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INEQUALITY BETWEEN MAJORITY AND MINORITY SECTORS IN ISRAEL

INEGALITATEA ÎNTRE SECTOARE CUMAJORITATE ȘI MINORITATE ÎN ISRAEL

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Annotation: "All people are created equal" – this phrase, allegedly, that expresses the basic principal of equality of all human being, seems obvious to us. It is based on religious beliefs, on universal moral principles, on international conventions and legislation. But, although there is a broad agreement regarding its content, in practice, it is far from being implemented. In the current research, the author questioned 106 respondents from the Jewish majority and Arab minority sectors in Israel. The inequality was found out in the demographic, political and education facilities domains.

Adnotare: "Toți oamenii sunt creați egali" - această expresie, presupusă, care exprimă principiul fundamental al egalității întregii ființe umane, ne pare evidentă. Se bazează pe credințele religioase, pe principiile morale universale, pe convențiile și legislația internațională. Dar, deși există un acord larg cu privire la conținutul său, în practică, acesta este departe de a fi pus în aplicare. În cadrul cercetării actuale, autorul a pus la îndoială 106 respondenți din majoritatea evreilor și din sectoarele minorităților arabe din Israel. Inegalitatea a fost identificată în domeniile demografice, politice și educaționale.

Keywords: equality, inequality, education, Arab minority, Jewish majority.

Cuvinte-cheie: egalitate, inegalitate, educație, minoritate arabă, majoritate evreiască.

Introduction

In Israel, the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty was enacted, followed by a series of judgments determining that the right to equality is a constitutional right derived from the right to dignity; However, sixty-two years after the establishment of the State of Israel, there is still no explicit constitutional anchoring in Israel for the right to equality. A country that seeks to act with equality should allocate its resources fairly and even act vigorously to decrease social and economic gaps within it. Fair allocation of resources is the basis for equality in many fields: for example, a fair allocation of educational resources is essential to create equal opportunities in society. Thus, those who were fortunate enough to study in an air-conditioned and computerized classroom with only small number of students would certainly enjoy an advantage over a student with the same potential who learned in an old, hot and dense classroom.

Materials and methods of research

The survey included 106 respondents, all of them work in the Education system of Israel, and mostly they are teachers. 67 of the respondents are women, 39- men. 70 of them Arabs, 27 Jews, and the rest 9 define themselves differently. Most of the respondents (40) are aged 41-50, 39 of the respondents are aged 31-40, 19 respondents are older (51-60), 8 are younger than 30. There are no

differences in the age distribution between men and women. Most of the respondents -59- have an MA education degree, 46 have BA degree, only 1 a PhD. The respondents filled in the questionnaire consisting of three parts: demographic data, political attitudes to Arab minority situation in Israel, satisfaction from the institution the respondent works in (namely, the school). The questionnaire is attached in the Appendix.

Results and considerations

The following figure describes the education levels (BA, MA and PhD) for Arab and other population of the sample and the men and women gender sub-samples:

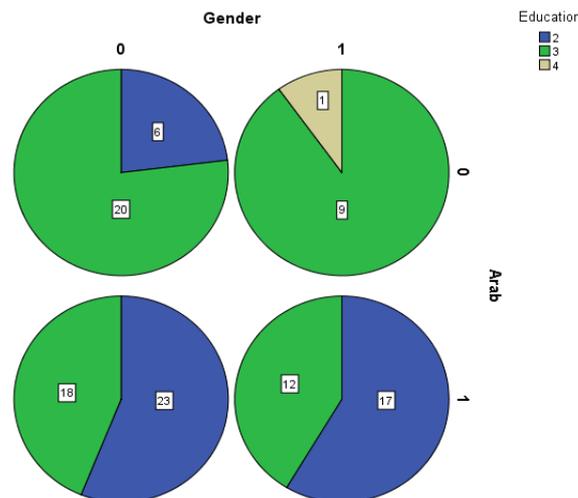


Figure 1. Education levels of the respondents. Arab=1 for Arabs, 0- others, gender=1 for males, 0- females, education: 2- BA, 3-MA, 4- PhD

Definitely, the majority sample is more educated than the Arab one. There are more MA than BA education in the majority sample, when is the Arab sample it is the opposite. Gender differences can be seen in the majority sample (women are a little less educated), but there are no gender differences in the Arab sample.

