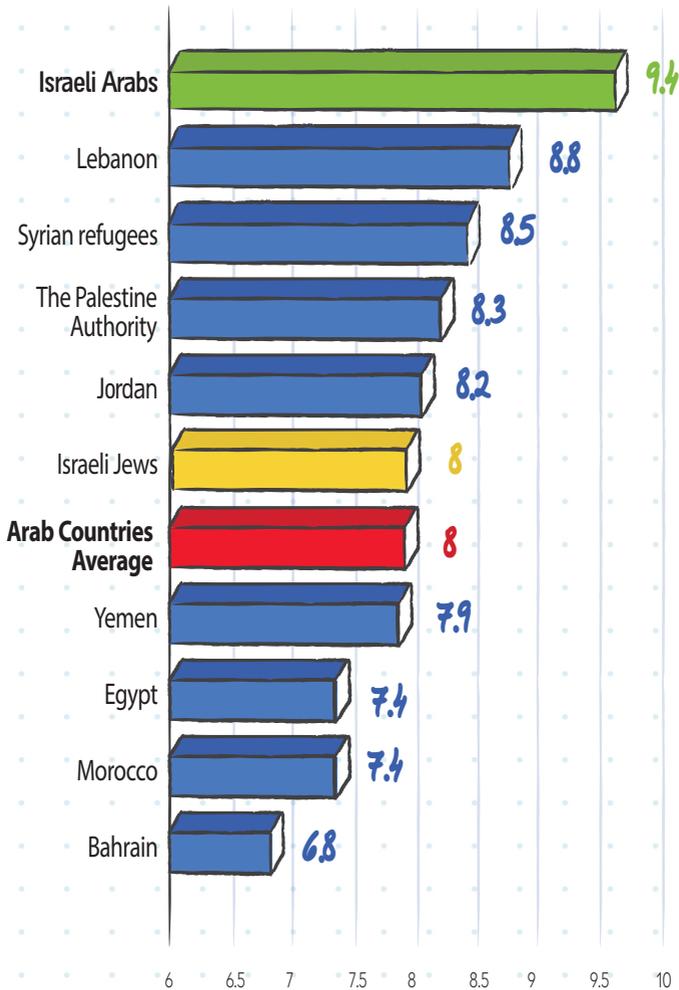
**Level of importance of democratic values in Israel, mean average (1-10), by gender and ethnicity**

The average for the Arab World was 8, equal to the Israeli Jewish average – with Palestinian youth assigning an average of 8.3. Thus, Palestinians had a lower average than Israeli Arabs, but higher than Israeli Jews. Interestingly, the overall weighted Israeli average was 8.3 – exactly the same as the score for Palestinians. Similarly, the proportion of Palestinian youth who ranked this dimension as having the highest importance with a score of ten was 34% - very close to that of Israeli Jews.

The country having the highest score in the Arab World was Tunisia, with an average of 9.1 – possibly reflecting the belief that expression of political beliefs had led to a successful revolutionary change of government that was almost entirely non-violent. Interestingly, the country with the lowest rate of top-priority score was Morocco, with just 6% and a 7.4 average rating.



**Level of importance of  
freedom of expression,  
mean average  
(1-10 scale), by country**



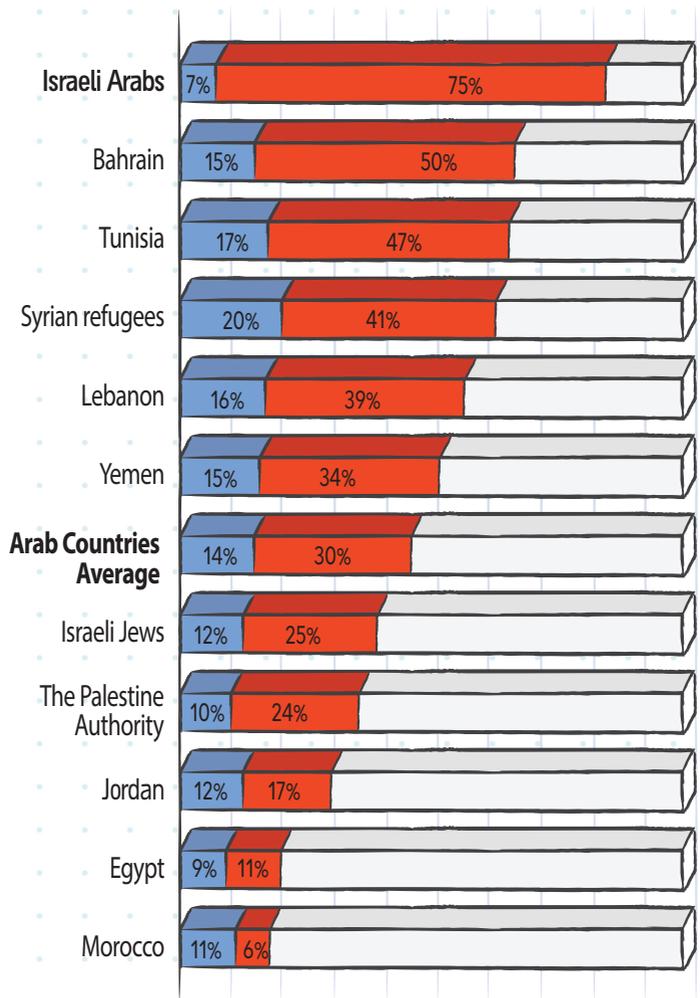
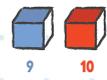
The second question in both surveys regarding democratic values was the level of importance young people attribute to basic rights for minorities. The question did not specify whether basic rights referred to material or political rights, but it was valuable for mapping reactions to the general principle.

Here too, Arab Israeli youth showed higher scores than all other samples, with 9.2 on average, and fully three-quarters gave it the highest score of 10. Strong support for minority rights, as well as related civil rights, is logical given that Arabs are a minority in Israel. This is also consistent with findings of previous youth studies in Israel showing similar support for minority protection among Arabs in Israel.

**The Arab Israeli responses contrast sharply with Israeli Jewish youth. Just one-quarter of the latter said minority rights was of the utmost importance (giving it the top score of 10), and this was notably close to trends among Palestinians (24%).** For Israeli Jewish and Palestinian youth, the average level of importance was equal, standing at 7.1. On this measure, Israeli Jews and Palestinians show trends closer to the lowest three countries of the Arab World: Egypt [6.4], Jordan [6.9] and Morocco [6.9], while Arab Israelis are outliers for their strong support.

Bahrain and Lebanon expressed relatively higher levels of support: 8.9 and 8.2 respectively – and Syrian refugees also gave high support, with an average of 8.5. Tunisian and Yemeni youth showed slightly lower average scores, 7.9 and 7.5 respectively.

