

# Where is Generation Z Going?

**Between Disappointment and  
Expectations – Personal, National  
and Societal Attitudes of Jewish and  
Arab Youth in Israel**

The 4th Youth Study of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

**April 2017**

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The 4th Youth Study of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

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## The 4th Youth Study

The joint study of the Macro Center for Political Economics and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Israel in 2016 is the fourth in a series of follow-up studies on attitudes and perceptions of teenagers (ages 15-18) and young people (ages 21-24) in Israel. The previous three studies were conducted in 1998, 2004 and 2010.

A sample of 1,264 interviewees, Jews and Arabs, aged 15-18 and 21-24 was drawn. In addition, four focus groups were conducted among secular young men and women, ultra-Orthodox young women, religious and traditional boys and girls, and boys and girls from the Arab society, in order to map young people's perceptions and attitudes on personal, social and national issues.



Where is  
**Generation  
Z** Going?

A series of horizontal blue lines for writing, with a vertical red margin line on the right side.

# 1. WHO ARE THE ISRAELI YOUTH?

## What is the demographic composition of Israeli youth?

**About two-thirds of the youth in Israel are Jews and the non-Jewish third is comprised of 76% Muslim Arabs, 7% Druze, 6% Christian Arabs and 11% are not classified by religion.**

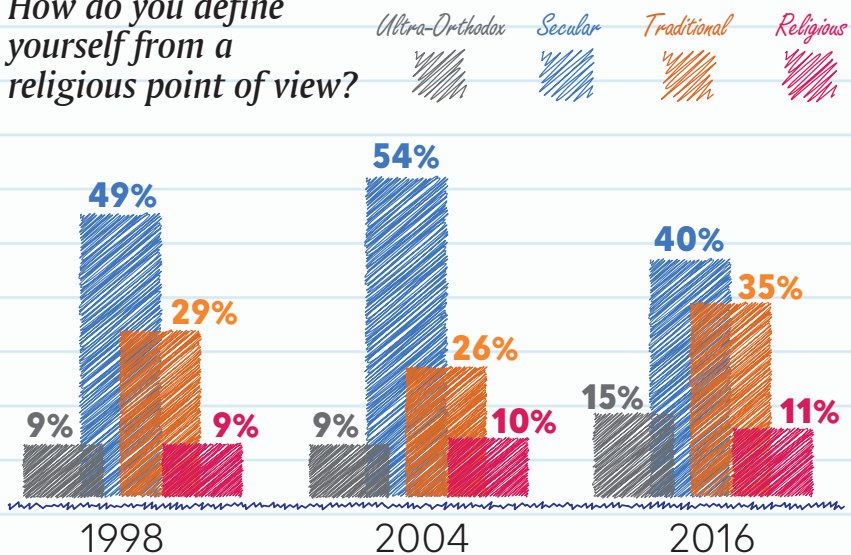
The composition of the young population in the country has changed significantly in recent decades: The rate of Arab youth out of all youth in Israel is higher by almost 20% than in the early years of statehood.

1955: Jewish youth - 86.6%, about 283 thousand; non-Jewish youth - 13.4%, about 37 thousand

2015: Jewish youth - 68.9%, about 867 thousand; non-Jewish youth - 31.1%, about 391 thousand

**Israeli society has become more religious. In 1998, almost half of the Jewish youth in Israel defined itself as secular as opposed to only 40% in 2016.** While the national-religious sector has preserved its relative size and the proportion of secular Jews has become smaller, the proportion of Israelis aged 15-24 who define themselves as ultra-Orthodox or Traditional has significantly increased.

*How do you define yourself from a religious point of view?*



## How does the youth identify politically?

**The brand 'Left' was critically damaged during the last decade among Jews and Arabs alike. Only 16% of the Jewish youth and 10% of the Arab youth say that they are leftists - even among people who espouse distinct leftist positions. This compares to 25% of Jewish youth and 50% of Arab youth in 2004.**

Intentionally, the respondents were not given an explanation as to the meaning of the left-right spectrum, but rather to examine how they identify politically based on their own set of values. Among Jews, the right-wing bloc has benefitted the most from the drop in identification with the left, whereas among the Arabs, the proportion of centrists and those who do not identify with any political camp has significantly increased. In gender terms, more Jewish men identify themselves as leftists than Jewish women [26.5% of the men compared to 22.9% of the women], and more Arab men identify themselves as centrists than Arab women [49.6% of the men compared to 29% of the women]. Among Arab youth, many more Arab women were willing to define themselves as supporters of the left. This might be linked to issues regarding the status of women or might be related to the growing education rates of Arab women.



## What is the political composition of the various sectors of the Jewish public?

➤ **An extremely strong correlation is shown between the degree of religiosity and political identification.** An overwhelming majority in the national-religious [91.9%], the ultra-Orthodox [84.1%] and the traditional [78.2%] youth identify themselves as right-wingers as opposed to only half of the seculars. The most prominent increase in the support of the right in the past six years is among ultra-Orthodox youth. At the same time, the left recorded significant growth only among secular Jewish youth, mainly at the expense of center supporters and unidentified. Despite the rise of centrist parties in the political arena, the rate of centrist youth and those who do not identify with any political camp has decreased in all groups.

➤ **About half of the young people (ages 21-24), Jews and Arabs alike, are studying in Upper Secondary Institutions, and about a quarter of the young people work full-time. The rest work part-time**

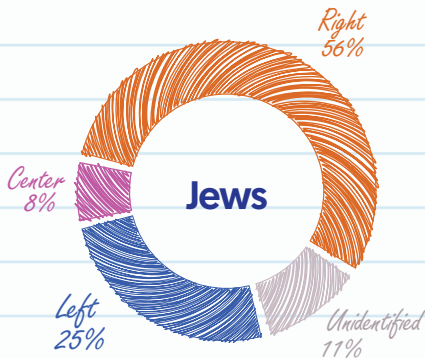
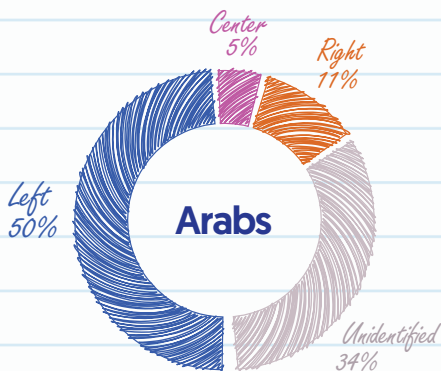


**jobs, are looking for work or do none of the above.** A noticeable difference between Arabs and Jews is the high proportion of young Arabs, mainly Arab women many of whom traditionally stay at home and tend to family matters, who are not working or studying [18.6% among Arabs versus only 3.4% for Jews] and the high proportion of Arabs who financially support their parents [16%]. Most young people in both groups [60%] are financially assisted by their parents to deal with the high cost of living. In an international comparison, Israel is ranked sixth among OECD countries in the poverty rate among young people [18.2% in Israel compared to only 13.7% in the OECD].

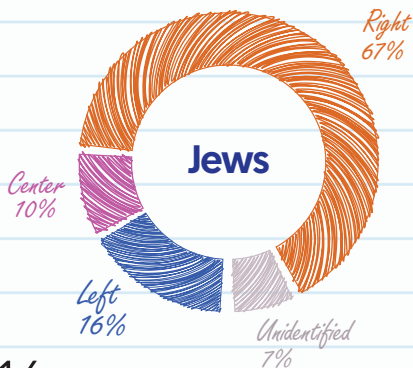
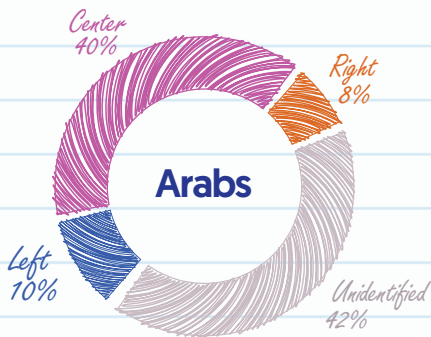
### What do young people (aged 21-24) do in their daily lives?

	Jews	Arabs	Total
Studying	46.2%	34.6%	43.2%
Specializing in a particular profession	4.5%	18.1%	8.0%
Working full time	27.8%	15.1%	24.5%
Working part-time because I haven't found a full time position	3.1%	4.2%	3.4%
Working in a part-time position by choice	9.1%	4.4%	7.9%
Looking for work	4.8%	4.9%	4.9%
Not working and not studying	3.4%	18.6%	7.3%
Don't know/refuse	1.1%		0.8%

How would you define yourself politically?