The importance of opportunity equality in the education system and attempts to achieve it are almost universally agreed upon in Israel, and the agreement crosses political and ethnic boundaries. In international tests, Israeli students are often at the top of the list of educational gaps between students of different classes and backgrounds, and over the years several committees have been established to discuss solutions to the situation. The heads of the education system used various methods in the struggle against inequality, and the most prominent were changes in budgeting methods, preferred conditions for educators who work in the geographic periphery, special curricula and adjusted frameworks to students of weak background. However, despite these considerable efforts, it seems that behind the scenes the picture looks somewhat different.

What do we know about the correlation between high levels of economic inequality and intergenerational mobility? In the opening phrase of the book entitled "From Parents to Children - The Intergenerational Transmission of Advantage", Ermisch et al. [2] write that from the all potential consequences of the increase in economic inequality, there is nothing more disturbing and complicated to research than the possibility that an increase in inequality will lead in long-term to reduction in opportunity equality and reduction of intergenerational mobility.

Swirski and Buzaglo [3] claim that reducing the inequality was never in the middle of a state reform plan. The opposite: the big reform plans, those that were implied and those that were not, focused in organizational changes that empowered the advantage of students from strong populations. The Dovrat committee as an example – public committee that was appointed in 2003 by the Israeli government in order to perform comprehensive examination of the education system

in Israel and recommend a plan to change. The committee acknowledged the depth of inequality in the education system and among its recommendations we may even find at least one important suggestion to cope with the problem – granting differential school budget, by which schools in cities that are not well – established will get higher budget of the one that schools in well - established cities get. Yet, the committee did not see a main mission in coping inequality. Instead, its most important recommendation was in the organizational level: to decentralize the system's administration, from the ministry of education to the regional and local authorities. This recommendation matches the macro-economic policy in Israel since 1985: maximizing the reduction of the state budget and at the same time transforming the responsibility from the central governing to other functions – business, civilian or local authorities.

The following figure describes the wages levels (low, middle and high) for Arab and other population of the sample:

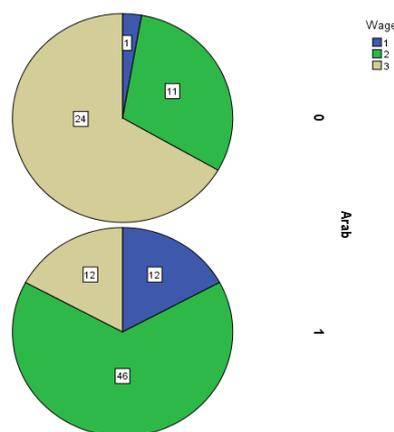


Figure 2. Wage level in Arab minority and Jewish majority samples. Arab=1 for Arabs, 0- others, wage=1 for low, 2 for middle, 3 for high levels

It looks clear that in the Arab population there are more respondents with low wage and much less respondents with high wage than in the majority sample. There are no significant differences in wage variances, but the average wage is significantly higher in the majority sample ($p_value < 0.0001$).

The following histogram describes the discrimination of Arabs in Israel in the eyes of respondents. The Arabs see they are very or highly discriminated (97.145%); in the majority sample the most of the respondents are neutral about the discrimination (88%).