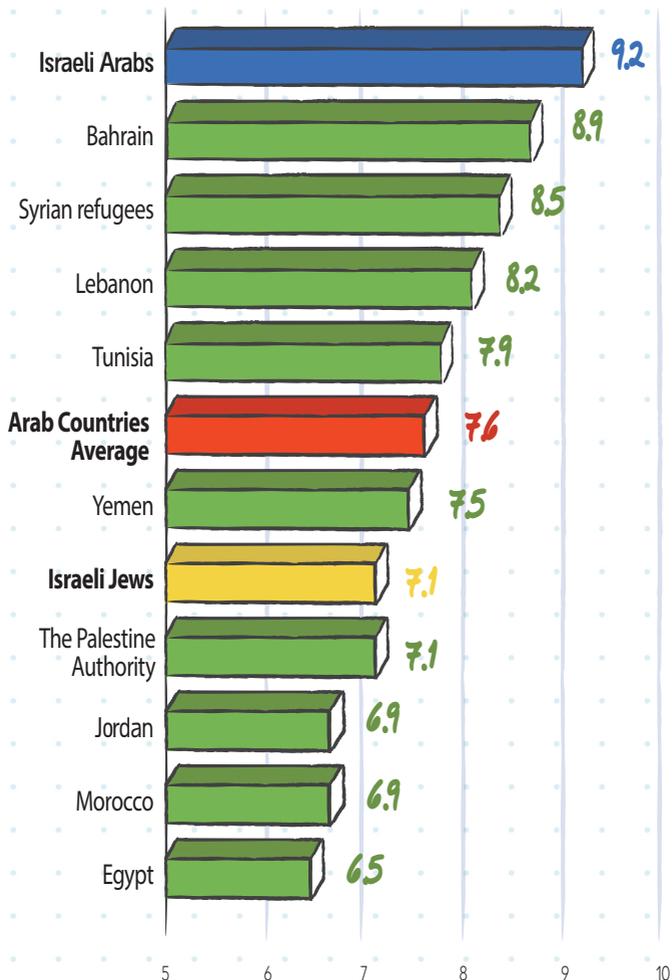
**Proportion who believe minority rights are very important (2 top scorers: 9 & 10)**



Morocco was the outlier in terms of the low proportion who rated the value of minority rights as having the highest level of importance: the average ranking was 6.9 out of ten, and just 6% gave it the top score. While 43% of the entire Arab World gave this a score of 9 or 10 on importance, among Moroccans just 18% gave it the same total score. Israeli Arabs ranked far above all others on the same measure: 82% gave minority rights the highest two scores.



**Level of importance of basic rights for minorities, mean average (1-10), by country**



An examination of levels of religious observance shows contrasting trends: for Jewish Israelis, higher levels of religious observance drove conservative values, but in the Arab World, higher religiosity was linked to certain liberal values among youth in this survey. In Israel, the most secular of the Jewish sample were the strongest supporters of freedom of expression. Combining all who said it was important (6-10 on the scale), fully 92% of young secular Jews believed it to be important. This number declined steadily based on higher levels of religious observance: 86%, dropping to 77% and 71% among the traditional, the national religious and the Ultra-Orthodox, respectively.

However, in the Arab World the opposite turned out to be true:



78% of secular people in the Arab World as an overall average assigned an “important” score, 85% among the somewhat religious people, and 91% among the most religious.



This was particularly notable in Egypt, where just 50% of secular respondents said freedom of expression was important; 68% among somewhat religious people, and 88% among the most religious: a 38-point gap.

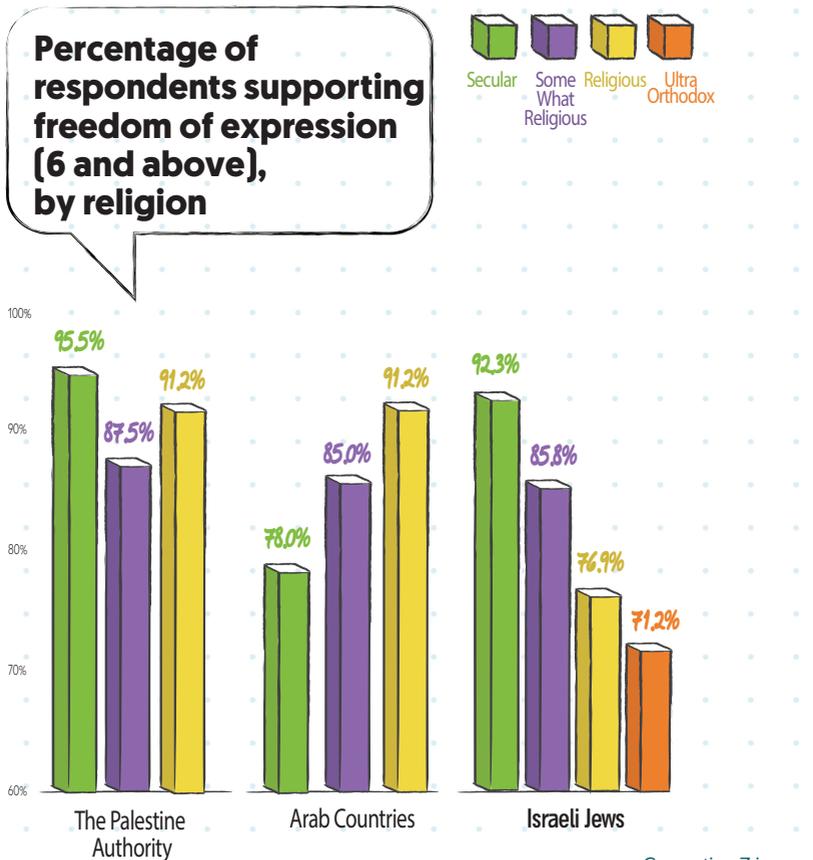


The same general pattern appeared in Jordan, with a gap of 34 points between the more secular and the most religious, the latter being the most supportive.

It seems likely that this support reflects the decades under secular authoritarian rulers in those countries, in which religious movements were associated with political subversion and were therefore suppressed – particularly in

Egypt, where a version of this also played out in the form of a resurgent military coup that overturned the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013.

The Palestinian youth, however, run counter to both trends of religion either driving more support or opposition to freedom of expression: Among Palestinians there was almost no difference between different religious groups: less, less religious, somewhat religious and the most religious embraced freedom of expression at the highest possible rates: 95%, 88% and 91% respectively, giving it a score indicating importance - nothing short of a consensus.



