

Arab Barometer V

Lebanon Country Report



2019

Executive Summary

Despite the 2018 election, satisfaction with the state of democracy is low. Relatively few Lebanese consider their country to be democratic, and even though most Lebanese want democracy, the percentage is declining. This trend could be due to the fact that Lebanese have little or no trust in core democratic institutions. While perceived levels of corruption have decreased slightly over the years, the vast majority of the Lebanese still say the government is corrupt. Notably, however, an increasing percentage believe the government is working to tackle this problem. However, the magnitude of corruption is extensive, as evidenced by the fact that roughly two-thirds believe bribes are necessary to receive better public services. Yet, whilst results suggest that levels of trust in government, parliament, and the judiciary are low, they are on the rise since 2016, particularly among youth. Trust remains high in the army and police while trust in the judiciary has gradually increased over the last decade.

There has also been a severe decline in trust in civil society organizations in Lebanon in recent years. Nevertheless, Lebanese are still twice as likely to believe that civil society organizations do all they can to provide people with basic services compared with the government. While there has been a steep drop in religious piety over the past decade, at the same time there is greater support for an increasing role for religious leaders in politics.

Perceptions of economic conditions remain poor. Very few people in Lebanon across all ages believe that the Lebanese economy is heading in the right direction. Citizens believe that addressing economic challenges should be a key government priority, especially as concerns about the Lebanese economy have increased in recent years.

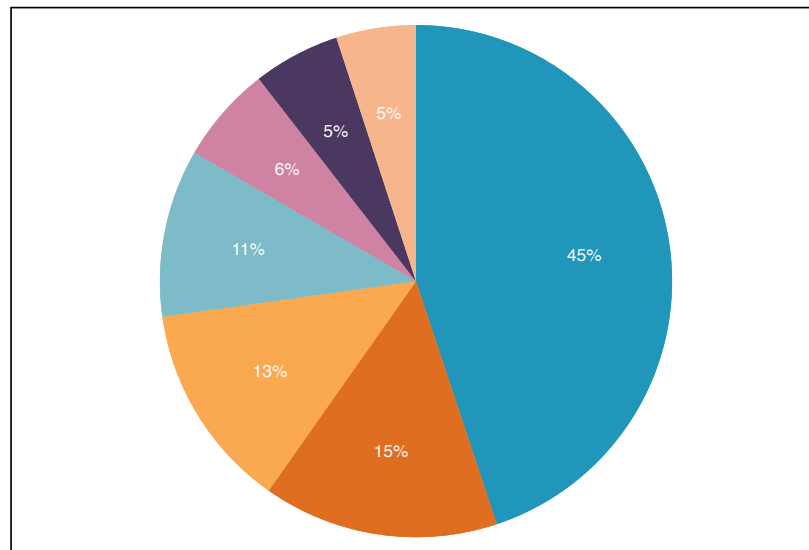
While corruption remains high, the younger generation of Lebanese have greater trust in the country's institutions than the older generation. Yet, many of the young and educated are considering emigrating due to pessimism about the economy and their country's future. Critically, those who want to emigrate also tend to be those with higher levels of education, which could potentially result in a brain drain phenomenon. Most want to seek opportunities in the West, such as North America or Europe. However, the majority say they would only leave Lebanon if they received legal permission.

These are among the key findings from a nationally representative public opinion survey conducted in Lebanon by the Arab Barometer in September-October 2018 by the Arab Barometer. The survey conducted 2,400 computer assisted personal interviews and has a margin of error of 2 percent with a cooperation rate of 64 percent.

Economic Conditions

Lebanese are divided on the main challenge facing their country, but most are pessimistic about the economy. A plurality (45 percent) say economic issues are the primary challenge in their country, followed by the quality of public services (15 percent) and corruption (13 percent). Notably, a large percentage of Lebanese cite other problems (27 percent), including internal security and foreign interference.

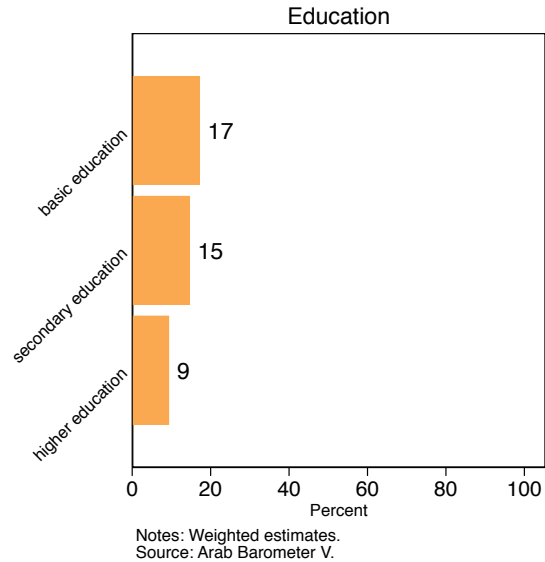
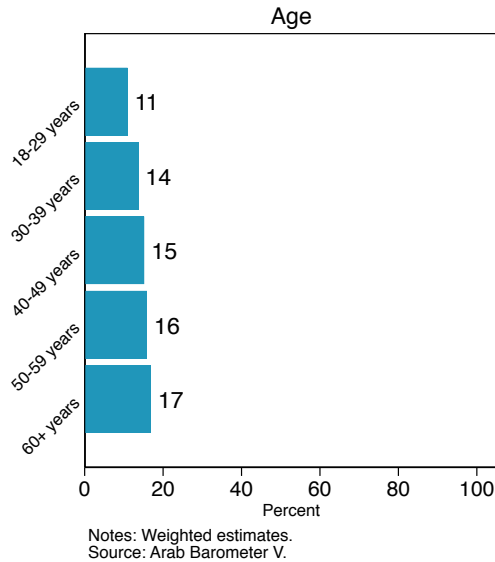
What is the most important challenge facing your country today? *% saying this is the most important challenge.*