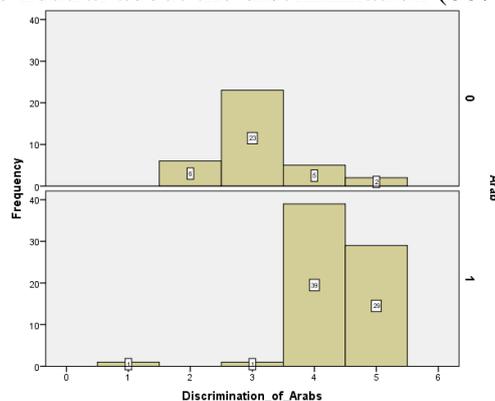


Figure 3. Arab discrimination in Israel. Arab=1 for Arabs, 0- others, 1- don't agree at all , 5 – strongly agree

The following histogram describes the agreement with the saying that Arab citizens deserve a full equality with Jews. In the Arab sample 54% strongly agree, 40% agree, only 61% of the majority sample agrees with this claim.

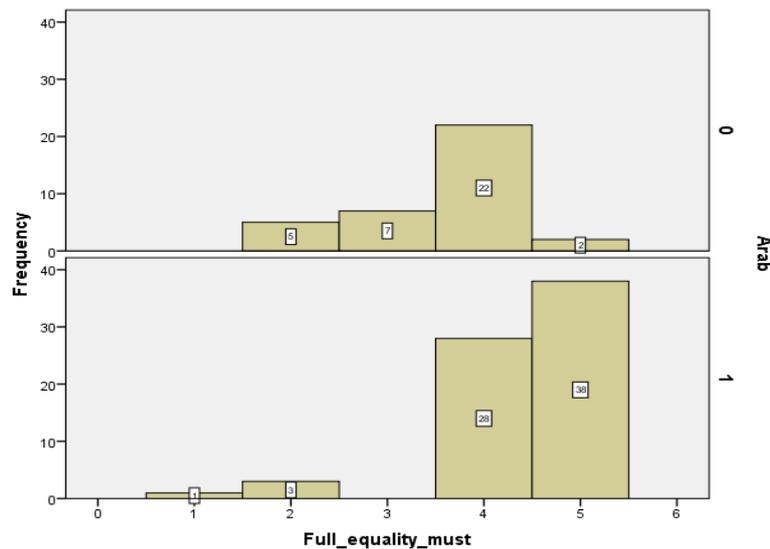


Figure 4. Agreement with the saying that full equality in Israel is a must. Arab=1 for Arabs, 0- others, 1- don't agree at all , 5 – strongly agree

The following histogram describes the agreement with the saying that Arab citizen should be given a priority in Higher Education Institutions. Most of the Arabs (94.3%) agree and strongly agree, only 77.7% of the majority sample also agrees.

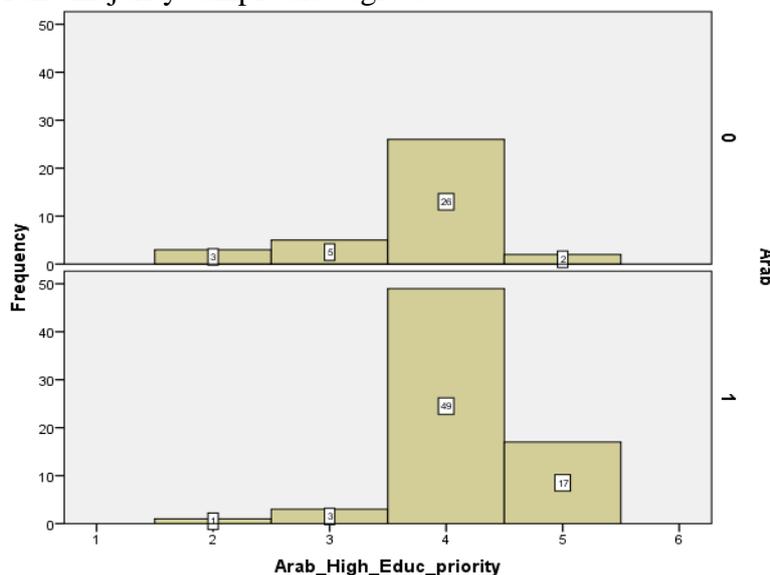


Figure 5. Agreement with the saying that that Arab citizens should be given a priority in Higher Education Institutions. Arab=1 for Arabs, 0- others, 1- don't agree at all, 5 – strongly agree

The following histogram describes the agreement with the saying “It must be legislated that Arab citizens get their proportional part in the state budget”. Almost all the Arabs (98.6%) agree and strongly agree, 92% of the majority sample also agrees.