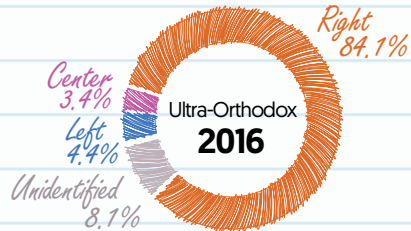
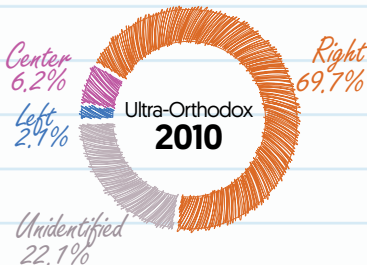
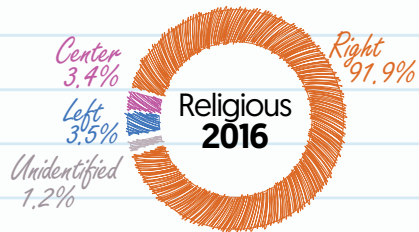
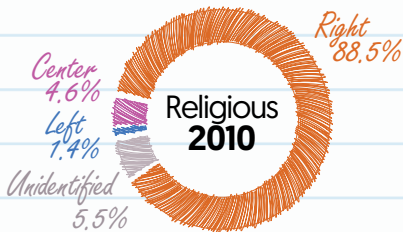
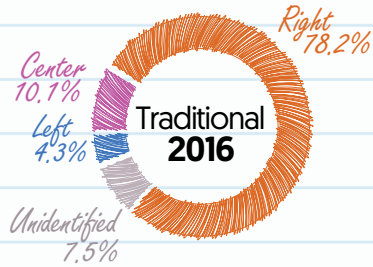
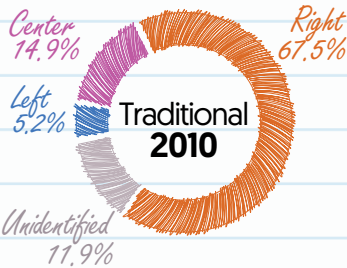
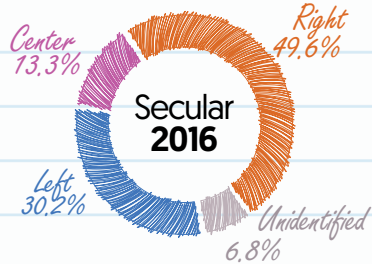
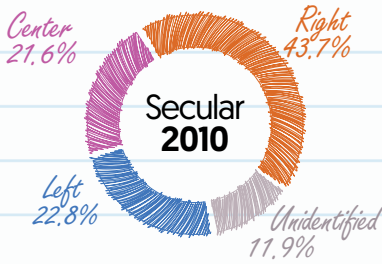


2004



2016

## What is the political composition of the various segments of the Jewish public?



"The religious coercion distances people from tradition and from religion. The Law on Hametz (leavened bread) - people eat Hametz on Passover, and the Brit Milah (circumcision) - there is no law and everyone does it."

"I am in favour of democracy except for religious subjects. We cannot compromise because then you would lose the Jewish character of the state."



## 2. PERSONAL OPINIONS

### Quotes:

"Education is the ultimate weapon of the woman"

"I don't believe I will fulfill my dream to be a football player, because I do not live in an entirely Arab society"

"Israeli-ness is: warmth, family, short fuse, caring, audacity, ambitiousness, technological progress."

"I don't have a defined dream, but I want to do something meaningful, so that I am remembered. Let's say that there could be a theorem in physics named after me."

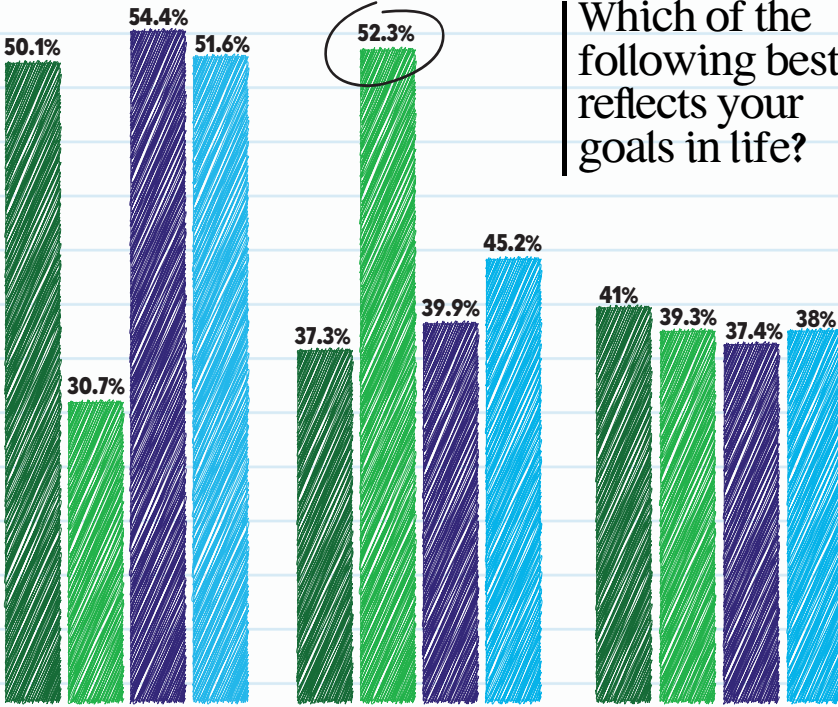
Jewish and Arab youth share the same three main goals in life: **financial success, enjoying life and obtaining higher education**. Economic success is the most popular ambition among Arab and Jewish men and Jewish women. Outstanding are Arab women that give utmost importance to obtaining higher education.



### What are the aspirations of the youth?

**The desire to enjoy life is significantly higher among secular youth than any other group.** The importance attached to the pleasures of life (enjoying life, entertainment, good meals, beach, etc.) declines with the rise in religious devotion. The desire to contribute to society is significantly higher among the national religious community, and so is the desire to contribute to the IDF. The aspiration for economic success is particularly evident among the ultra-Orthodox and traditional youth. With regard to aspirations for the future, traditional youth reveal many similarities to secular youth, despite being closer to national-religious youth in terms of their political positions.

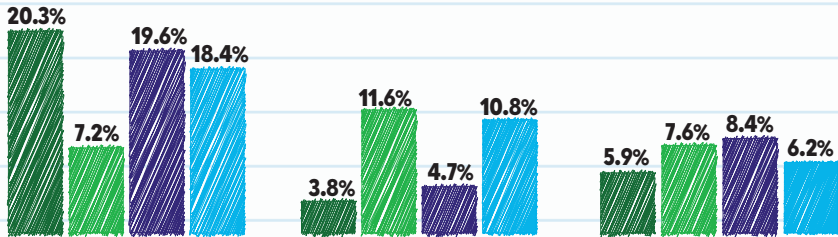
Which of the following best reflects your goals in life?



Economic success

Obtaining higher education

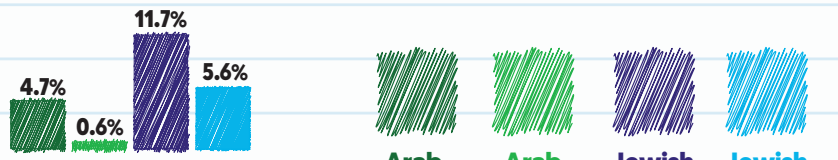
Pleasures in life



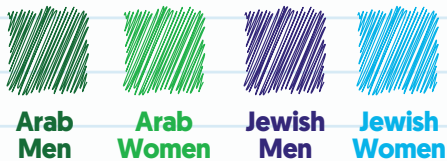
Contribution to the state and society

Volunteer work

Emigrating overseas



Contribution to the IDF

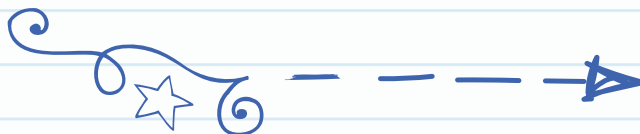


## In what degree are the youth optimistic about the ability to fulfill their personal goals in Israel?

**The majority of respondents, both Jews and Arabs, express optimism about their ability to fulfill their personal goals in Israel. However, young Arabs are far more optimistic than their Jewish peers.**

However, the research shows that the optimism of the Arab youth mainly relates to personal and economic matters. When it comes to their status in society and the importance of democratic values, attitudes can be viewed as less optimistic (as can be seen in the previous and in the next chapter). Among the Jewish population, almost half of the young people express pessimism about their ability to fulfill their aspirations in the country. The more religious they are, the more confidence they have in their ability to achieve their personal goals. Confidence level is particularly low among supporters of the left.

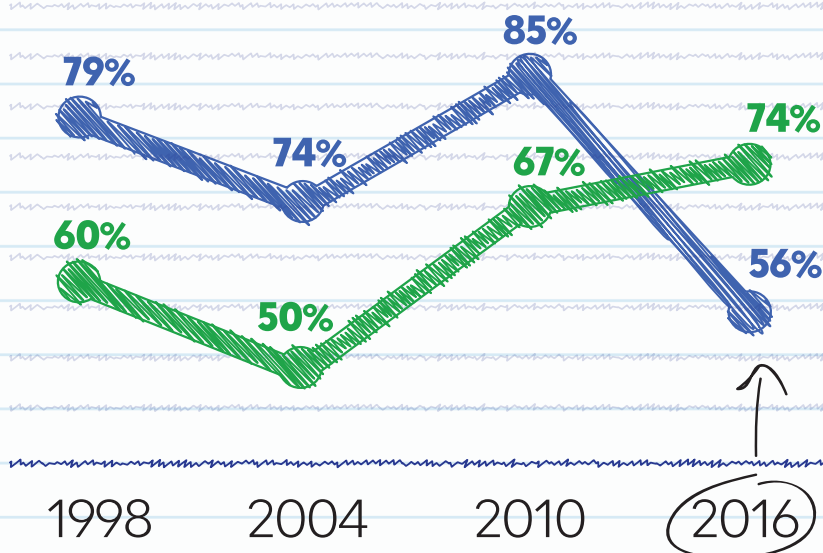
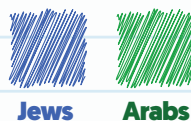
	JEWS	ARABS	TOTAL
<b>To what extent do you feel sure or unsure that you will be able to achieve your personal goals in Israel?</b>			
Very sure	15.9%	20.9%	17.1%
Fairly sure	40.4%	52.9%	43.4%
Not so sure	35.9%	16.9%	31.3%
Not sure at all	4.9%	5.1%	5.0%
Don't know/ refuse	2.9%	4.2%	3.2%



## How has the degree of youth optimism changed over the years?

The optimism of young Jews regarding their personal lives in Israel is the lowest since 1998 - lower than it was after the outbreak of the second intifada. However, the degree of optimism of young Arabs is the highest recorded during those years. The significant rise in optimism among the Arab youth can be explained by the fact that they are more pragmatic and have grown closer to the Jewish population in their language, culture, life style and in their ways of thinking; the economic improvement among Arab communities; or perhaps greater openness to the world. Among the Jewish population, the national religious youth is the most optimistic: almost 80% expressed confidence in fulfilling their goals in Israel, followed by the ultra-Orthodox with 71%. Among traditional youth the rate drops to 54%, and among seculars the rate drops to below half. Segmentation by political positions - right, center and left - yield similar results.