Note: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

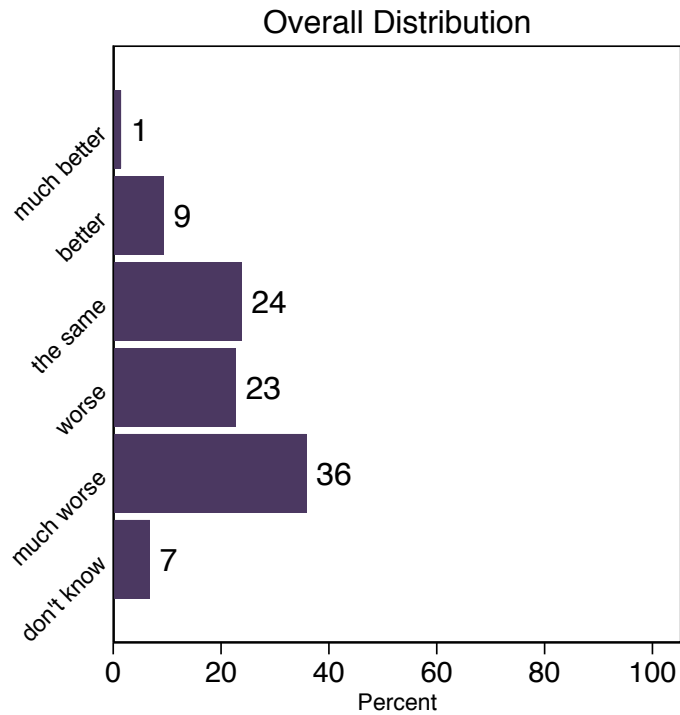
Overall, few (14 percent) rate the economy as good or very good, although this represents a marginal increase from 2016 (+5 points). Meanwhile 86 percent view the economy as bad or very bad with half (51 percent) saying the economic situation was much or somewhat better in Lebanon 2-3 years ago.

How would you evaluate the current economic situation in your country?
% saying the current economy is very good or good.



Notably, economic perceptions do not vary dramatically by age – 11 percent of those between ages 18 and 29 say the economy is good compared with 17 percent of those ages 60 or above. However, perhaps surprisingly, those with lower levels of education are eight points more likely to say the economy is good compared with college graduates. Meanwhile, few believe that the situation will improve soon with, three-in-five predicting the economy will be worse in the coming years.

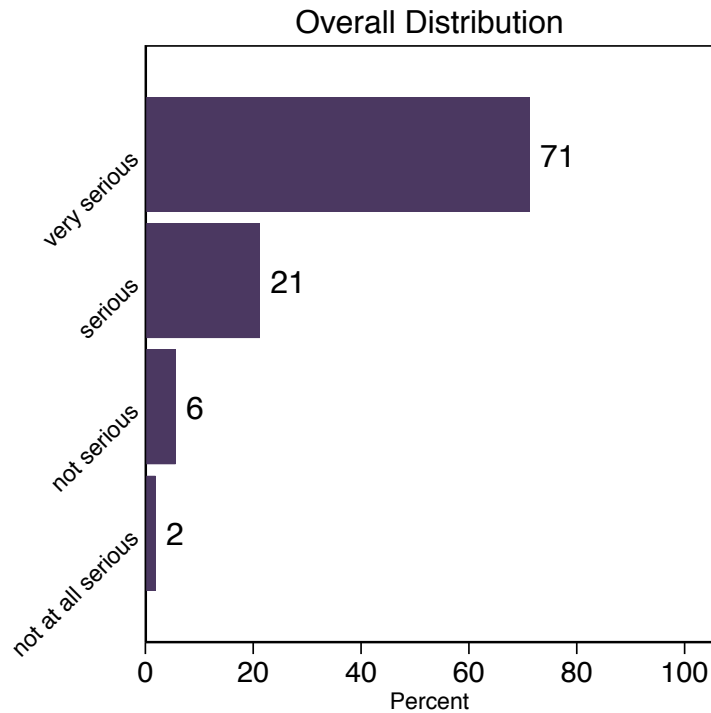
What do you think the economic situation in your country will be in the next few years (2-3 years) compared to the current situation?