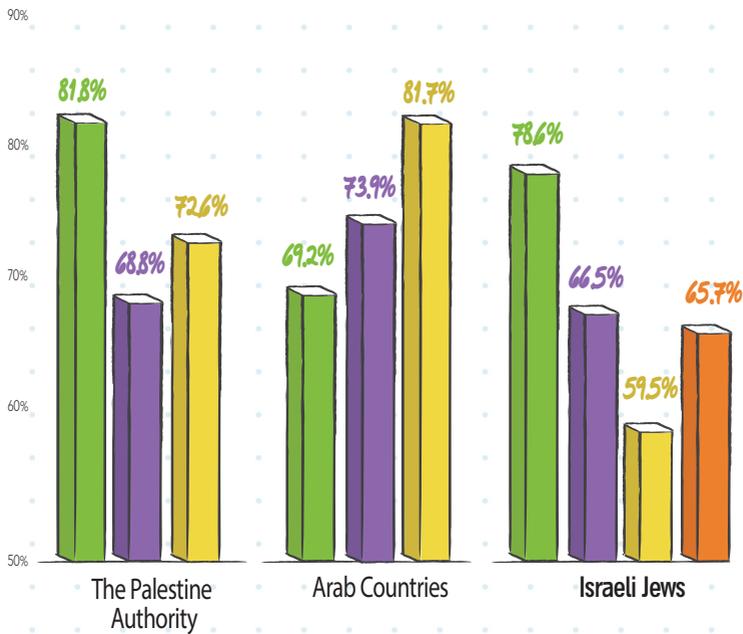
**A similar trend can be seen regarding minority rights: among the Arab World in total, fewer secular respondents gave it a ranking of “important” – 69% – but support rose with levels of religious observance, and reached 82% among the most religious. Again, Israeli Jews displayed the opposite trend:** 79% of secular people supported minority rights, declining steadily as religiosity rose - although, in this case, national religious youth assigned lower levels of support than the Ultra-Orthodox: 60% and 66% respectively.

**On this question, Palestinians displayed a minor variation but without a clear trend: 82% of secular youth believed minority rights to be important, as did 73% of the most religious, as well as 69% of those who described themselves as somewhat religious.**

As on the question of freedom of expression, there was less evidence of a clear link between the level of religiosity and attitudes towards these civic values - although other surveys have shown that there are clearly other political differences between the secular and the most religious Palestinians.

It is therefore possible that the differences relate to party preference but certain civic values are broadly supported among Palestinians of different religious/political leanings.

**Percentage of respondents supporting basic rights for minorities (6 and above), by religion**



## 6. Personal Goals

While the other questions asked about material conditions, and public values for society, each survey contained a question about young people's expectations for self-fulfillment in their countries as well. This question was asked differently in the Israeli questionnaire and the Arab World. Israelis were asked "How certain are you that you will be able to fulfill your personal goals in Israel?" In the Arab World, the survey asked people to rank the level of stability they felt would enable them to "live a fulfilled life," and they were given five options – including a middle option of "so-so." Israeli Jews and Arabs had a binary, four-point response scale which led to different trends; thus they were not completely comparable.

In the Arab World, three countries formed a top tier in which large proportions of their samples responded that they felt either high certainty or high stability that would enable them to lead a fulfilled life. The three countries ranked at the top were Jordan and Morocco with over two thirds (70%) who gave the highest two responses (stable + rather stable prospects to have a fulfilled life), and Bahrain with one point behind (69%) – nearly a three-way tie.

Although the comparison could only be an approximate for the reasons described earlier, **the Arab youth in Israel showed high levels of optimism, with 74% saying they were certain they could live fulfilled lives in Israel. The appropriate comparison was to Israeli Jews, who displayed**

## **lower optimism: Just 56% of Israeli Jewish youth felt certain they could fulfil their personal goals in Israel.**

Due to the question and response differences, Palestinian youth can be compared more significantly to the rest of the Arab World: on this measure, the latter rank lower than any other community examined except for Egypt and Syrian refugees. Among Syrian refugees, 26%, barely over one-quarter, had the stability to imagine a fulfilled life; among Egyptians, just 43% experienced such stability. Among Palestinians, the number stood at 45%, fewer than half. **This relatively low position stands in contrast to the Arab citizens of Israel who expressed higher levels of certainty that they would be able to fulfil their personal goals, relative to their immediate context of Israeli Jewish society.**

The contrast between Palestinians and Arab citizens in Israel raises a fascinating question about how people come to be optimistic – do they have an objective measure, or do they compare themselves to others? If so, to whom? **If Arab citizens compare themselves to Jewish Israelis, they could be expected to be more pessimistic, since they suffer discrimination and obstacles towards self-fulfillment in Israel, relative to Israeli Jews. However, if they compare themselves to Palestinians, or Syrian refugees for that matter, they may believe their situation to have significantly more potential.**

Egypt, Yemen, and Lebanon all showed significantly lower levels of optimism about achieving the stability for a fulfilling life: 43%, 47%, and 52% respectively. Given the violent ongoing war in Yemen, Lebanon's destabilization due to Syria's crisis, the threat of war with Israel, and the deep political instability that roiled Egypt in the years leading up

to the survey, the low levels of optimism, particularly when tied to stability, are well-contextualized.

**And, as seen in other topics, a religious and secular worldview influenced the respondents' perspective on the potential to live a fulfilled life. Thus, among Palestinians, and in the Arab World in general, the secular and moderately religious expressed similar levels of certainty that they could live a fulfilled life.**

In the Arab World in general, 53% of secular respondents, and 47% of somewhat religious people felt they had either stable or very stable prospects. Among the most religious, there was a moderate rise to 54%.

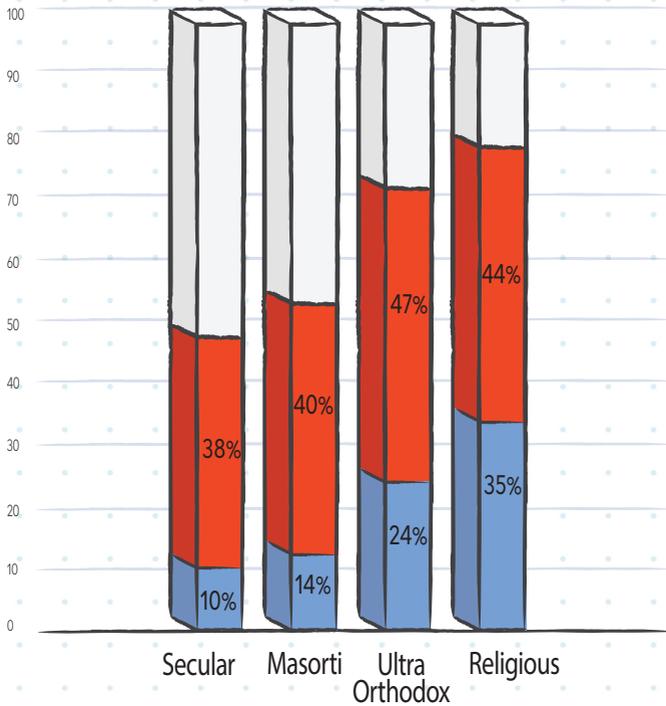
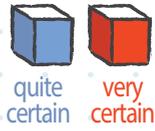
Among Palestinians, 45% of secular respondents felt they had the stability for a fulfilled life, in comparison to 43% of the somewhat religious and 47% of the most religious.

Yet among Israeli Jews, the differences previously described findings the Arab World, unlike some of the previously described findings. On the question of personal fulfilment, the differences between religious groups were pronounced:

secular respondents had the lowest certainty, with 48% and national, religious people were more certain by a margin of over 30 points [79%].



