



The Decline in Employment of Young Men in Arab Society and its Characteristics

Marian Tehawkho, Tali Larom and Kiril Moskalev*



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This is a short summary, for the full paper (in Hebrew) see
<https://www.idc.ac.il/he/research/aiep/pages/policy-papers.aspx>.

* Dr. Marian Tehawkho is a senior researcher and Head of the Center for Economic Policy for the Israeli Arab Society at the Aaron Institute for Economic Policy, IDC Herzliya. Dr. Tali Larom is a senior researcher at Aaron Institute in charge of employment policy issues. Kiril Moskalev is a researcher at Aaron Institute. Data analysis was conducted in the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics research room, and we thank the professional staff there for their fruitful cooperation and willingness to help.

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→ **Contact details:**

The Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya - IDC, P.O. Box 167, Herzliya, ISRAEL 4610101

Phone: 972-9-9602431

Email: aaron.economics@idc.ac.il

Website: <https://www.idc.ac.il/en/research/aiep/pages/main.aspx>

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In recent years there has been a significant decline in the employment rates of Arab men, particularly at younger ages. This trend was exacerbated during the COVID-19 crisis, along with a dramatic rise in the numbers of idle individuals (who neither work nor study) among this group. This study examines the decline in employment which had occurred prior to the crisis, in the years 2014-2019, focusing on young men aged 18 to 24, and explores the main characteristics of idle individuals. The study segments the employed and unemployed population, characterizing employment and idleness across time and according to categories of age, educational attainment level, geographic region, religion, and economic sector. Our analysis is based on data from detailed workforce surveys conducted by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), which can only be accessed in the Research Rooms of the CBS.¹

Our key findings:

- A decline in the employment of young Arab men as well as non-Haredi Jews; a very sharp drop among Arabs, compared to a more moderate decrease among Jews.
- This decline had been accelerated during the two years prior to the crisis, 2018-2019.
- In the Jewish society, the decrease in employment coincides with an increase in the rate of higher education students.
- In Arab society, the decrease in employment coincides mainly with an increase in the rate of idle individuals, who neither work nor study.
- Idleness is a chronic, growing phenomenon – a high and rising number of idle individuals who have not worked during the past year.
- A rise in the number of idle individuals who do not seek work and have no interest in working.
- An increase in matriculation eligibility rate which is not reflected in further studies or employment; an increase in the proportion of high-school graduates with matriculation eligibility among the idle population.
- The decrease in the employment of young men is across all economic sectors.
- Decreasing employment rates in all regions.
- A decrease in employment among Muslim and Christian; an increase among Druze.

¹ All analyses in this paper disregard the constant panel sample.