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

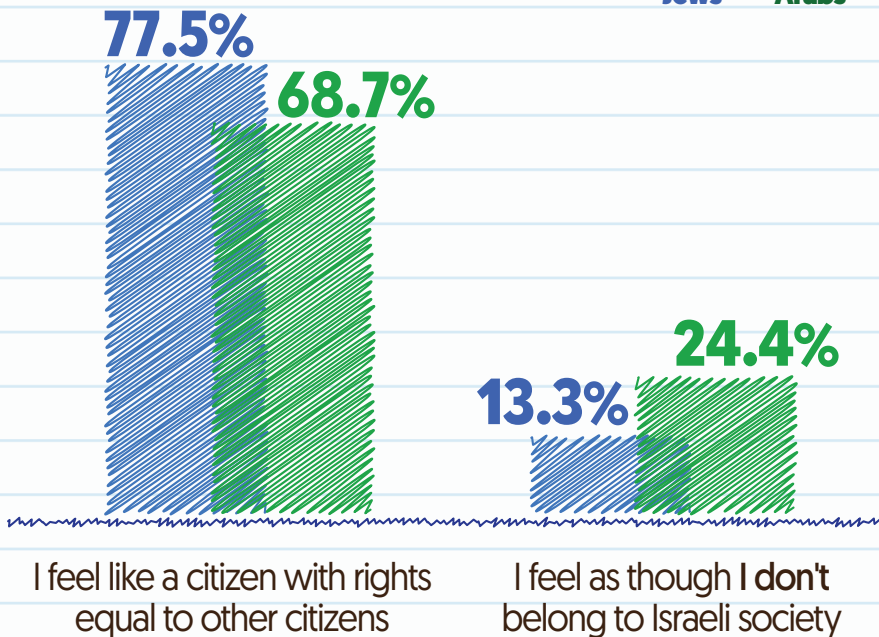
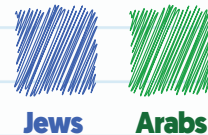




## How strong is the youth's sense of belonging to Israeli society?

In both national groups the majority of respondents feel that they are equal citizens, but among the Arabs there is a significant minority – slightly less than a third - who feel alienated from society. High school aged Arab youth are similar to their Jewish peers in their sense of belonging, but three years later there is a dramatic turning point for them - a drop of 30% in respondents who feel that they are equal citizens. This sense is even more pronounced among Arab women. Among the Jewish youth, only the ultra-Orthodox youth feel significantly alienated.

*Sense of belonging to Israeli society*



## What is the degree of the youth's sense of security in everyday life?

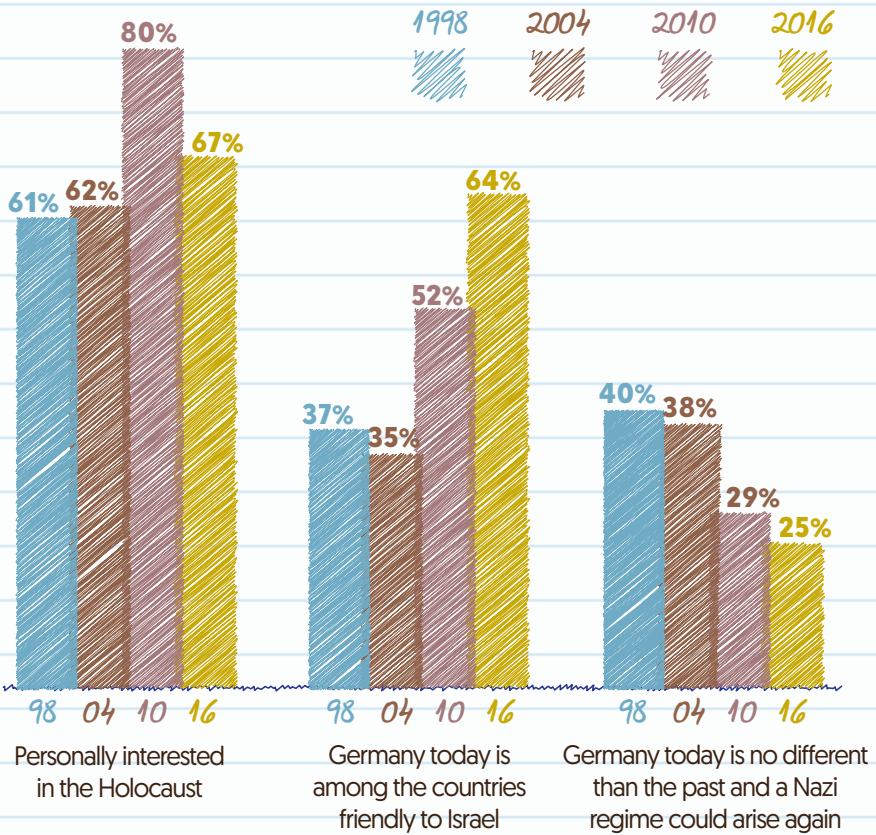
**Jews and Arabs alike show a sense of security - but not at a high level. Of the two groups, the Arabs' sense of security is higher than their Jewish peers.** While half the Arabs do not feel that their personal safety is threatened at all, about a third of the Jewish youth feel a high or moderately high threat to their personal safety. This feeling is higher among women and rightists. The level of personal economic security decreases with age.

**On a 10 level scale:**

	<b>JEWS</b>	<b>ARABS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Personal security in the face of threat	7.0	8.9	7.5
Exposure to violence	6.2	6.9	6.4
Economic security	6.5	7.6	6.8
General Security	7.2	8.0	7.4


## What is the level of interest in the Holocaust? How does Germany look today in the eyes of Jewish youth?

**With regard to Germany and the Holocaust, Jewish youth do not forget the past, but recognize the present. The high levels of interest in the Holocaust are a consensus - left, right and center, both religious and secular, show the same high levels of interest.** The belief that Germany is among the countries most friendly to Israel reached a peak of 64% in 2016, an increase of 73% compared to 1998. Only a quarter of the youth, the lowest rate since 1998, believes that Germany has not changed and there is still a possibility of the rise of a Nazi-like regime.



### 3. THE STATE AND I

#### Quotes:




"There is no democracy in the State of Israel, no freedom, no equality, there is racism towards Arabs in the work sphere. Restrictions are placed on us and we are prevented from being promoted"

"For me as an ultra-Orthodox woman, my democracy is that I have chosen the Torah. We expect full democracy but for us as ultra-Orthodox women it cannot be put into effect, because of the laws of the Torah"

"The State of Israel is Jewish and democratic, but in the future it will be only democratic and not Jewish when an Arab majority or leftist organizations will take control and their decisions will be in the majority."

"I really don't think we can make any changes, we are the Arab minority and the most we can achieve are a few more seats in the Knesset."

"Extremism is increasing and hatred is gaining momentum in a worrying manner, and even without the demographic problems it is frightening to think about what might happen here."



"An apartment is something basic, it should be taken for granted, and in this country, a person my age finds himself doubting whether he could ever buy one"

### What is the degree of youth optimism regarding the future of the state?

**Arab youth are much more optimistic than the Jewish youth about the future of the state.** Perhaps it stems from their belief that their social and economic situation is improving and will continue to improve or greater awareness of developments in neighboring Arab countries. In both groups the rate of optimists exceeds pessimists, although for Jews the gap is relatively small. The data indicates two opposite trends: the highest degree of optimism among the Arab youth since 1998, while the Jewish youth are at a low point, after a drop of 10 percentage points since 2010. The data also shows that the national-religious are significantly more optimistic than the secular and right-wingers more than the center and left supporters.

	JEWS	ARABS	TOTAL
<b>To what extent are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the state?</b>			
Very pessimistic	5.2%	8.3%	5.9%
Fairly pessimistic	35.5%	17.6%	31.1%
Fairly optimistic	41.6%	42.3%	41.8%
Very optimistic	9.0%	20.8%	11.9%
Don't know	8.7%	11.0%	9.3%

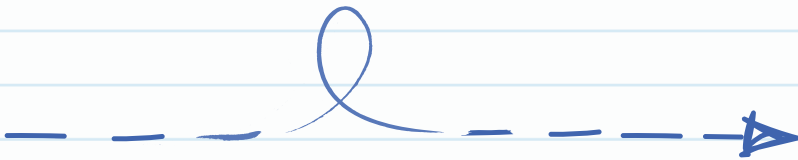
## Which institutions are trusted by the youth?

**The IDF and the law enforcement system got the highest score in the public trust rating.** Among Jewish youth, the IDF leads with a vast margin of 32 percentage points over the second ranked institution, the judiciary system. Not surprisingly, the Arab youth gives the utmost trust not to the IDF but to the legal system. However, it is important to emphasize that the level of trust among Arab youth is very low, and in any case does not exceed 50%. Anyhow, the two groups demonstrate worsening alienation towards the political institutions as well as a loss of trust in the media: since 2010 the level of trust in the media has dropped by 23 percentage points and the level of trust in the Knesset has dropped by 11 percentage points.

	<b>JEWS</b>	<b>ARABS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Political parties in Israel	18.5%	23.8%	19.8%
The media	29.5%	36.1%	31.1%
The Knesset	31.0%	33.7%	31.6%
The Histadrut	30.7%	34.6%	31.6%
Religious institutions	35.3%	43.5%	37.3%
The police	51.7%	45.5%	50.2%
Legal system	53.5%	47.1%	52.0%
IDF	85.2%	38.1%	73.7%

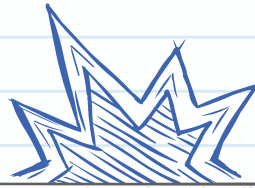
## Ranking of institutions by level of public trust

	JEWS	ARABS	TOTAL
Political parties in Israel	8	8	8
The media	7	5	7
The Knesset	5	7	5-6
The Histadrut	6	6	5-6
Religious institutions	4	3	4
The police	3	2	3
Legal system	2	1	2
IDF	1	4	1
Total trust (%) <small>weighted average level of trust in institutions</small>	41.9%	37.8%	40.9%



## What are the two most important issues the government should address?

**Arab youth are very different from Jewish youth with regard to the appropriate national priorities for the State of Israel.** According to the Arab respondents the most important goal is to improve Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. In contrast, their Jewish peers ranked this goal only in fourth place, and attached extreme importance to the cost of living and social inequalities. Common for both groups: The low importance they attach to negotiations with the Palestinians. It is apparent that national security is particularly important to right-wing supporters and national-religious, while the percent of those who attach great importance to peace negotiations is particularly high among secularists, and increases as ranging to the left across the ideological axis.