**Percentage of Israeli Jews who believed they could fulfill their personal goals in Israel, by religiosity**



The differences between young women and men were not very great on this measure in general. However, the gaps that exist tended to favor women.



Among Palestinians, 41% of men felt either stable or rather stable about their prospects to live a fulfilling life, but 50% of women felt that.



In the Arab World in general, 50% of men, but 56% of women felt stable or rather stable.

This particular trend did not hold true for either Jews or Arab youth in Israel. Once again, the gaps were small or practically non-existent: 56% and 57% of male and female young Jews in Israel believed they could fulfill themselves. Among male Arab youth, 77% believed they could fulfill their goals, but just 71% of female youth held this belief.



## 7. Conclusions

The findings of the overlapping study among youth in the Middle East show a range of similarities and differences - both among Arab countries and peoples, and between Jews and Arabs. In some cases, Arab Israeli youth are different from all other communities, and Jewish Israelis show trends closer to the rest of the Middle East. This was the case for example in relation to civic values and liberal principles. The **Arab World Average regarding the importance of basic rights for minorities was 7.6. The average among the Jewish population in Israel was even lower – 7.1. Nonetheless, Israeli Arabs ranked it the highest among all participating countries with a 9.2 score. This is not surprising, as they are a minority group within Israel.** It is also important to note that among secular Jews in Israel the ranking was only a little higher compared to the Arab World average, and stood at 7.7.

**When it comes to freedom of expression the results were fairly similar.** The Jewish population in Israel gave the same score as the Arab World average – 8. Israeli Arabs, again ranked this measure the highest with a 9.4 score. Secular Jews considered freedom of expression to be more important as compared to the ranking given by traditional and religious Jews and gave it a score of 8.5, still much lower when compared to Israeli Arabs. This demonstrates a strong similarity between the Jewish population and Arab countries, and places Israeli Arabs as an exception.

**This leads to another interesting observation - in the Arab World, the more religious respondents appeared to be more supportive of liberal-oriented principles, perhaps due to the years of suppression of religious political organizing under secular, pan-Arab or Baathist leaders of the past [or under new semi-authoritarian leaders of the present, as in Egypt]. Israel was the outlier in this case, in which religious people were less likely to support liberal principles - more closely in line with trends in Western countries.**

On some aspects, Arab Israelis and Palestinian youth experience their lives differently, for example in relation to their prospects for fulfillment of their life goals. This could reflect the very different reality that Arab Israelis perceive, relative to the obstacles and barriers to such personal goals in Palestinian life. **For example, when asked about life security, an indicator that takes into account different personal situations including school, job, family, economic situation, political transformation and future development, Israel (7.4) was ranked significantly above the Arab World average (6.4). Israeli Arabs ranked themselves even higher than Israeli Jews, and only Tunisians appeared to have more life security than Israeli Arabs.** As could have been expected, the Israeli score was much higher compared to the Palestinian one.

**Concerning exposure to violence, Israeli Jews are among the communities that feel least safe. Only Syrian refugees and Yemenis, both impacted by civil wars, feel less secure. Israeli Arabs and Palestinians both have the same score as the Arab World average of 6.9. The numbers are surprising, as crime in Arab society in Israel is higher than crime in Jewish society.**

Therefore, this might be another example of the difference between the Jewish and Arab populations in Israel –

**It is possible that while the Jews compare themselves to Western countries, Israeli Arabs compare themselves to other Arab countries.**

Another interesting observation about the sense of security and violence is that in Israel, both Arab women and Jewish women report lower security than men. The Arab World trend is the reverse – more men feel low security than women. This might be a result of the growing awareness about violence against women in Israel.

**To conclude, Israel in general appears to lean both towards the West and towards the Middle East on various measures – perhaps a defining tension in its society. On the one hand, Israel is located in the Middle East and on the other hand, tends to be more similar to western countries. At the same time, the Middle East itself is in flux and it seems likely that future surveys will show significant changes in the years to come.**

# Appendix A: Comparative Analysis

This appendix presents data and information about the countries which participated in the research from official data sources such as the World Bank, Youth Development Index [YDI], and the World Values Survey [WVS].



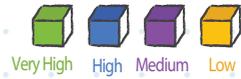
# Youth Development Index (YDI)

## YDI domain ranks and scores for selected countries, 2016

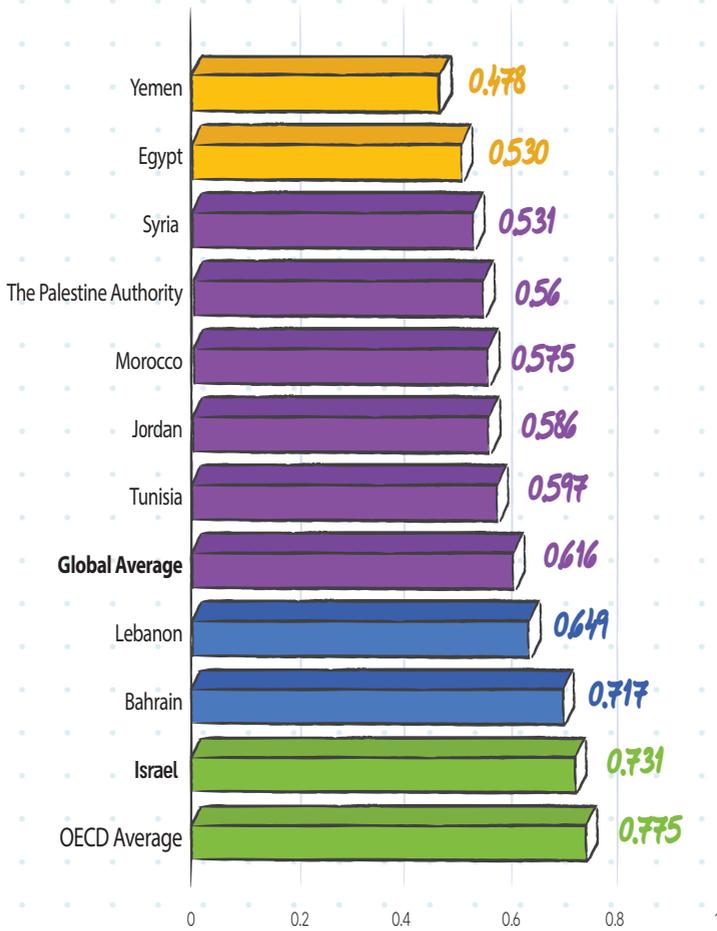
Source:  
Global Youth Development Index  
and Report 2016, the Commonwealth

