

The Principle of Equality in the Eyes of the Israeli Citizens: A Comparative Study between Arab and Jewish Citizens in Israel

Author: Dr. Alaa Azaizah - Girne American University (GAU)

Abstract

This study explores the perceptions of Arab and Jewish citizens in Israel regarding the principle of equality, utilizing a mixed-method approach comprising both qualitative and quantitative methods. The sample consisted of 200 Israeli citizens, divided equally among Arabs and Jews, with all participants completing a questionnaire and 10 also participating in in-depth interviews. The findings reveal significant differences in perceptions of inequality across various dimensions, including income, employment opportunities, educational accessibility, healthcare coverage, and housing quality. These disparities highlight a profound difference in how the two communities perceive their socio-economic standing within the country. For instance, a majority of Arab citizens perceive income inequality and economic discrimination, a sentiment less echoed among Jewish citizens. Employment opportunities also emerged as a concern, with Arab professionals reporting discrimination in the job market. Educational accessibility is notably perceived as unequal by Arab citizens, reflecting disparities in resources and facilities between Jewish and Arab schools. Similarly, healthcare coverage and the quality of housing facilities are areas where Arab citizens perceive greater inequality. The qualitative findings corroborate these perceptions, emphasizing the need for policy changes and a more inclusive approach to address socio-economic and political disparities.

The study emphasizes the importance of aligning democratic principles with equitable outcomes, highlighting the challenge faced by the Israeli government in balancing the country's distinct identity with the need for equality in all sectors. It calls for a reevaluation of the Israeli legal system in light of Israel's unique history and cultural richness, advocating for pluralism, inclusivity, and equality. The influence of Zionist ideas since Israel's establishment in 1948 is also discussed, particularly their impact on power distribution and opportunities across different ethnicities. The study suggests that these ideologies may contribute to career advancement challenges faced by non-Jewish citizens, reflecting a broader issue of implicit and explicit discrimination in the country.

=====
Keywords: *equality, Israel, Jews, Arabs, legal system, constitutional rights, income, employment opportunities, educational accessibility, healthcare coverage, housing quality.*

Introduction

Israel is a country characterized by historically significant cultures and breathtaking panoramas. It is a small country, almost the size of New Jersey, located on the east side of the Mediterranean Sea. It also borders countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Israel was founded in 1948 as a democratic state respected and guided by the rule of law as enshrined in its Declaration of Independence and all other laws governing the land (Raijman et al., 2022). However, events that led to Israel's formation faced issues intrinsic to her political history. A

major issue amongst these challenges rose from conflicts between Jewish and Palestinian Arab communities whose starkly different political objectives contributed significantly to creating a contentious atmosphere (Zielińska, 2021).

Moreover, ambitions based on nationalistic ideals only served to heighten existing schisms further within these two groups. Other contentious issues like land ownership claims between Arabs and Jews and the displacement of Palestinian Arabs added to the issue's complexity. These circumstances bore witness to violence, such as tension or unrest (Adolfsson, 2023).

The degree of equality between Israeli citizens is complex and ultimately exists on multiple levels beyond Judaism. Therefore, it calls for multifaceted approaches toward the resolution of critical issues affecting equality, especially within minority groups, requiring specific policies addressing them on separate protocols implemented rather than general regulations that can be biased (Beinin, 2015). This is crucial in ensuring that justice prevails regardless of their religion, ethnicity, or nationality. Paradoxically, it only demonstrates that despite laws like Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty explicitly outlining legal frameworks for respect for human life, some imperfections in their application threaten equality throughout society.

Background to Israeli's Legal System

Israel's unique legal system incorporates various elements from different sources, such as the Ottoman Legal system, primarily derived from Islamic standards prevalent until the early twentieth century, accompanied by parts reflecting influence from Jewish Religious Law (Halacha) and British laws. The combination of these laws has now evolved and shaped its modern legal principles. Further historical research demonstrates how the British Mandate years beginning in 1919 saw the introduction of British-style courts, novel legal institutions, and practices adopted from a core common-law basis (Totry-Jubran, 2023).