		JEWS	ARABS	TOTAL
<b>Which of the following problems that Israel grapples with today are the two most important problems that the government must assign the highest priority?</b>	Level of living expenses social gaps	67.4%	41.4%	61.0%
	National security/terror	61.9%	14.1%	50.3%
	Education	28.6%	35.0%	30.2%
	Relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel	19.1%	47.3%	25.9%
	Advancing the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians	12.4%	18.9%	14.0%
	Don't know	1.5%	4.0%	2.1%



## The National Priorities

	JEWS	ARABS	TOTAL
Level of living expenses/social gaps	1	2	1
National security/terror	2	5	2
Education	3	3	3
Relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel	4	1	4
Advancing the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians	5	4	5

### What dispute is the most dangerous for the future of the state?

**Jewish and Arab youth agree that the dispute that most endangers Israeli society is the Jewish-Arab divide.** The main difference between the two groups, regarding this issue, is that the Jews assign more importance to the tension between the right and left - an increase of 9 percentage points since 2004 - while the Arabs give more weight to the tension between rich and poor. Examination of the data over time reveals that among Jews, the dispute between right and left has replaced the controversy between religious and secular Jews as a major rift in society. Surprisingly, the Jewish respondents attach very little importance to the ethnic divide, despite the increased public discussion on the subject in recent years.

**DANGER!**

	JEWS	ARABS	TOTAL
Between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel	45.2%	51.7%	46.8%
Between the right-wing and the left-wing	28.6%	9.6%	23.9%
Between the religious and the secular	12.0%	11.5%	11.9%
Between the rich and the poor	6.5%	14.2%	8.3%
Between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews <sup>1</sup>	5.2%	11.0%	6.6%
Don't know	2.6%	1.9%	2.4%

**Which dispute most endangers Israeli society?**

**What is the importance that youth attribute to different democratic values?**

**The two national groups and all sectors of the Jewish public attach high importance to democracy. However, it is clear that these values are particularly important to the Arab youth.** The most significant value for both Arabs and Jews is the democratic character of the state. Among the Jews, the less the level of religious observance is, the more importance is attributed to democratic values. Among the religious group, the ultra-Orthodox are unusual in that they attach particularly great importance to political and economic equality. Politically, it is clear that centrists and leftists are very similar in the ethical concepts they present. It is interesting to see that the centrists give more importance than the leftist supporters to economic equality and minority rights - further evidence that the separation between the "center" and "left" often stems from a desire to avoid a "leftist" labeling and not necessarily a result of having different values.

<sup>1</sup>Ashkenazi - Jews descended mainly from Central and Eastern Europe  
 .Mizrahi - Jews descended mainly from the Middle East and North Africa.

*What importance do Israeli youth attribute to different democratic values?*

**Basic Rights of Minorities**



**Equal Political Rights**



**Freedom of Expression**



**Economic Equality**



**Gender Equality**



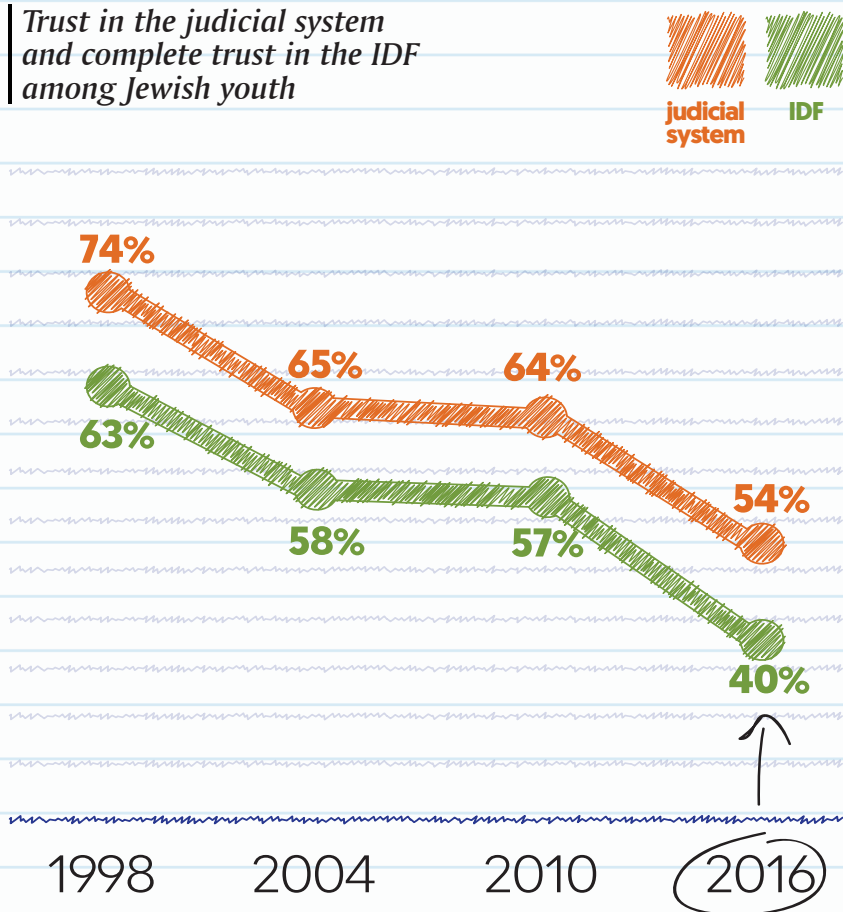
**Democratic State**



### What percentage of the Jewish youth express complete trust in the IDF and regular or complete trust in the justice system?

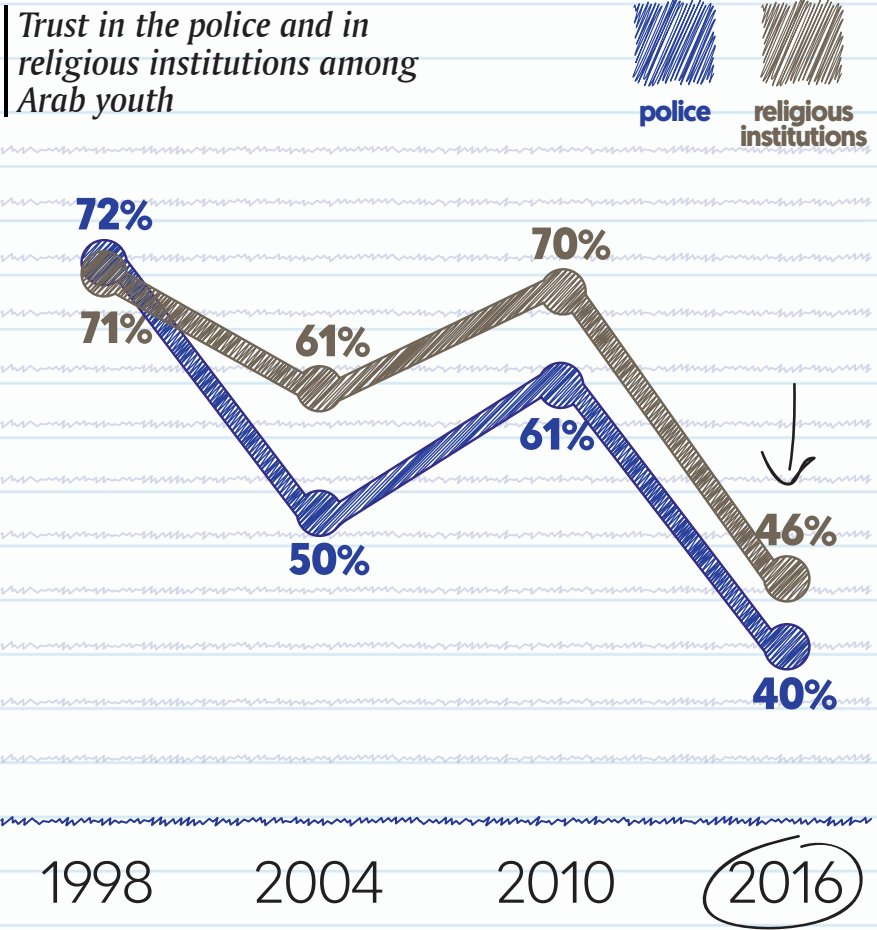
Although the IDF easily maintains its place at the top of the list of public trust, since 2010 there has been significant erosion in its status: a sharp drop of 17 percentage points in Jewish youth "completely trusting" the IDF. The decline is particularly evident in the level of trust between the ages of 21 to 24, meaning, young people fresh out of military service. At the same time also the judiciary's image suffered a severe blow, with a drop of 10 percentage points in Jewish youth trust of any kind [complete or regular].

Trust in the judicial system and complete trust in the IDF among Jewish youth



## How has the rate of Arab youth expressing trust in the police and religious institutions changed over the years?

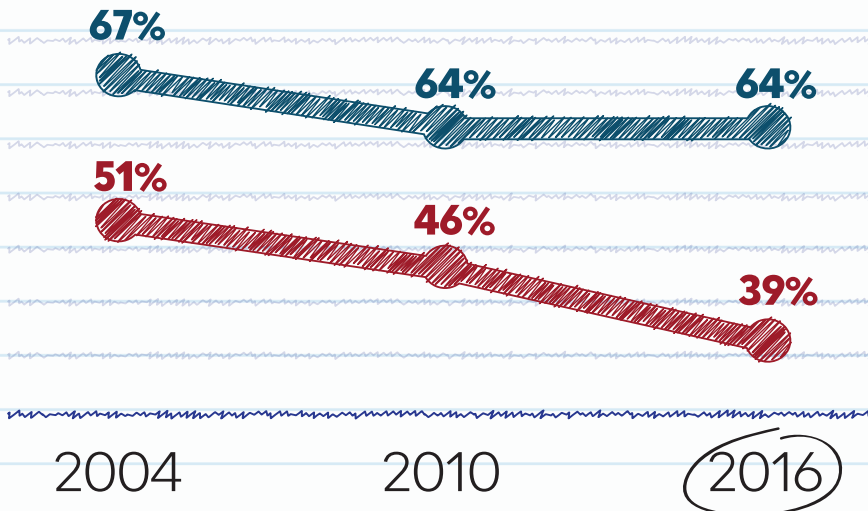
The level of trust Arab youth have for the Israeli police is at a low point, and is even lower than it was at the beginning of the last decade, a few years after the October 2000 events. Another notable trend is the drop in the level of trust in religious institutions, which is also evident among Jewish youth.