Country	Global Rank	Health and Wellbeing	Education	Employment and Opportunity	Civic	Political Participation	% of change from 2010
<b>Israel</b>	31	(0.904) 1	(0.926) 34	(0.751) 24	(0.820) 17	(0.703) 54	+11.08%
<b>Bahrain</b>	41	(0.796) 36	(0.849) 52	(0.735) 29	(0.753) 26	(0.056) 181	+7.39%
<b>Lebanon</b>	76	(0.851) 10	(0.721) 108	(0.506) 118	(0.248) 155	(0.701) 56	-3.70%
<b>Tunisia</b>	110	(0.805) 33	(0.772) 80	(0.568) 79	(0.238) 160	(0.246) 165	-4.36%
<b>Jordan</b>	114	(0.811) 30	(0.770) 82	(0.456) 143	(0.252) 152	(0.345) 153	+2.22%
<b>Morocco</b>	120	(0.657) 107	(0.725) 103	(0.518) 108	(0.382) 129	(0.412) 140	+1.74%
<b>The Palestine Authority</b>	126	(0.713) 88	(0.751) 90	(0.477) 136	(0.183) 175	(0.379) 148	-6.07%
<b>Syria</b>	137	(0.789) 41	(0.614) 126	(0.401) 164	(0.478) 97	(0.212) 172	-3.20%
<b>Egypt</b>	138	(0.756) 60	(0.735) 96	(0.354) 174	(0.337) 134	(0.234) 169	+7.55%
<b>Yemen</b>	152	(0.746) 67	(0.541) 140	(0.232) 181	(0.202) 171	(0.523) 115	-0.21%
<b>Global Average</b>	-	0.616	0.636	0.714	0.567	0.509	-
<b>OECD Average</b>	-	0.955	0.955	0.758	0.567	0.669	-

## YDI total score for selected countries, 2016

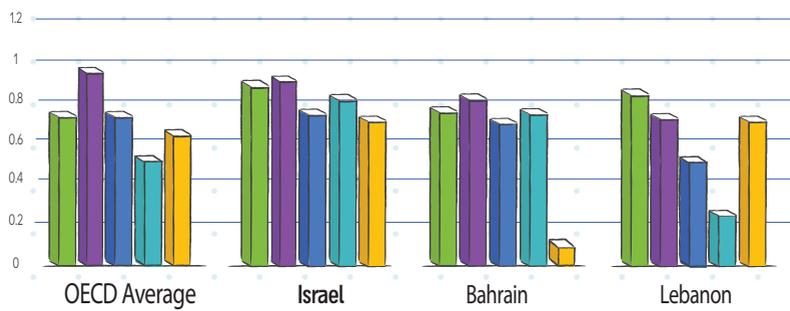
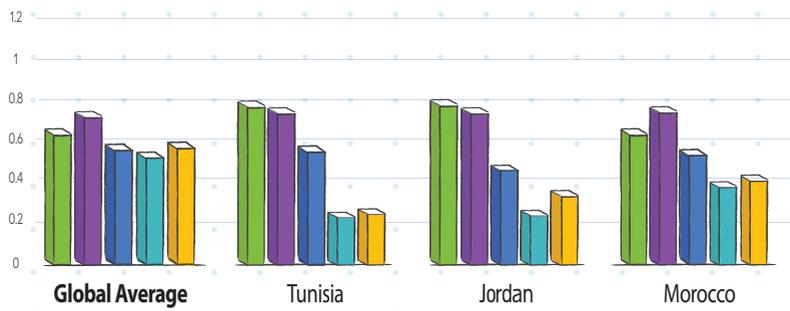
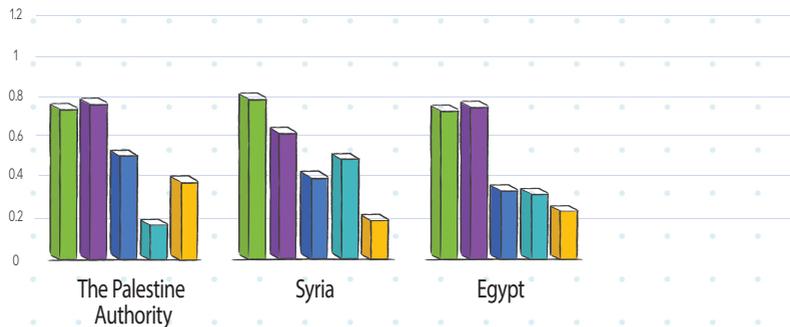


Source: Global Youth Development Index and Report 2016, the Commonwealth



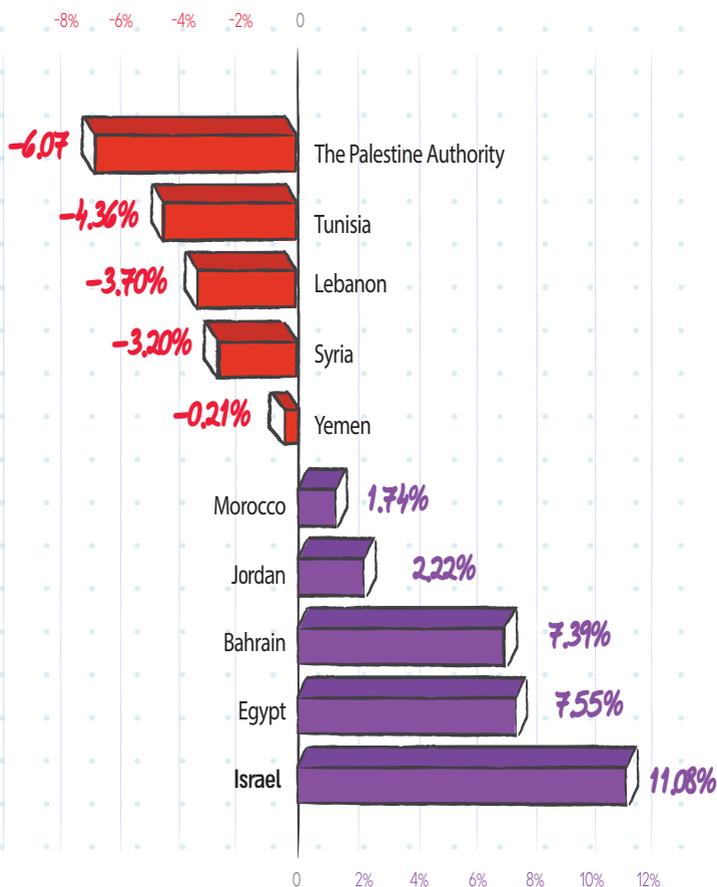
# YDI and domain score for selected countries, 2016