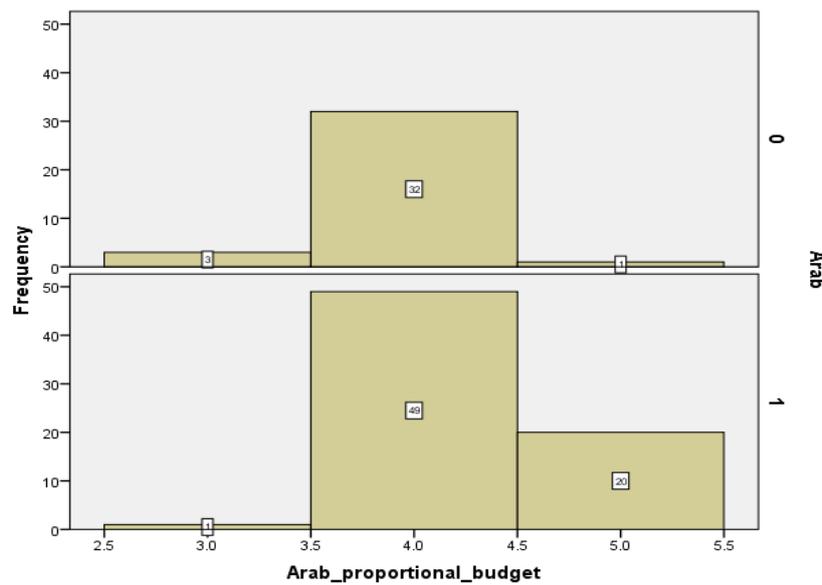


Figure 6. Agreement with the saying “It must be legislated that Arab citizens get their proportional part in the state budget”. Arab=1 for Arabs, 0- others, 1- don’t agree at all, 5 – strongly agree

Although it looks like the tendencies are similar in the two sample, the T-test for equality of means between the Arab minority and Jewish majority in all the claims presented above describe significant differences ($p_value < 0.05$). Arabs definitely feel discriminated more than think the others, and they are more aware about the existing inequalities in political, social and economic aspects.

In all the questions dealing with satisfaction from the institution the respondents work in, most of the respondents in the Arab sample are less satisfied with the number of pupils in the classes, the security and general looks of the school, of its functionality. All the results demonstrate significant differences between the sub-samples ($p_value < 0.05$).

Conclusions

Despite the centrality of the problem of inequality and gaps in the education system, the resources allocation (financial and other) in the education system according to socio - economic status did not usually get a lot of attention from the research establishment in Israel, and the international researchers community as well makes relatively little empirical examines of the resources division between population groups differ from each other in socio-economic status characterization. This fact is quite surprising due to the vast scope of resources invested in education, and the number of studies that engage with the connection between resources of all types and the educational outputs. In Israel the relation tissue between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority is characterized in increasing tensions and in exclusion and negation relations [1] worsening of inequality may also cause a crisis and violence and create a threat upon the democratic character of the country. The survey of teachers of Israel included 106 respondents, 70 of which belong to the Arab minority and the rest- to the Jewish majority. Significant differences were found out in three fields: demographic - education and wages are significantly higher in the majority sample, the political opinions and stands (the minority definitely feels discriminated and thinks there are changes needed to integrate it in the economics, social and cultural fields whereas the majority is less aware of the subject), and the institutional facilities field (the Arabs teacher suffer more from the overloaded classes than the teachers of the majority sample).

Appendix: questionnaire used in the research

Dear respondent! We ask you to fill in the anonymous questionnaire for research sake.

Thank you for cooperation!