**What is the percentage of Jewish youth who believe that Arabs should be prohibited from being elected to the Knesset?**  
**What is the percentage of Jewish youth who believe that most Arabs want to destroy the State of Israel?**

**The percentage of Jews who believe that Arabs should be prevented from getting elected to the Knesset is declining.** However, there is no significant change in the rate of Jewish youth who agrees with the premise that the Arabs did not accept the existence of Israel and want to destroy it.

*What is the percentage of Jewish youth who think that Arabs should be prevented from being elected to the Knesset, and what percentage of Jewish youth thinks that most Arabs want to destroy the State of Israel?*



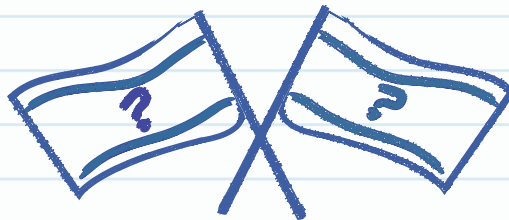
 Most of the Arabs have not reconciled with the existence of the State of Israel and would destroy it if they could

 Arab citizens of Israel should be prohibited from being elected to the Knesset

**What is the percentage of Arab youth who believe that it is very important for Israel to be a state of all its citizens? What is the percentage of Jewish youth who believe that it is very important for Israel to be a Jewish state?**

Another important trend is the strengthening of the Arab aspiration for the establishment of the State of all its citizens: in 1998, 57% of the respondents indicated that this ambition is "very important" compared to more than 85% in 2016. On the other hand, the increased importance attributed to the Jews of Israel being a Jewish state: in 1998, 62% of respondents described this ambition as "very important", compared with 85% in 2016. More evident is that the idea that Israel should live in peace with its neighbors is fading from Jewish consciousness.

	Jews who believe that it is very important for Israel to be a Jewish state	Arabs who believe that it is very important for Israel to be a state of all its citizens
1998	61.8%	56.5%
2004	62.3%	82.1%
2010	59.4%	70.5%
2016	84.9%	86.1%



# Let's Dig a Little Deeper...

## The Israeli Left, the Arab Youth and Trust in Institutions and Democratic Values

### The Israeli 'Left'

The terms 'left' and 'right' are an integral part of the political vocabulary. As political symbols, these terms are not only used to describe the political system but also for communication purposes, for recruiting voters, for distinguishing between streams and camps and for legitimizing or delegitimizing groups and political ideas.

The various ways in which researchers, the media, the public and even the politicians themselves define or refer to the left in Israel show that there is a lack of clarity and great uncertainty on the subject. While in most democratic states, the left-right axis mainly revolves around socio-economic issues, or commonly between capitalism and socialism, in Israel this axis mainly revolves around security and political issues.

In the modern world there is a delicate tension between liberty and equality. In most countries these tensions distinguish between right and left. The Right is associated with those who wish to maintain the existing social order and the left is associated with those who want to change the social order toward a more egalitarian society.

Generally speaking, one can point out different theories and ideologies identified with one of the concepts. The main political controversies associated with 'Left' and 'Right' over the years are those of: Socialism (left) compared to Capitalism (right), government involvement in the economy (left) compared to unregulated enterprises (right), universal approach (left) compared to selective national orientation (right), a desire for change (left) compared to maintaining the status quo (right), the separation of religion and state (left) compared to objection to it (right), and more. Any citizen and/or party can be identified with the right in a certain field and identify with the left in other fields.



In the early years of the State of Israel, the distinction between left [the Labor Movement] and right [Revisionist Zionism] in Israel indeed focused on these issues and it was difficult to identify significant differences in the political and security positions. The differences between the camps started to become clearer after the 1967 war when the State of Israel added territories to its control inhabited by several millions of Palestinian residents. Baruch Kimmerling (2001)<sup>1</sup>, a leading Israeli sociologist, sees the process of colonization, which started for him in 1973, as the breaking-point of the Labor Movement. From then on, public debate and political and symbolic organization revolved solely on a single theme: the position on the Arab-Jewish conflict and what means should be used to manage it. In other words, the only yardstick for being leftist was whether you are in favor of 'territories' or 'peace'. The triumph of the Israeli right regarding this altered reality is that also the left have adopted it.

**The terms 'left' and 'right' are used as a scheme, a framework and a template for sorting the political reality around us.** As such, they help the public cope with the political world, which is not the center of their being. With these terms one can relatively easily mark a 'friend' or 'enemy' and 'good' or 'bad'. Many politicians and public figures, use these terms to place the opposite camp on the 'wrong' edge of the left-right continuum and to deny them of potential voters. This use of labels, occasionally reflects inclusive emotional attitudes of one another, without having to carefully consider the views, attitudes and actions of the individual, the group or the idea that is characterized by using the labels 'left' and 'right'. For most of the public, 'left' and 'right' are used as a necessary 'shortcut' to orient themselves in the political system and as a means of political and social identity.

**As aforesaid, in Israel, the central controversy dimension is in the issue of the territories,** although of much broader implications. It pushed aside many other dimensions and largely defines the party system and, accordingly, the left-right spectrum. The economic dimension exists, but its relationship with the 'left-right' spectrum is much weaker. The religious dimension is especially significant for religious people, but even within the



<sup>1</sup>"The End of Ashkenazi Hegemony" by Baruch Kimmerling, Keter Publishing House

religious communities, several groups find the issue of the territories, or political-security dimension, more important.

The ideological leanings of young people have changed much over the years. In 2004, following a general right-ward shift among Israeli Jews during the second Intifada, 56% of all Jewish youth were right-wing, 25% were left, and eight percent were centrists. At present, 16% of Jews consider themselves left-wing – which includes people who define themselves as 'centrists leaning somewhat more left'.

The corollary on the right is very high: nearly three-quarters of young people are right-wing (including center-leaning-right), and 62% among teenagers. True centrists are just over 10% among Jews, without significant difference between the two age groups. While data is not available for all years, and at points the question was asked differently, the trend is clear: young Jews have become far more polarized now. Just over ten percent now do not wish to identify as any leaning.

**Very small portions of Arab youth currently identify as right or left** (8% or 10%, respectively, combining both age groups, which showed only tiny variation between them). But this finding contains a dramatic change: In 2004, fully half of all Arab respondents openly identified as left-wing, even as over one-third chose not to identify.

The intervening years have seen intensive strife – three wars in Gaza, renewed violence from the West Bank, and growing hostility towards Arab citizens in Israel. In this environment, many Arabs report significant fear among their communities, that political activity or even identity has dangers or discomfort and therefore many more prefer not to identify with the ideological left or right.

At the same time, young Arabs respondents who do not wish to identify may also be expressing alienation from Arab leaders in Israel. Like so many voters in other western democracies, they could be expressing disappointment and cynicism in general about politics. For these reasons, even the relatively high self-definition as 'Centrist' among Arabs in 2016

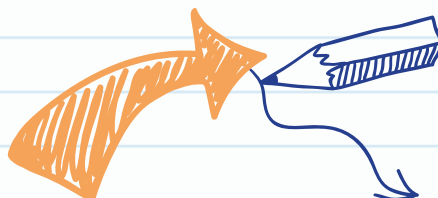
can be read more as a non-committal response, rather than a definition of centrist attitudes according to the Jewish population.

In addition, Israeli youth prepare themselves for the army or have already served and are therefore more involved in the political discourse in the country. Arab youth, on the other hand, do not serve in the army and their first encounter with the Jewish population in Israel outside the public sphere (parks, shopping malls, etc.) is in the academy (if they decide to study) and therefore are less involved in the political situation in Israel.

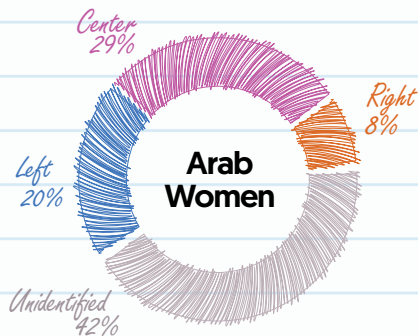
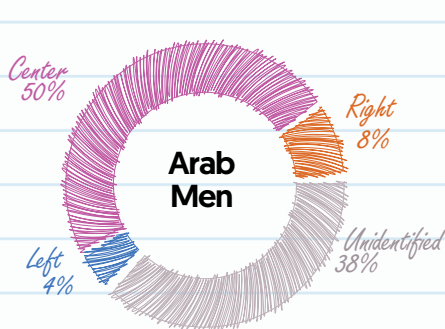
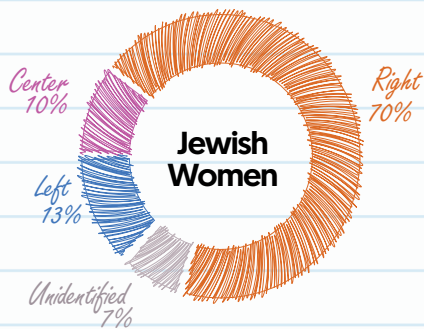
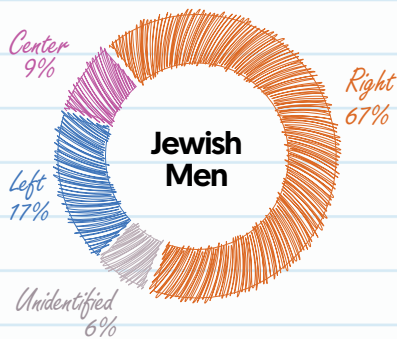
Finally, perhaps the high percentage of unidentified may suggest that the Arab youth does not have the sufficient awareness to understand the meaning of the scale or that due to their distinct cultural background and young age, the discourse of left and right in Israel has a lower priority in their daily agenda.