Source: Global Youth Development Index and Report 2016, the Commonwealth



## 2016 YDI percentage of change in total score compared to 2010 YDI

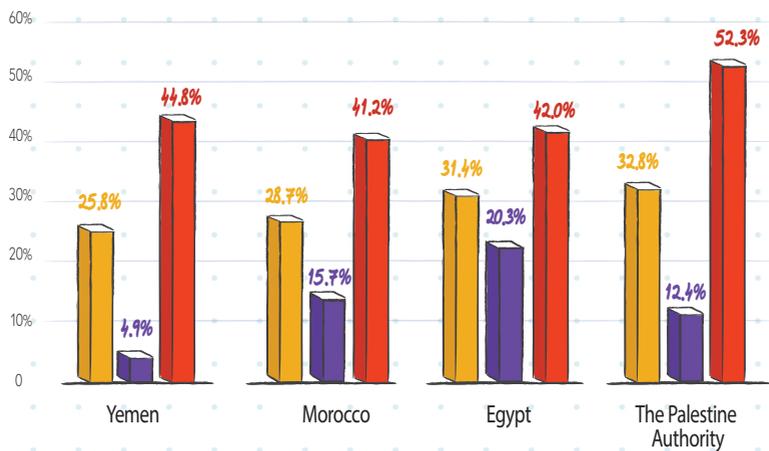
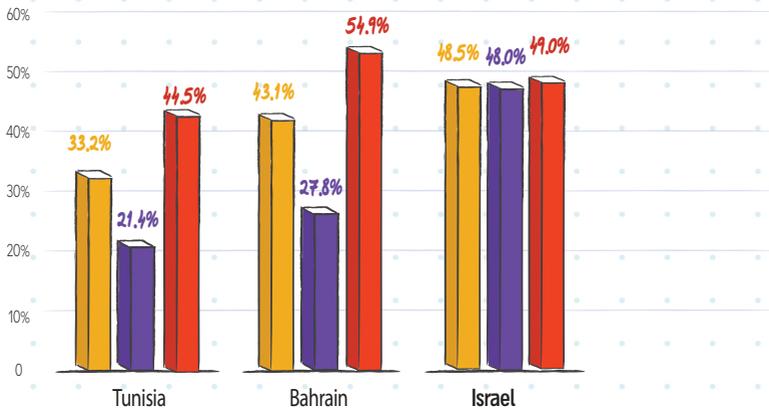
Source: Global Youth Development Index and Report 2016, the Commonwealth and the Macro Center for Political Economics



# Youth Labor Market

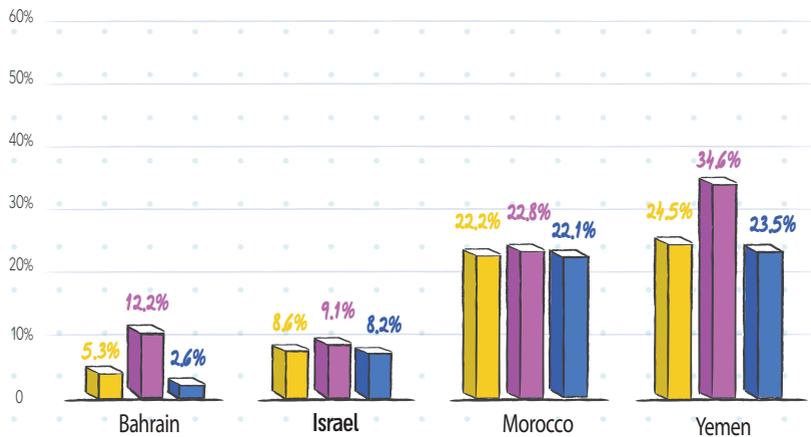
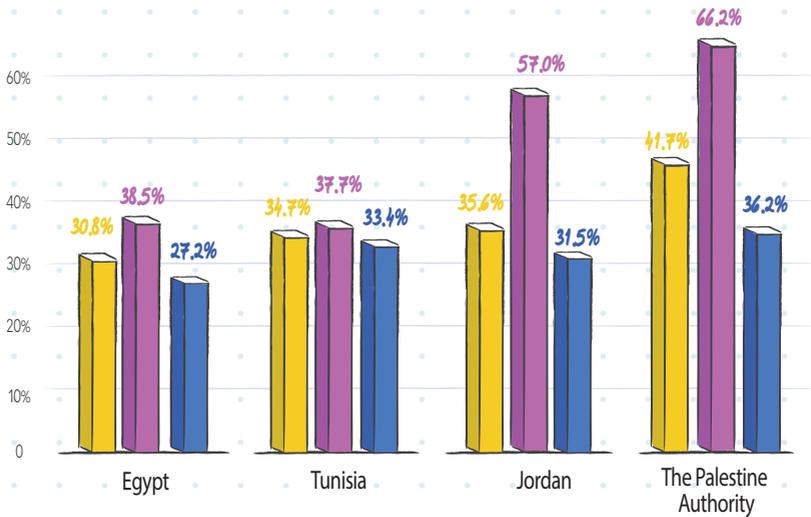
**Total, Men and Women Labor Force Participation Rate for people aged 15-24, most available data (2013-2016)**