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Despite the end of the so-called “trash protests of 2015-6”, Lebanese continue to worry about the quality of their environment. Nearly all Lebanese (92 percent) view trash as a serious, or very serious problem, while a similar percentage say the same about water pollution.

Is trash a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, not a very serious problem, or not at all a serious problem?



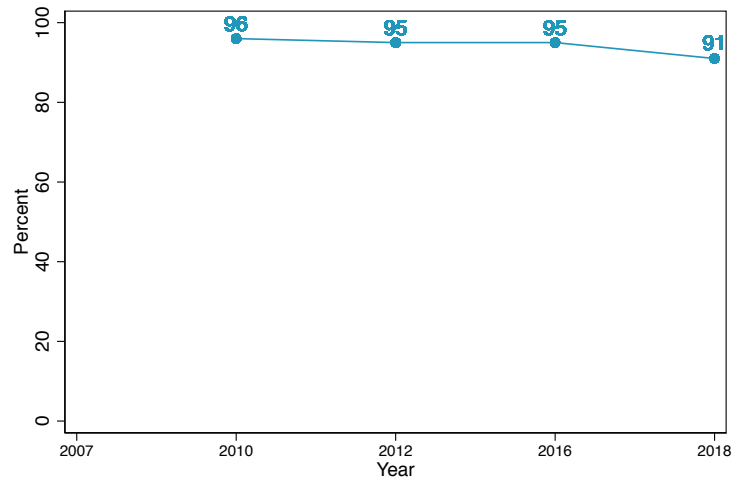
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Corruption

Corruption remains an endemic with nine-in-ten (91 percent) saying that corruption is found within state institutions to a large or medium extent. Nevertheless, this percentage has actually declined slightly since 2010, falling from 96 percent to 91 percent. Perceptions of corruption do not vary substantially by age. Those ages 60 and above (87 percent) are slightly less likely to say corruption is a problem compared to those between ages 18 and 29, where nine-in-ten view state corruption as an issue.

Despite the fact that most Lebanese say corruption is widespread, relatively few believe that the government is taking significant steps to tackle the problem. Roughly a quarter (28 percent) say the government is cracking down on corruption to a great or medium extent.

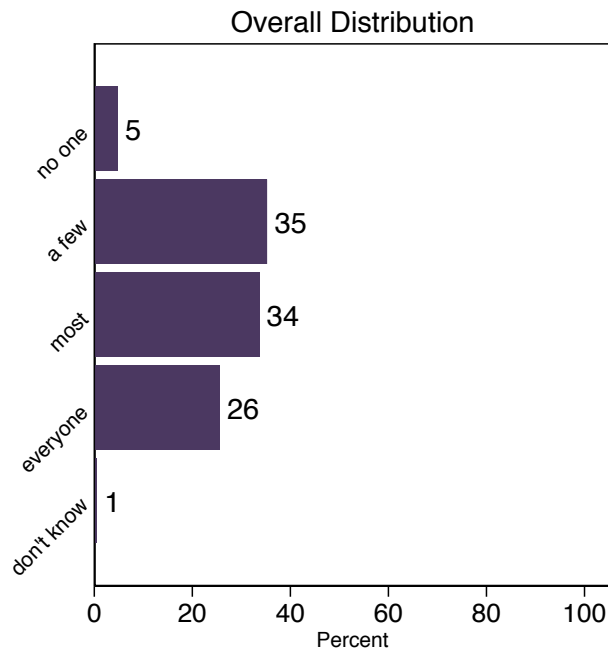
Trend in perceived corruption in national institutions *% saying to a large or medium extent.*



Notes: Weighted estimates (2010, 2012, 2016, 2018); unweighted estimates (2007).
Source: Arab Barometer.

However, this level represents an 18-point increase since 2012, indicating that public perceptions have improved somewhat on this issue in recent years.

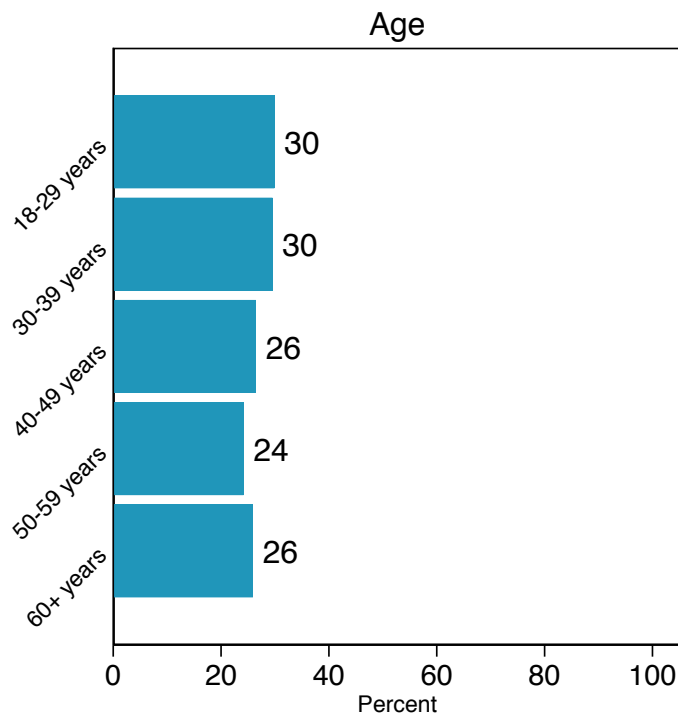
How widespread do you think corruption is in your local/municipal government? How many officials would you say are corrupt?