When considering the differences in political identity by characteristics of sex, nationality and religiosity [Jews], there are substantial differences in some cases, in other cases the study found only minor or no differences.

As seen in the figure below, among the Jewish population, there are minor differences in political identity between men and women. However, it can be seen that overall Jewish men are more left-wing than women (26.5% compared to 22.9%). One interesting finding in this respect is that more women consider themselves as 'ultra-Right' than men (13.3% compared to 10.9%). In the Arab sector, one substantial difference is that many more Arab men consider themselves as 'Center' than women (49.6% compared to 29.0%). Another noteworthy finding is that 20.4% of Arab Women identified with the left side of the political spectrum [from 'Center-Left' to 'Ultra-Left'] compared to only 4.1% of the Arab men. Perhaps, the leftist agenda of Arab women is linked to issues regarding the status of women or is related to the growing education rates of Arab women.



**Political identity self-definition, by sex and nationality, 2016**



**There is a growing correlation between political ideology and level of religiosity among Jews in Israel.** When comparing the results to those of 2010, religious and ultra-Orthodox youth are more than before likely to be right-wing [91.9% compared to 88.5% and 84.1% compared to 69.7%, respectively]. When it comes to political views, the traditional sector is closer to the religious groups than to the seculars. However, even among the secular youth, almost half consider themselves as right-wing [compared to 44% in 2010].

In the past 12 years, the proportion of the secular sector among Jewish Israeli youth has dropped dramatically from 54% to 41%, while the

traditional and ultra-Orthodox sectors have increased correspondingly.

To conclude, unless religious or traditional attitudes become less powerfully linked with right-wing political attitudes, the growing religious sector (at all levels, from traditional to ultra-Orthodox), combined with their clear inclination to the right, will lead to a more right wing, less liberal, and more religious generation than previous ones.

### **The rise of optimism among young Arabs in Israel regarding the future of Israel and their ability to fulfill their goals in Israel**

**At the end of 2015, the Arab population in Israel was estimated at 1,757,800 (about 20.8% of all Israelis). The Arab population in Israel is very young in comparison to the Jewish population and others living in Israel: 54.6% of the Arabs in Israel are under 25 years old, compared to 40.4% of Jewish or other Israelis<sup>2</sup>.**

Arabs in Israel are a minority group, and therefore, relations between Israeli Jews and Arabs are that of a majority group towards a minority in different societies. Besides being a minority group, most of the Arabs in Israel see themselves as part of the Palestinian people who live in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the diaspora. This makes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the main difficulty in the relationship between Arabs and Jews in Israel.

Until the Six-Day War of 1967, the Arab population was isolated, away from the attention of the Jews, and subject to the rule of the authorities. Since then, Arabs are no longer hidden and insignificant, and their presence has become prominent in the media and in the daily life as Arab citizens in Israel. The discrimination of Arabs has become a subject of public discussion in Israel. Especially the question about Arabs being equal citizens since Israel is defined as a 'Jewish and Democratic State', and their right to be part of the Israeli economy, politics and social life<sup>3</sup>.

This has created suspicion and mistrust among Arabs towards Jews and State institutions. Even though defined by law as having equal rights, they

<sup>2</sup>Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics

<sup>3</sup> Smoocha, Sammy. "Relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel as a Jewish and democratic state" [translated]. Tel Aviv: Open University.

do not have effective representation in the government, they do not get their share in the State budget and resources, and they do not have equal access to work and housing in the private Jewish sector.

The 'Arab radicalization thesis' is popular among the Jewish sector including policy makers, researchers in the academia and the media. According to this thesis the Arabs are going through an historic process of alienation and separation from the Jews and the State, and therefore a violent confrontation is inevitable. The belief is that the Arabs are becoming more and more identified with the Palestinian people and that many of them are drawn to the Islamic Movement in Israel which is driving them further away from the Jews. They do not agree with the Jewish hegemony in a country that is sacred to Islam. They are furious with the ongoing occupation of the West Bank, and the blockade on the Gaza Strip and the oppression of the Palestinian people. The radicalization is also the cause of the growing number of Jews who belong to the right-wing and to the radical right who are known for being less tolerant toward Arabs. At the same time the thesis stresses that Israel is not doing enough to promote equal treatment for Arabs in Israel and it is actually acting in a discriminatory way<sup>4</sup>.

In recent years we have experienced the opposite trend. 63% of the Arab youth in Israel (age 15-18 and 21-24, with no significant gender difference) felt optimistic about the future of Israel, compared to only 51% of Jewish youth. This is the highest rate of optimism among Arab youth since the survey first took place in 1998. In 1998, only 52% felt optimistic and in 2004 there was a drop in optimism (36%) which was related to the intifada and the October 2000 events. In 2010, optimism went back up to 52%. This stands in contrast to the drop in optimism among the Jewish youth seen in 2016 – only 51% of Jews feel optimistic about Israel's future.

There has also been a rise in the rate of Arab youth who expressed optimism in fulfilling their personal goals in Israel. In 2016, 74% felt that they could achieve their goals in Israel (again, with no significant gender difference) in comparison to 60% in 1998, 50% in 2004 and 67% in 2010. Again, as opposed to Arabs, Jewish youth express less optimism than in

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<sup>4</sup>Smoocha, Sammy. "Still Playing by the Rules: Index of Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel 2013". The Israel Democracy Institute.

the past years. In 2016, only 56% of Israeli Jews said they were optimistic about fulfilling their goals in Israel. This is the lowest rate of optimism which is about 20 percentage points lower than the second lowest rate.

When asked to rank the goals they would like to fulfill, Arab youth rank obtaining higher education first, 'enjoying life' second and economic success third. As in past surveys, Arabs ranked higher education at the top of the list more than Israeli Jews [45% compared to 43% among Jews, within the margin of error].

Nevertheless, the goals in life of Arab youth differ much between men and women. While obtaining higher education is considered the main goal among Arab women with 52.3% mentioning it as one of their two main goals, the men ranked it only on the third place with 37.3% and mentioned economic success as their top goal with 50.1% [compared to 30.7% among women].

The three main goals in life [obtaining higher education, economic success and pleasures in life] do not differ between Arabs and Jews. This also indicates a desire for integration among Arab youth. The majority of Arab men, as Jewish men and women, consider economic success as one of their main goals in life. However, Arab women are an exception in this regard, where higher education is considered as the most important to them. Perhaps this has to do with the matter of double exclusion Arab women are facing: exclusion based on nationality and on gender.

If so, why young Arabs in Israel have felt more optimistic in recent years? That could be explained by the 'Arab politicization theory' which opposes the 'Arab radicalization thesis'. According to the 'Arab politicization theory', along with power dividing Arabs from the Jewish population in Israel, this thesis detects other moderating powers between Arabs and Jews in Israel. The politicization process that Arabs in Israel are going through leads them to fight even harder against their discrimination and exclusion and for more equality and peace. The Arabs in Israel have gone through a process of becoming more Israeli and attached to the State and the Jews. They have grown closer to the Israeli Jewish population in their language, culture, life style and in their ways of thinking<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup>Smootha, Sammy. "Still Playing by the Rules: Index of Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel 2013". The Israel Democracy Institute.

In accordance, in 2016, 95% of Arab youth in Israel stated high standard of living as very or somewhat important, and 87% supported gender equality. Those are the highest levels of all past surveys for both indicators. **Similarly, they stated the equality of political right as being very important, more than ever before:** 87% in 2016, as opposed to 67% in 2010, 77% in 2004 and a low 59% in 1998. However, we have seen the opposite trend among Israeli Jewish youth, where there is in-ongoing decline in the rate of Jews who think it is very important to give Arabs full political equality. In 2016, only 35% of the Jewish youth said that political equality was very important. In addition, in recent years a greater part of young Arabs has felt that the Jewish-Arab divide was the most threatening to social cohesion.

Another explanation for the rise of optimism among young Arabs in Israel may be that there has been an improvement, in recent years, in the Arab community in Israel, including growing rates of higher education, especially among women, growing rates of labor participation among women and growing rates of employment in the public sector. Besides, time has passed since the October 2000 events and with it the memory of those events has faded away.

Arab youth in Israel are more pragmatic. They are more interested in achieving economic security and education than in achieving utopian goals such as advancing the peace process. They realize that they have a better chance to fulfill their goals compared to their parents and their fellow Arab countries. The Arab youth are more open to the world, to Europe, they have more opportunities to explore and share information. They know what they want. They believe that they can be accepted into higher education institutions, acquire a profession and make a decent living.

Perhaps the optimism stems from their belief that the situation will improve, peace will come someday and that they will feel that their opportunities are equal to those of the Jews in the State of Israel. It is possible that their optimistic initial response expresses the desire of the youth that the situation will be better, and when we go deeper, the answer becomes more complex.

A different explanation is the massive deterioration of other Arab countries in the Middle East between the current and last survey in 2010. Arabs in Israel have witnessed the deadly chaos in Syria and in Iraq and they are



conscious of the strict restrictions in other countries such as Saudi Arabia. They may be more aware than ever that in a material sense their lives are more stable in Israel.

Despite all this, still a portion of Arabs agrees with the statement that Arabs do not accept the State and would destroy it: 50% of the teenagers and fewer than 25% of young people. This trend has not really changed since 1998. However, it is possible that many respondents referred only to the first part of the statement, or that they referred to the views of most Arabs in the world in general. For comparison, 64% of Jewish youth agree with this statement.