Source: The World Bank



# Total, Men and Women Unemployment Rate for people aged 15-24, most available data (2013-2016)

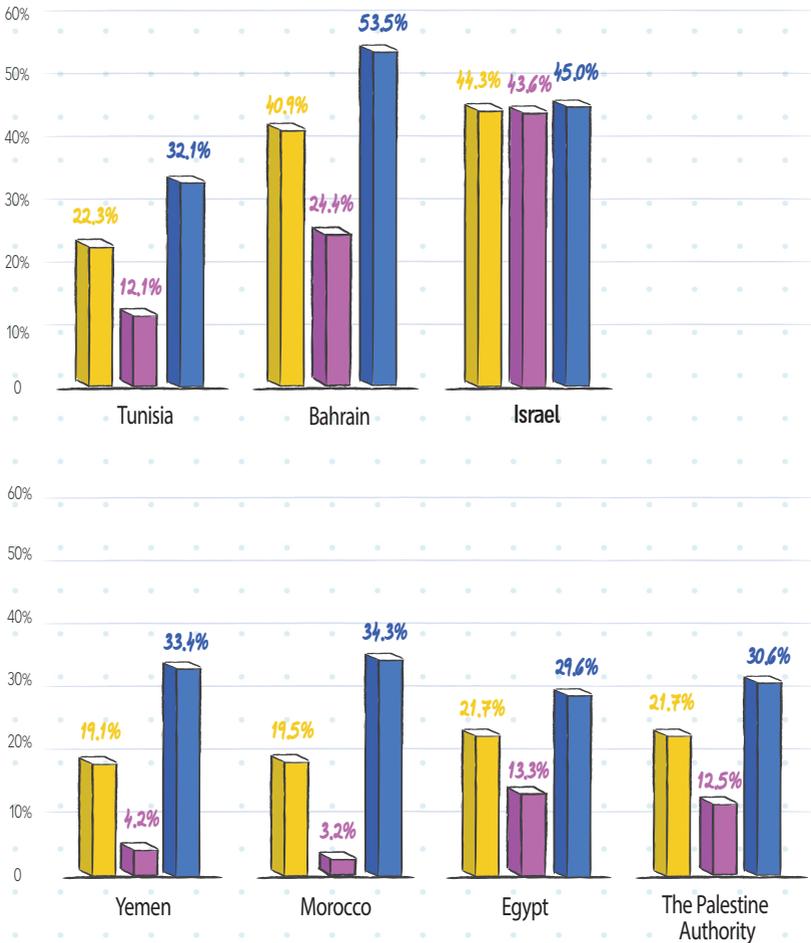
Source: The World Bank



# Total, Employed Men and Women aged 15-24, most available data (2013-2016)



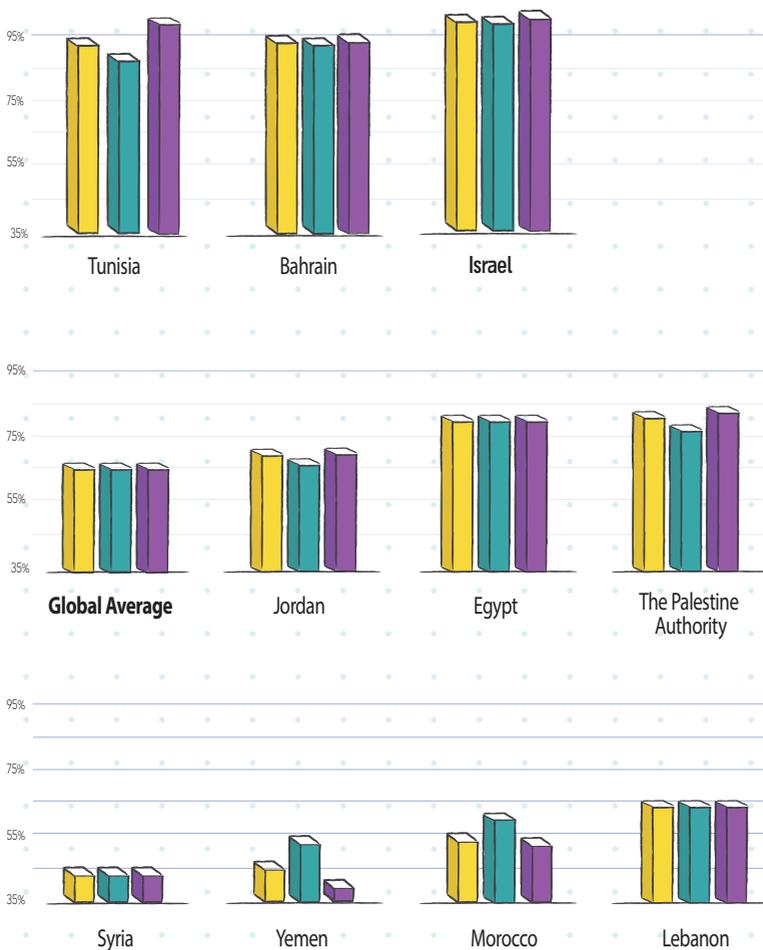
Source: The World Bank, processed by the Macro Center for Political Economics