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

In your opinion, to what extent is the national government working to crackdown on corruption?

% saying to a large or medium extent.



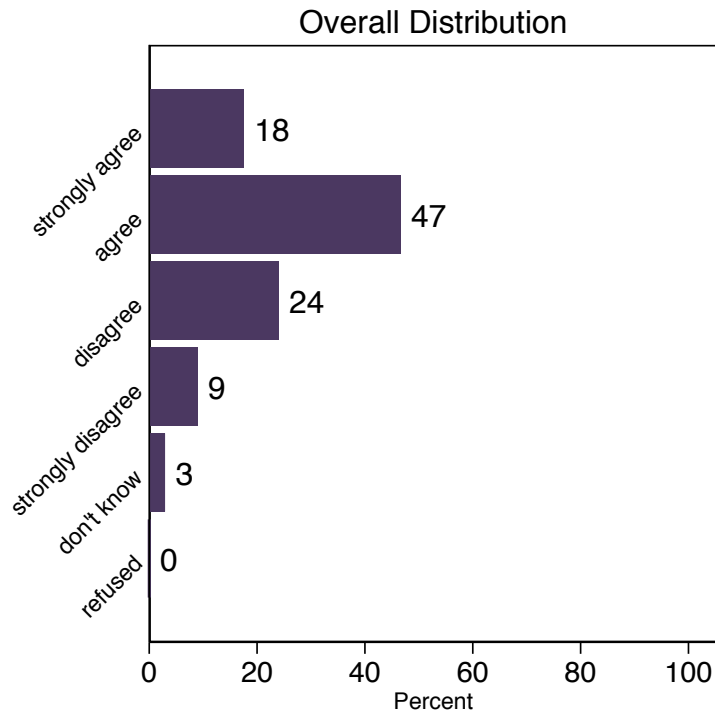
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Overall, youth are somewhat more likely to believe the state is serious about tackling this problem. While only 24 percent of those ages 50 to 59 believe that the government is doing so, three-in-ten youths (ages 18 to 29) hold this view. Meanwhile, perceptions of corruption at the local level are somewhat lower. Most (60 percent) say that most or all officials at the local level are corrupt.

A majority say that bribes are necessary to obtain better access to basic public services. Two-thirds say that bribes are necessary (41 percent) or highly necessary (26 percent) to receive better health care services. Meanwhile, 63 percent say the same about better educational services. Generational differences stand out in this regard, with younger Lebanese being more likely to say bribes are necessary than those who are older.

Meanwhile, nearly all (95 percent) of Lebanese say it is necessary to have *wasta* to obtain employment - with this percentage being the same as in 2010. However, most do not believe that religion is a solution to corruption: nearly two-thirds (65 percent) say religious leaders are as likely to be corrupt as non-religious leaders.

Today, religious leaders are as likely to be corrupt as non-religious leaders

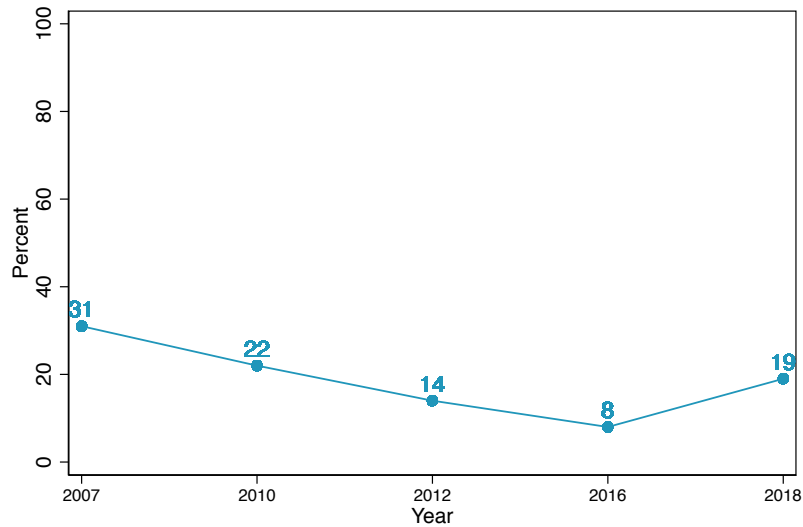


Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Trust in the Government

Trust in core public institutions remains low with roughly 20 percent saying they trust the government, parliament, or judiciary. However, there has been a notable increase since 2016, suggesting that the 2018 election may have had a small but positive effect, especially on trust in government and political parties.

Trend in institutional trust: government
% saying they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust.