Demographic questionnaire

1. What is your gender?
 - Female
 - Male
2. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)
 - Jewish
 - Arab
 - Multiple ethnicity
 - Other (please specify) _____
3. What is your age?
 - Less than 30
 - 31-40
 - 41-50
 - 51-60
 - 60 and more
4. Please describe what language(s) were primarily spoken in your childhood home:
 - Hebrew
 - Arab
 - Russian
 - English
 - Other (please, specify) _____
5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - High school
 - College BA
 - College MA
 - College PhD
 - Other _____
6. What is your approximate average salary?
 - Low
 - Average
 - High

General inequality attitudes

1. Do you agree that Arabs are generally discriminated in Israel?
 - Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
2. Inequality between Arabs and Jews in Israel does not bother me.
 - Strongly disagree
 - Disagree

- Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
3. Israel is declared to be a Jewish country, so it cannot be equal for all.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
4. Arabs who are Israeli citizens deserve a full equality with Jews.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
5. It is possible to achieve a full equality between Jews and Arabs in Israel.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
6. I think that for a full economic equality, the Arabs in Israel should give up on equality in a sense of state symbols.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
7. I think that for a full economic equality, the Arabs in Israel should give up on their demand for changing the Jewish character of the state.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
8. I think that Arabs in Israel should give up on their loyalty to the Palestinian nation and to identify themselves with the state of Israel.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

9. I am ready to support the program of gaps reducing between Jews and Arabs even if it hurts me personally.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

10. Arab citizen should be given a priority in Higher Education Institutions.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

11. It must be legislated that Arab citizens get their proportional part in the state budget.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

12. I think economic integration of Arab citizens is important.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

13. I think social-cultural integration of Arab citizens is important.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree

Strongly agree

Quality of institutional facilities

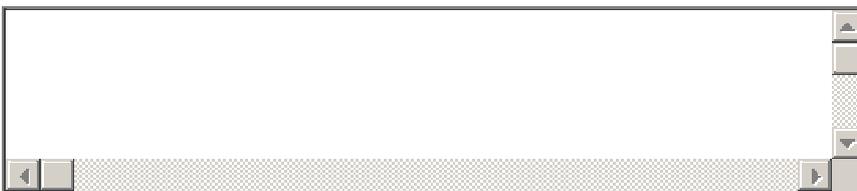
Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 10.
(10 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree)

Question 1

Taking into account the kind of work you do, you are satisfied overall with institutional facilities.

1 5 10

Comments: (If applicable, please indicate the specific location or building you are referring to)



Question 2

Taking into account the kind of work you do, you feel that institutional facilities are safe and secure in every respect (including occupational health and safety).

1 5 10

Comments: (If applicable, please indicate the specific location or building you are referring to)



Question 3

Taking into account the kind of work you do, you feel that institutional facilities are functional in every respect (including ergonomics, room temperature, and lighting).

1 5 10

Comments: (If applicable, please indicate the specific location or building you are referring to)

Question 4

Taking into account the kind of work you do, you feel that institutional facilities are comfortable in every respect (impact on your quality of life).

1 5 10

Comments: (If applicable, please indicate the specific location or building you are referring to)

Question 5

Taking into account the kind of work you do, you feel that institutional facilities are esthetically appealing in every respect (colours, shapes, textures, cleanliness, etc.).

1 5 10

Comments: (If applicable, please indicate the specific location or building you are referring to)

Question 6

As compared with other public places you frequent, you feel that your institution provides a thoroughly suitable environment.

1 5 10

Comments: (If applicable, please indicate the specific location or building you are referring to)

Question 7

You feel that institutional facilities meet the needs of the people they serve (namely, pupils and school staff).

1 5 10

Comments: (If applicable, please indicate the specific location or building you are referring to)

General comments on the education quality in your school in comparison to others in Jewish and Arab sectors: please, consider the number of pupils in the class, number and quality of teachers, differences in study materials.

<http://www.concordia.ca/offices/facilities/questionnaire.html>

Thank you for being cooperative!

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