# Youth Education

## Total, Men and Women Secondary Education Enrollment Rate, 2016

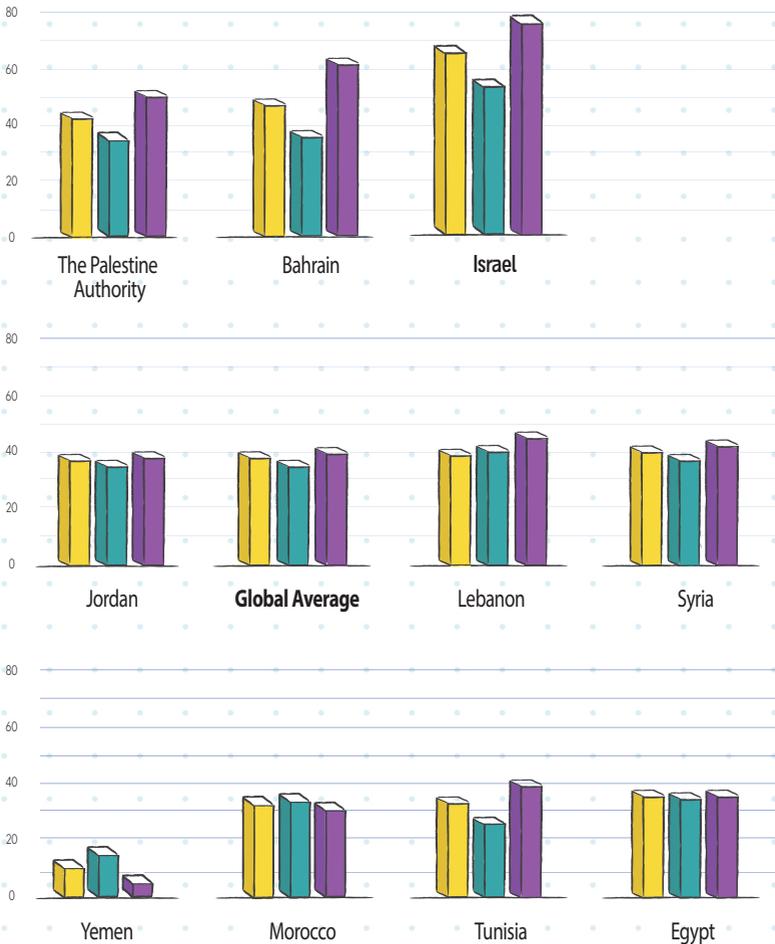
Source: The World Bank



# Total, Men and Women Tertiary Education Enrollment Rate, 2016



Source: The World Bank

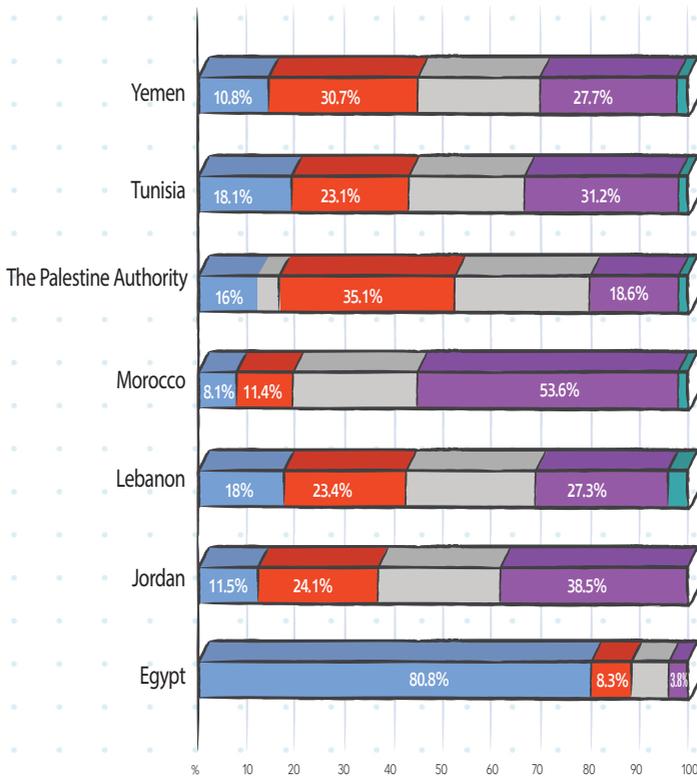


# Politics and Society

## Level of importance of politics in life, percentage, 2010-2014



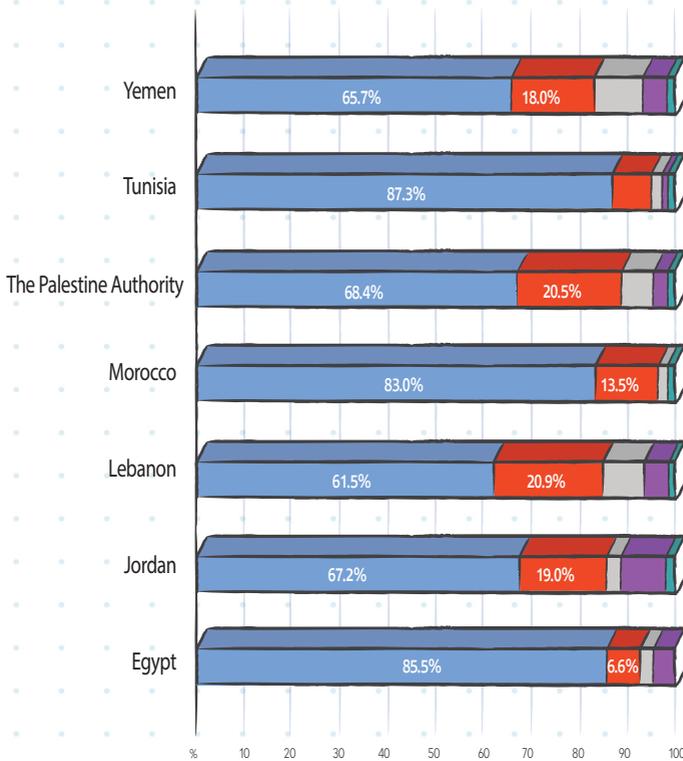
Source: The World Values Survey, processed by The Macro Center for Political Economics



## Level of importance of work in life, percentage, 2010-2014



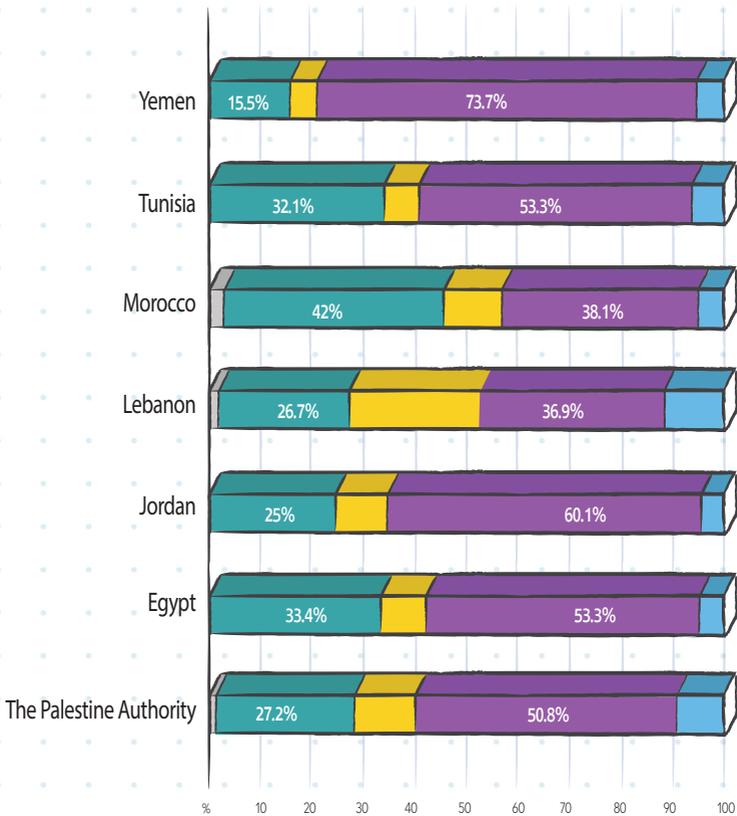
Source: The World Values Survey, processed by The Macro Center for Political Economics



# First aim of the government should be, percentage, 2010-2014

Source: The World Values Survey, processed by The Macro Center for Political Economics

-  Don't know
-  Fighting rising prices
-  Giving people more say in important government decisions
-  Maintaining order in the nation
-  Protecting freedom of speech



## Level of willingness to take part in main political activities, percentage, 2010-2014

Source: The World Values Survey, processed by The Macro Center for Political Economics

Country	Political Activity	Would never take part	Might take part	Have done	Don't know
<b>The Palestine Authority</b>	Signing a petition	59.7%	27.5%	9.2%	3.7%
	Attending a peaceful demonstration	42.7%	33.0%	22.5%	1.8%
<b>Egypt</b>	Signing a petition	93.1%	5.5%	1.4%	0.0%
	Attending a peaceful demonstration	88.9%	5.9%	5.2%	0.0%
<b>Jordan</b>	Signing a petition	83.3%	11.5%	4.6%	0.6%
	Attending a peaceful demonstration	84.8%	9.8%	4.9%	0.6%
<b>Lebanon</b>	Signing a petition	49.9%	32.5%	9.9%	7.7%
	Attending a peaceful demonstration	41.3%	38.2%	14.2%	6.4%
<b>Morocco</b>	Signing a petition	78.7%	13.3%	4.3%	3.7%
	Attending a peaceful demonstration	73.7%	12.6%	11.1%	2.7%
<b>Tunisia</b>	Signing a petition	66.6%	22.5%	3.9%	7.0%
	Attending a peaceful demonstration	57.0%	24.2%	14.2%	4.6%
<b>Yemen</b>	Signing a petition	58.2%	17.2%	2.8%	21.9%
	Attending a peaceful demonstration	53.5%	18.3%	15.0%	13.3%



The 2016 survey of young people in Israel, focused on people aged 15-18 and 21-25, testing a wide range of social, demographic, and attitudinal trends. The survey was conducted among a large representative sample of the youth of Israel, Jews and Arabs, all religious groups and other demographic characteristics.

In 2017, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung undertook a major survey project among youth throughout the entire Arab world, ages 16-30. The project covered nine countries – Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Yemen and Syrian refugees.

The surveys were developed to address the relevant aspects of life and social attitudes for each society respectively, Israel and the Arab world. However, a number of questions were purposely repeated in both surveys in order to convey a comparative picture where appropriate. Five questions were repeated verbatim, with three further questions that were slightly adjusted for wording adaptations appropriate to the Israeli context.

This research summarizes the findings and insights, about what the youth of each society share – and where they are different. The analysis compares the Jewish and Arab youth populations to their counterparts in the Arab World, and particularly to the Palestinian Authority – Israel's closest neighbors and for many Arab citizens, their kin. There are several trajectories of comparison: Jews relative to the Arab World, Arab citizens of Israel relative to the Arab World, Arab citizens compared to Palestinian youth, and Palestinians compared to both Jews and the Arab World.