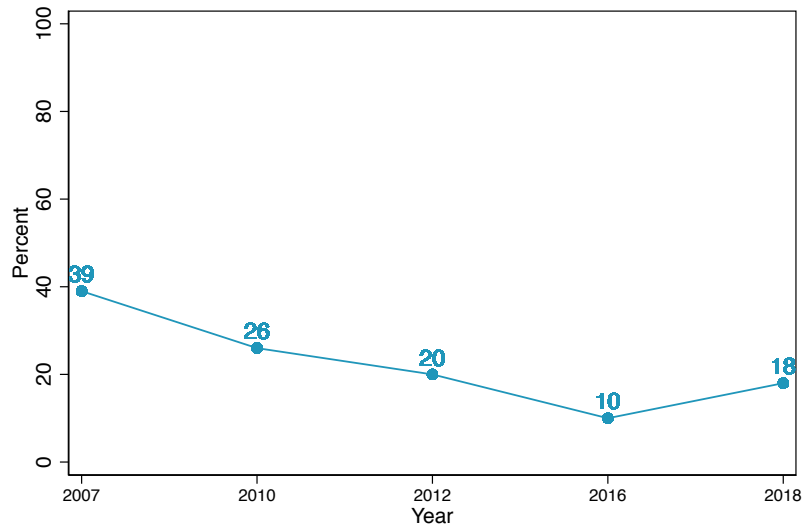


Notes: Weighted estimates (2010, 2012, 2016, 2018); unweighted estimates (2007).
Source: Arab Barometer.

Notably, youth and those with at least a secondary degree are more likely to trust public institutions. Roughly one-in-four of those aged between 18-29 trust the government compared with just 15 percent of those ages 60 and above.

About one-in-five (18 percent) have a great deal or some trust in parliament, compared with a third (34 percent) who have little trust and half (49 percent) who have no trust. As with other measures, those who are younger tend to have higher levels of trust, including 23 percent of those ages 18-29 compared to 10 percent of those ages 60 and older.

Trend in institutional trust: parliament
% saying they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust.

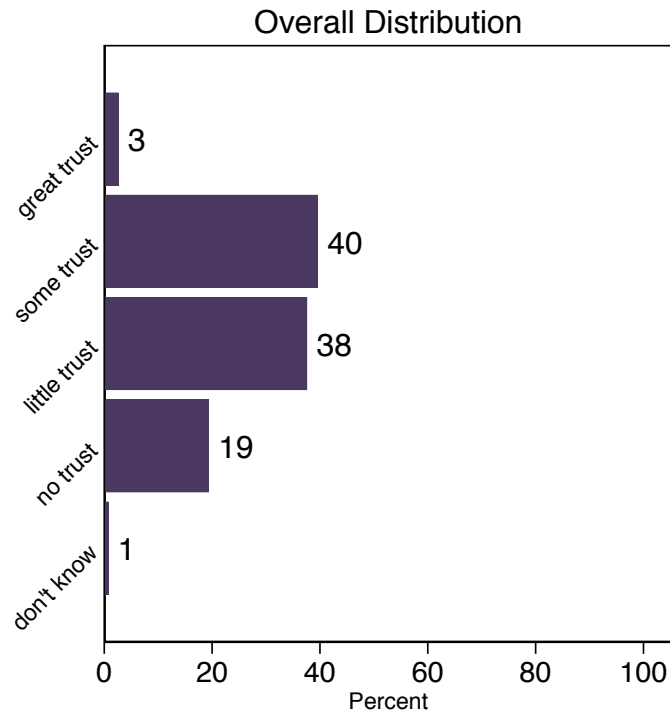


Notes: Weighted estimates (2010, 2012, 2016, 2018); unweighted estimates (2007).
Source: Arab Barometer.

Roughly one-in-five trust political parties (19 percent). Although low, this percentage represents an increase from 2016 (+5 points). Those ages 18-29 are more likely to trust political parties than those ages 60 or more (26 percent vs. 18 percent).

Overall, there is greater trust in private institutions than public institutions. For example, about 40 percent trust private banks and hospitals while half trust private universities.

And how much trust do you have in: Private hospitals?