## Trust in State Institutions and Democratic Values in Israel

### I. Trust in State Institutions

The trust in state institutions is a critical factor in every democracy. Trust between the public and the government is important for the success of public policies. Trust is necessary to increase the confidence in the protection of property, in local trade, in the national currency and in the economy as a whole. Trust is also important in order for the public to feel safe. Trust is essential to create cooperation and compliance of citizens to the laws<sup>6</sup>.

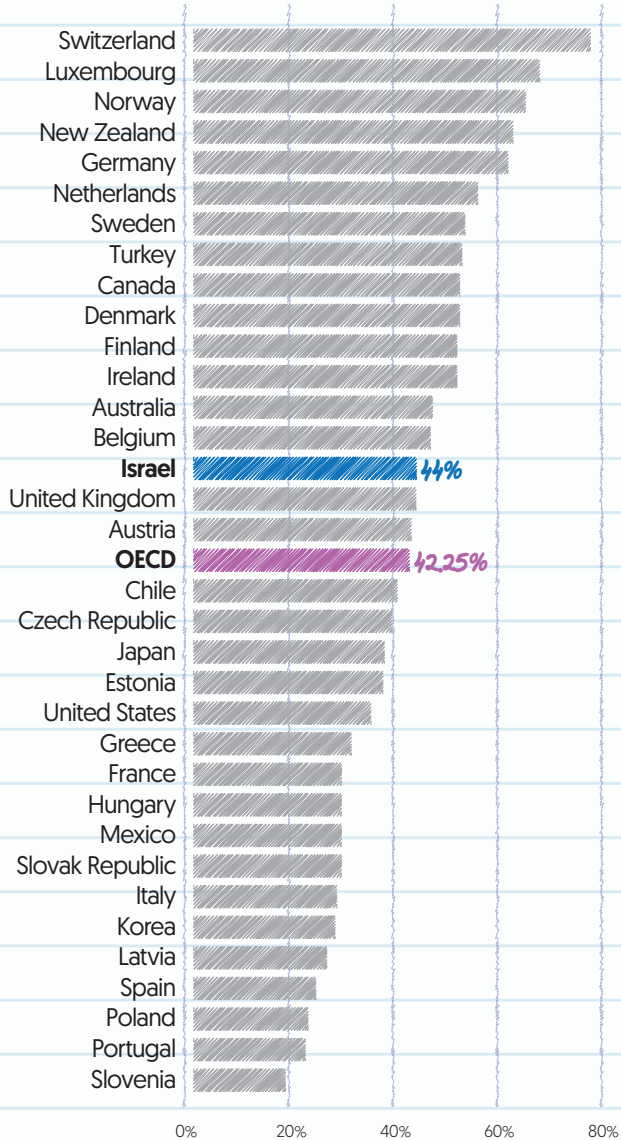
#### The important indicators of trust in the government are:

- **Reliability**- Governments have a duty to reduce uncertainty in economic, social and political factors.
- **Responsiveness**- The quality of the public services.
- **Openness**- Open government policies and access to information.
- **Better regulation**- effective regulation leads to justice, fairness, and rule of law.
- **Integrity & fairness**- avoiding government corruption.
- **Inclusive policy making**- designed policies that endorse trust of the public in institutions.

<sup>6</sup>OECD "Trust in Government"  
<http://www.oecd.org/gov/trust-in-government.htm>

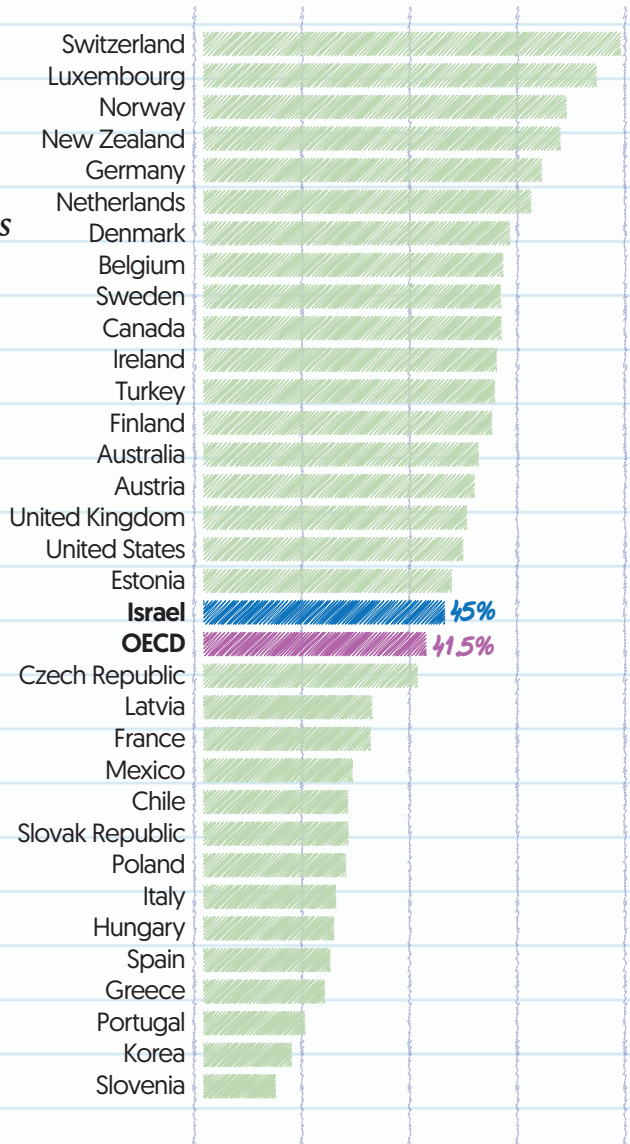
In many countries around the world we are witnessing a decline in the level of trust in State Institutions. 60% of the OECD citizens do not trust their government. Nordic countries report higher levels of trust than other OECD countries. Israel's level of trust is slightly above the OECD average; 44% of the citizens trust the Israeli government. Confidence in national government varies across countries:

*Percentage of people reporting to have confidence in the national government, average 2014/ 2015*



Young people and teenagers in Israel have a similar level of trust in the government as the rest of the population; about 45% of the Israeli teens trust their government. The level of trust of teenagers and young people in the government in Switzerland is almost twice the level of Israel.

**Percentage of people reporting to have confidence in the national government, ages 15-29, average 2014/ 2015**



The Israeli Youth Survey of 2016 supports the finding that most of the youth and young people have low levels of trust in most of the government institutions that the survey covered.

### **Legal system-**

In 2016 the level of trust in the legal system among Jews reached the lowest level since 1998; from 74% in 1998 to 54% in 2016. The decline in the level of trust stopped between 2004 and 2010, but remained stable - did not increase. Nowadays, teenagers seem to be more trusting, while young people tend to be skeptical of the Israeli legal system. In 2016 the level of trust in the legal system is estimated at 60% among teenagers and 48% among young people.

Left wing Israeli young people are more likely to trust the legal system than right wingers, in 2010 and 2016. Almost three-quarters of left-wingers claim that they trust the legal system, while the level of right wingers who claim that they trust the legal system is 47%.

Another noticeable trust gap is between religious and secular young people. Among young ultra-Orthodox people, the level of trust in the legal system remains constant; about one third trusts the legal system in 2010 and 2016. Among secular people the trust in the legal system has declined from 81% in 2010 to only 63% in 2016. The level of trust among Arab youth declined from 70% in 2010 to 47% in 2016. 39% of Arab teenagers and 54% of young Arab people have shown trust in the legal system in 2016.

### **Israel Defense Forces (IDF) –**

The IDF is regularly ranked as the institution with the highest level of trust. Yet, there was a decline in the levels of trust in the IDF from 91% in 2010 to 85% in 2016. In previous years, most of the Jewish young population had 'Complete trust' in the IDF: 63% in 1998, 58% in 2004, and 57% in 2010. Young Jewish people seem to have lower levels of 'Complete trust' than teenagers. In 2016 there was a dramatic decline in complete trust, and the gap between the two groups narrowed; 43% of teenagers and 36% of young people.

Due to the history and current events, such as the military rule of the

Arab citizens in Israel for the first nearly-two decades of statehood, or the occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, the trust of the Arab population in the IDF was consistently lower than the trust of the Jewish population. In 2016 the trust among Arab youth was estimated at 38%.

### **The Police-**

The level of trust of Arab youth in the police declined from 72% in 1998 (after the Oslo agreement), to 50% in 2004. In 2010 there was a rise to 61%, and another decline in 2016 to 46% - the lowest level of all surveys. The decline is explained by the high level of crime in Arab localities, and the low level of government effort in law enforcement in Arab localities.

### **The legislature - the Knesset**

In 2004, about 25% of Israeli youth said they trusted the Knesset. In 2010 their number rose to about 40%, while in 2016 there was a decrease of 10 percentage points, to 32% and 34% among Jews and Arabs, respectively. The latest decline can be attributed to coalition instability leading to two further elections in quick succession, in 2013 and 2015, ongoing coalition bargaining, collapse, re-formation and rumours. Both a former President and a former Prime Minister have been sent to jail. While there is some consolation in knowing that the system is acting against those who transgress, the overriding feeling is jaded and angry towards the lawmakers. In addition, in recent years, the Knesset has passed legislation that is perceived as threatening to democratic principles and targeting Arabs and left-wing attitudes, and this can lead to a decline in trust among these populations.

### **The media-**

Jewish young people seem to be skeptical about the information delivered by the traditional media. The reasons could be critical thinking of young people, or perhaps a suspicious attitude towards the media. In 2010 between 50%-60% of young Israelis expressed strong or moderate levels of trust in the media. In recent years, young people give less trust in the media than teenagers.

In addition, the recent rise of social media has weakened the traditional media. The new media, such as Facebook, Twitter etc., is based on social

networks, which are considered more reliable by the youth, because they reflect the “true” occurrence and opinions. That enables Israeli politicians to discredit the traditional media more than ever.