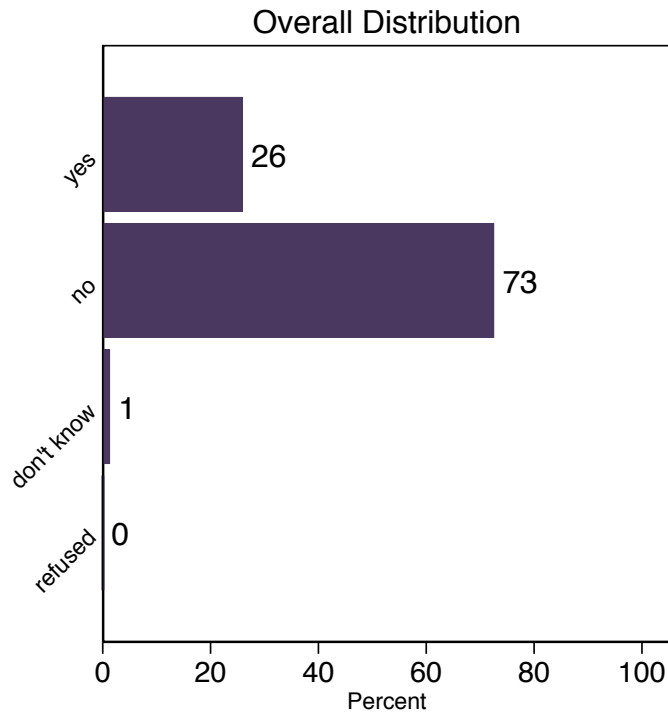
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Levels of trust are significantly higher in institutions that are tasked with ensuring law and order. A quarter of the Lebanese trust the judiciary, which is an 8-point increase since 2016. The vast majority (87 percent) trust the army, while nearly half (48 percent) also trust the police. These levels have remained largely unchanged over the last decade. However, those ages 60 and above are more likely to trust the army and police compared to those ages 18-29.

Civil Society and Organizations

Only 15 percent of Lebanese are satisfied with the current government's performance, which is a 7-point increase from 2016. At the same time, trust in civil society organizations has declined dramatically since 2016, as only a quarter (26 percent) report "great trust" or "some trust" in civil society organizations, compared to 55 percent in 2012. Levels of trust are highest in Akkar and Bekaa.

Have you ever thought about emigrating from your country?

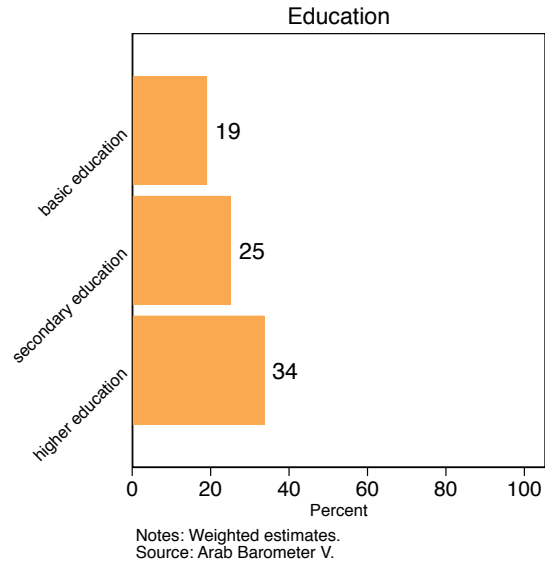
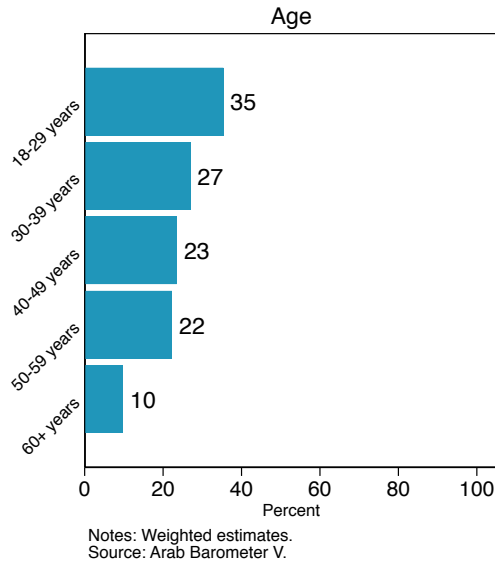


Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Migration

Lebanese are less likely to want to emigrate than in the past. Today, 26 percent say they want to leave their homeland, which is a 4-point decrease since 2016. Notably, this fits a longstanding trend where the percentage wanting to emigrate has gradually decreased over time.

Have you ever thought about emigrating from your country? *% saying they thought about emigrating.*

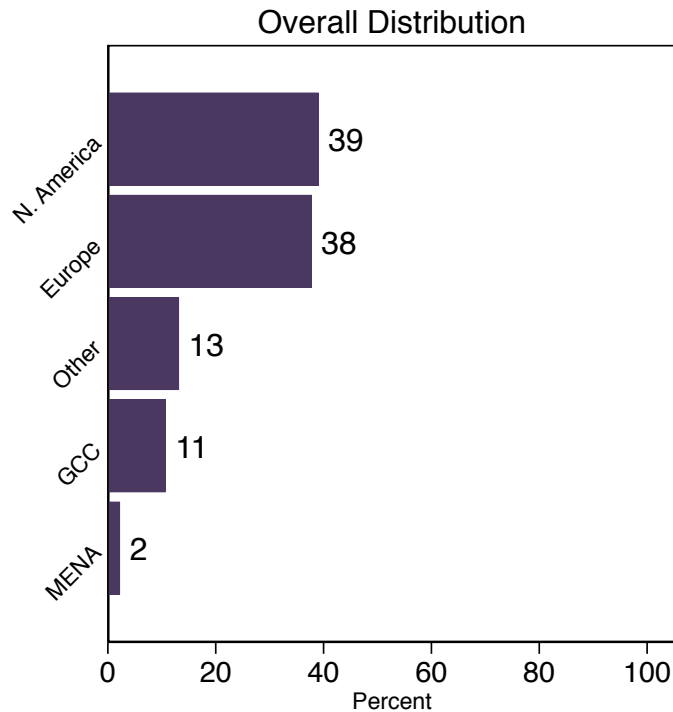


Migration is strongly linked with age – 35 percent of those ages 18-29 want to leave Lebanon, compared with 27 percent of those ages 30-39, and 10 percent who are 60 or older. Lebanon is at significant risk of brain drain as well as more than half – 59 percent – of those with a secondary or university degree want to leave their homeland.