### **Religious institutions-**

The trust in religious institutions declined in both Arab and Jewish young populations. In 1998 and 2004, 45% of the Jewish population trusted religious institutions. In 2010, 60% trusted these institutions, compared to only 32% in 2016. In 1998, 71% of the young Arabs trusted the religious institutions. In 2004 the level of trust was 61%, and 70% in 2010. In 2016, only 46% trusted those institutions; a significant decline from previous years. The decline could be explained by the growing levels of higher education in the Arab society.

## **II. The Importance of Democratic Values among Israeli Youth**

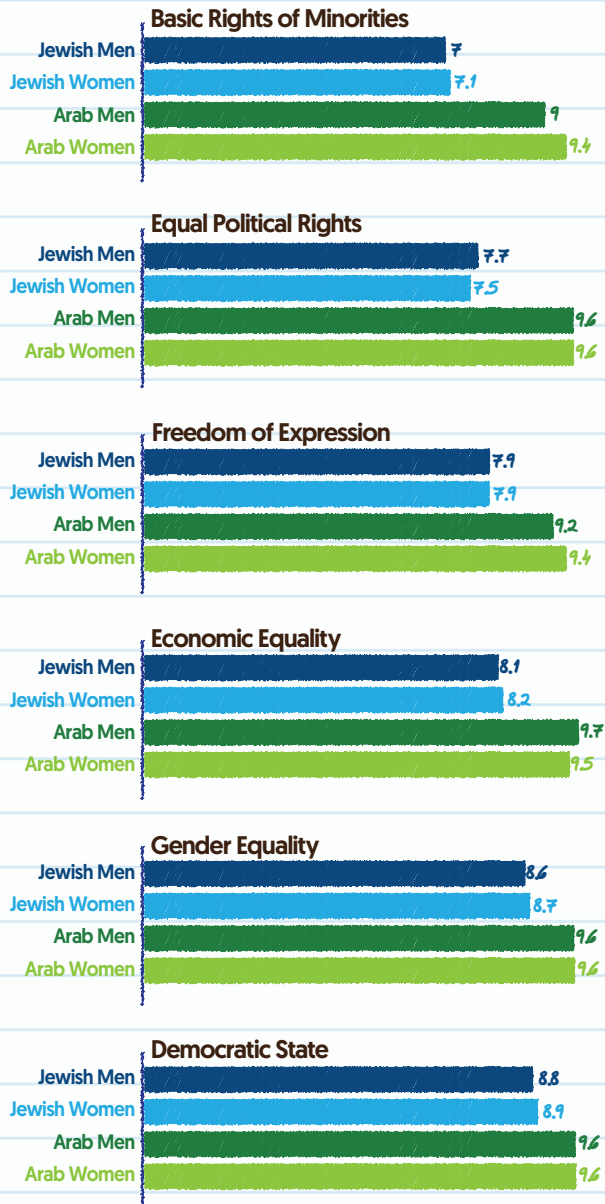
Democratic values support the belief that a proper well-functioning society can exist, in which [balanced] freedom is preserved. Democratic societies also expect another kind of balance: a compromise between liberty and equality. Basic values of democracy are broadly supported around the world and the Israeli society is no exception in this regard. Nevertheless, there are notable differences among different groups within the society concerning the strength of commitment to democratic values.

Attitudes towards basic democratic values and the perception of their importance virtually depend on which group of the Israeli society one belongs to. Among the Jewish population, abundantly, the less religious you are the more importance you confer to democratic values. There are a few exceptions regarding ultra-Orthodox youth, where they see equal political rights and economic equality as more important than their religious counterparts. Secular youth confer more importance to all democratic values in question than any other religious group.

Arab youth perceive democratic values as more important than Jewish youth [with no significant gender difference]. This is quite typical for minorities and underprivileged groups in society that have more 'need' for these values to protect themselves. In addition, the terminology of

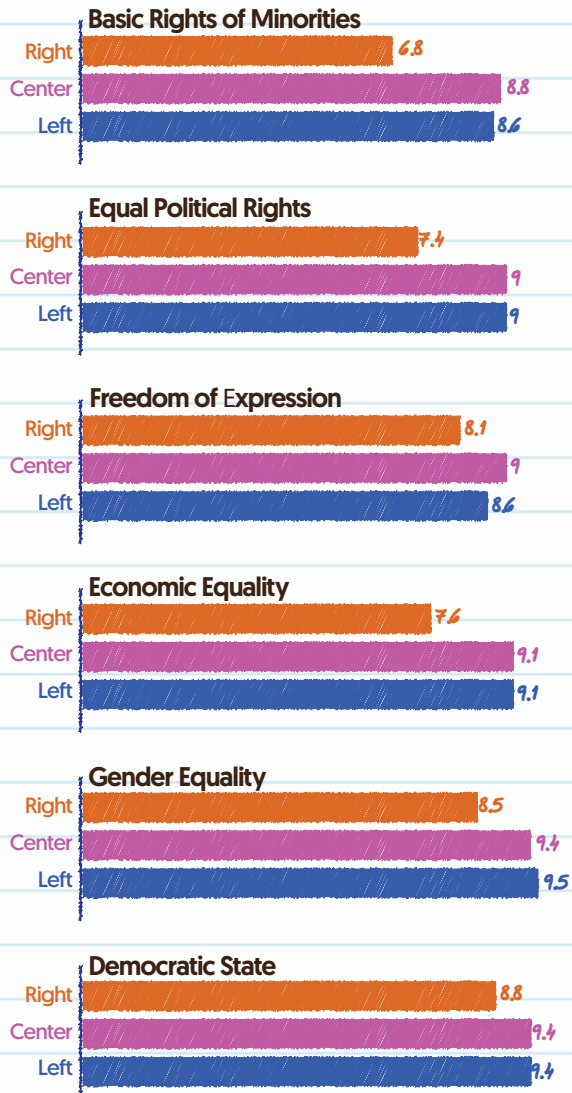
freedom and justice characterized the recent revolutions in the Arab countries, to which many young Arabs in Israel were connected — through social networks, and it may have emphasized their significant support for democratic values.

*Average importance of democratic values (10-level scale), by nationality and gender*



When examining the differences according to ideological positioning, left-wing and center confer much more importance to all democratic values than those who identify themselves as right-wing. Another interesting finding is that there are minor differences between center and left and in some cases, centrists attribute more importance to values such as basic rights to minorities and economic equality.

*Average importance of democratic values (10-level scale), by ideological positioning*

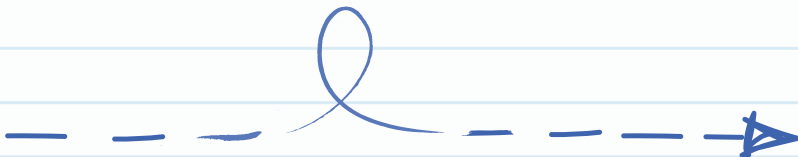




As can be seen in the chart above, minority rights are at the bottom of the list. There is a dissonance between the sense of optimism of young Arabs in Israel and the less importance the majority gives to advancing their rights - they have an optimistic feeling, are educated and have opportunities, but when they look for work they may have trouble getting it, even because of their name.

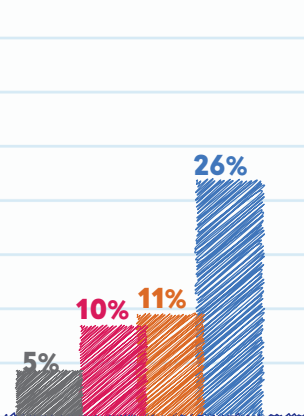
In conclusion, the importance given to democratic values in Israel is directly related to the level of religiosity (seculars more than religious), nationality (Arabs more than Jews) and political affiliation (leftists more than rightists).

These results are also reflected in the state security aspect. The figure below shows the proportion of youth who chose democratic values (always or usually) over security needs, when asked about preferences in case of a conflict between the requirements of democracy and the requirements of state security. As one moves on the political axis (from right to left) and on the religious axis (from ultra-Orthodox to secular), more young people perceive the values of democracy as superior to security needs. This is also reflected in nationality (Arabs more than Jews) and gender (men more than women).

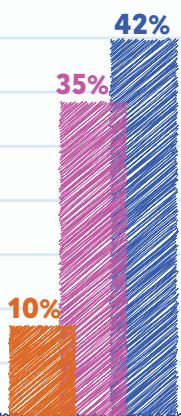


*Always/usually prioritize democratic values over security needs, by level of religiosity, ideological positioning and by nationality and gender*

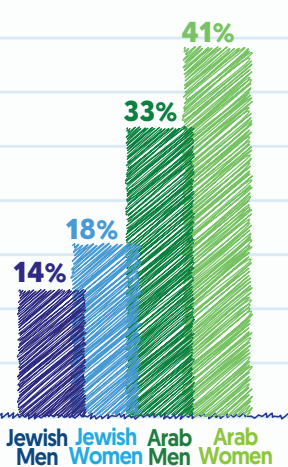
By level of religiosity



By ideological positioning



By nationality and gender





The joint study of the Macro Center for Political Economics and the Israel office of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in 2016 is the fourth in a series of studies conducted every six years since 1998. The objectives of these studies are to present the personal, national and social views of Israel's young generation and how they have shifted over the years. These studies allow for a long-term tracking of changes in attitudes and perceptions of the Israeli youth. They offer a unique perspective on how every young generation is different from its predecessors and how trends have changed over time.

The following important topics appear from the findings of the 2016 study and need to be followed up by further debates:

**Political Identity:** Young Jews became increasingly more right wing.

Plus: The proportion of traditional and ultra-orthodox Jews is also growing. Most Arabs identify with center, not left anymore or don't identify with any political affiliation.

**Democratic Values:** Democratic values are important, but the majority prefers safety over these principles. Plus: The more religious and the more right, the less people consider democratic values as crucial for society.

**Trust in State Institutions:** The State of Israel loses its young citizens – Trust in IDF, Legal System, Police, Knesset, Political Parties, Histadrut, Media & Religious Institutions has reached its lowest point.

**Perception of the Future:** Arabs are more optimistic than ever and believe they can fulfill their goals in Israel. Young secular Jews have never been more pessimistic about their future than now.