Among potential migrants, the primary reason for wanting to leave is because of economic considerations (63 percent). This is then followed by educational opportunities (12 percent) and corruption (11 percent).

Potential migrants are most likely to look to go to North America with four-in-ten (39 percent) listing North America as their preferred destination. Meanwhile, a similar percentage (38 percent) prefer Europe. Notably, only one-in-ten Lebanese who say they are considering emigrating would be willing to do so without the necessary papers.

Which region are you thinking of emigrating to?

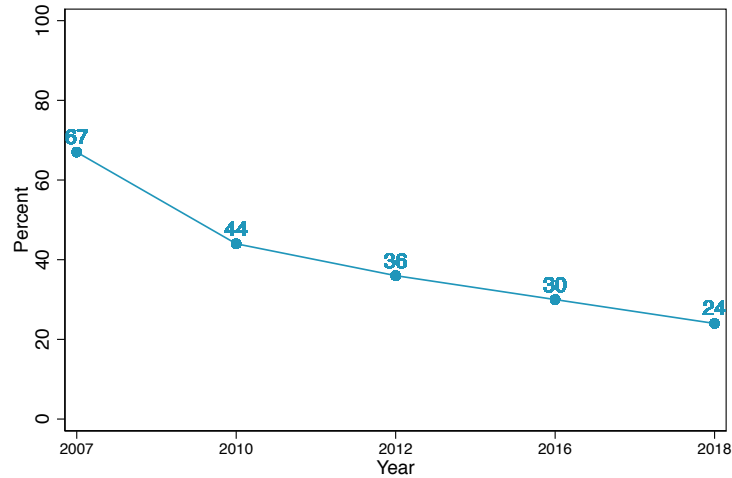


Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Religious Belief

Personal piety in Lebanon has declined dramatically in the past decade: only 24 percent describe themselves as religious compared with 44 percent in 2010. Again, the younger generation stands out from the older generation. Nearly a quarter (23 percent) of those who are ages 18-29 are likely to identify as religious compared with 34 percent of those who are 60 or older who identify as religious. Surprisingly, those with a secondary level of education are only somewhat less likely to be religious. In fact, those with a basic level of education in Lebanon are as likely to be religious as those with a higher degree.

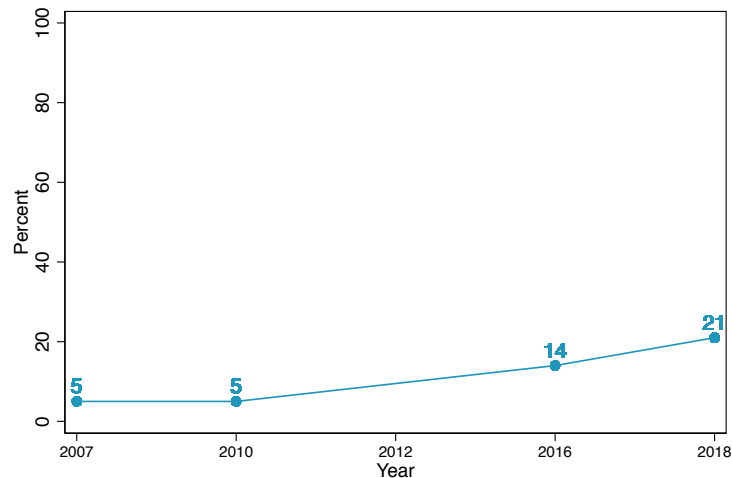
Trend in religious piety *% saying they are religious.*



Notes: Weighted estimates (2010, 2012, 2016, 2018); unweighted estimates (2007).
Source: Arab Barometer.

In addition, attending religious services weekly has dropped by 21 points from 2007 to 2018. A similar trend can be observed for reading and listening to religious texts, which has dropped by 28 points from 2007 to 37 percent in 2018. Intolerance toward members of other religions is also on the rise: two-in-ten state they would not like neighbors of a different religious group; an increase of 16 points since 2010.

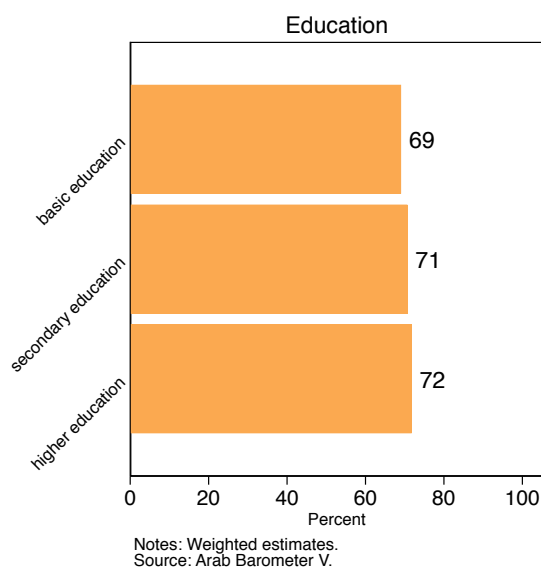
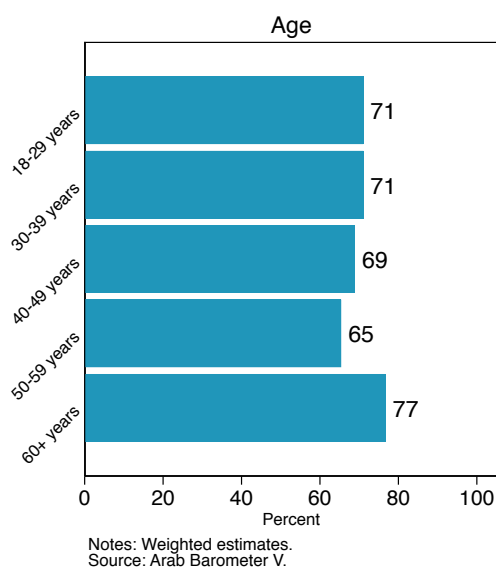
Trend in intolerance of neighbors of a different region *% saying they strongly dislike or dislike having members of a different religion as neighbors.*



Notes: Weighted estimates (2010, 2012, 2016, 2018); unweighted estimates (2007).
Source: Arab Barometer.

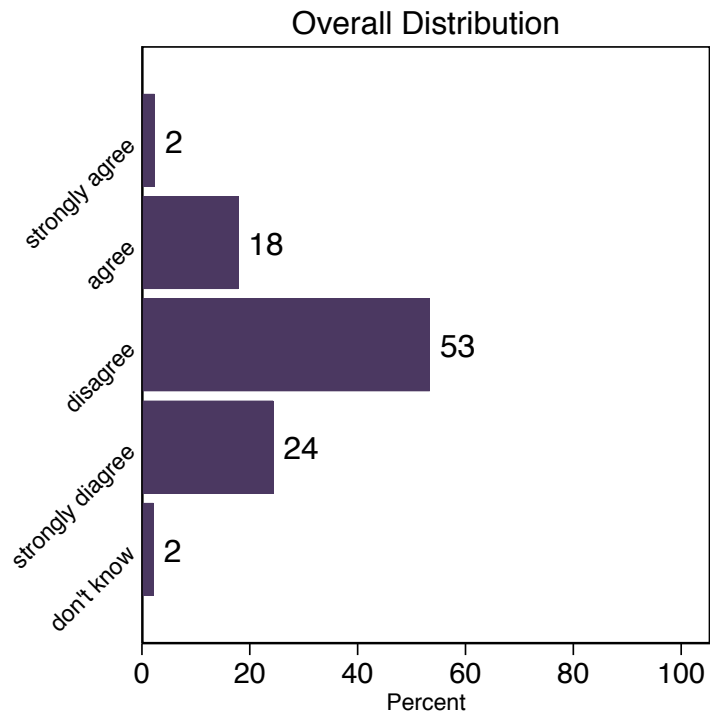
Most Lebanese do not support mixing religion and politics. However, support for religion in the public sphere has increased in recent years, with Shia and Druze being somewhat more likely than Christians to favor incorporating religion into politics. Overall, 71 percent say religious leaders should not influence voters, a 20-point decline since 2010. Meanwhile, 77 percent of the older generation (ages 60 and above) say religious leaders should not interfere with voters compared to 71 percent among the younger generation. Notably, level of education is not as closely linked with whether religious leaders should be able to influence voters, as comparable percentages of those with a basic level of education and those with a higher level hold this view.

Religious leaders should *not* interfere in voters decisions in elections
% saying they strongly agree or agree.



Only 20 percent say religious leaders should influence government decisions, but this level represents an 11-point increase since 2012. A three-quarters majority (78 percent) say religion is a private matter that should be separate from public life, which is a 13-point decline from 2012. Additionally, two-in-ten Muslims (20 percent) say non-Muslims should have inferior rights in a Muslim-majority country, a 12-point increase from 2010.

Islam requires that in a Muslim country the political rights of non-Muslims should be inferior



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.



About Arab Barometer

The Arab Barometer is a nonpartisan research network that provides insights into the social, political, and economic attitudes and values of ordinary citizens across the Arab world.

We have been conducting rigorous, and nationally representative face-to-face public opinion surveys on probability samples of the adult populations across the Arab world since 2006. The margin of error is ± 3 percent.

The Arab Barometer is the largest repository of publicly available data on the views of men and women in the MENA region. Our findings give a voice to the needs and concerns of Arab publics.



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