A striking component of Israel's legal framework is its inclusion of Jewish religious law, which governs personal status among Jewish civilians, such as matters relating to marriage, divorce, or inheritance (Lifshitz, 1990). While it does not form the basis for providing legislation per se, this facet significantly influences various factions of Israeli laws over time. In response to

perpetual conflicts and state security threats, Israel faces over time, innovative approaches such as military courts or emergency regulations have also been crucial (Baruch & Kurz, 2006). The needs for adequate justice without discrimination and preserving national interests are vital ingredients in different conversations concerning an evolving judicial system.

Israeli legal system is built upon civil, common-law, and religious laws. This legal system is built upon a rich legacy traced to the pre-state days when the strict separation between Judaism and civic interactions brought about distinct legal systems among Jewish communities scattered throughout Palestine (Einhorn, 2016). The British mandate subsequently saw further standardization measures that shaped this unique ecosystem. Although present-day Israel has developed an independent judicial system, Knesset, alongside respective court-led precedents, continues to shape the structure of the legal system. For instance, matters relating to personal status within specific religions have necessitated invoking religious laws (Sten, 2021).

Israel has struggled with various issues regarding equality, human rights, national security, and other civil liberties in their judicial system for quite some time now. The recurrent debates and ongoing legal battles reflect how well-equipped Israel is when it comes to evolving its judiciary framework suitable for each social progress while considering different societal values over time.

Research Objectives

The study aimed to understand the perceptions of Arab and Jewish citizens in Israel regarding the principle of equality, focusing on various socio-economic aspects such as income, employment, education, healthcare, and housing. Using a mixed methodology that combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study also seeks to shed light on the specific areas where these disparities are most pronounced, such as income inequality, employment opportunities, educational accessibility, healthcare coverage, and housing quality. Furthermore, the qualitative findings provide deeper insights into the underlying socio-economic and political issues driving these disparities.

Literature Review

As an identifiable group within Israeli society, the Arabs constitute numerical and sociological minorities. They are disadvantaged regarding their representation within crucial sectors such as politics, military hierarchy, or economic resource allocation (Ghanem, 2000). This permanent deprivation shaped them into an inferior social category concerning the Jews, who are a dominant group. Israel places significant weight on security matters. However, Ayalon and his colleagues (2019) suggest that such an approach can impact the civic freedoms of minorities such as Arabs living within Israel's borders, whereby general mistreatment still exists under discriminatory laws limiting free expression. This inflexible ethnoreligious eccentricity reveals a system unable to accommodate multiculturalism in its idealized form, promoting instead hierarchical structures benefiting dominant groups over minorities

Fundamentally, Israel is considered a democratic state. However, the frameworks of governance precede Judaism, which upholds Jewish democracy. According to Berman (2020), this precedence supersedes the fundamental rights accorded to all other groups in the populace. Berman (2020) further explains that the events that led to the Holocaust might have possibly triggered the need to find a haven for Jews across the globe and ensure that the world does not experience another horrific experience of such magnitude. With the UN backing the creation of Israel as an independent state, this might have instilled a sense that Israel is a Jewish state, contributing to the conspicuous level of inequality in almost all public administration sectors.

The beauty of democracies lies in their ability to welcome people from different backgrounds while explicitly promoting equal opportunities for everyone residing within them. Israel epitomizes this notion with its unwavering commitment to achieving legal parity amongst individuals regardless of religion or identity (Friesel, 2021). The Israeli Declaration of Independence guarantees complete equality in social and political rights to all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race, or gender. However, Israel's self-perception is rooted in Jewish traditions, which explains the differences between Jewish and non-Jewish citizens. For instance, by The Law of Return, Jews worldwide hold the right to migrate and settle in Israel while acquiring citizenship. But non-Jews, like Arab citizens in Israel or other minorities, do not have similar provisions for straightforward citizenship as per the application of this particular law (Jabareen, 2007).

According to Madhala, (2019) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) review of Israel's labor-market policies reveals a pervasive issue concerning enforcement of minimum employment conditions for resident and foreign workers. This is even aggravated by the inadequate investments in enforcement capacity by relevant authorities. Specifically, underfunding combined with understaffing of inspectors exacerbates an already vulnerable workforce. Such workers, most of them being Arabs and foreigners, work mostly in small firms or contractual arrangements with poor leverage to demand fair pay or file grievances over violations against unsuspecting employers who enjoy impunity (Madhala, 2019). Therefore, this highly segmented labor market has justified a culture of oppression of minority groups, with most settling for low-paying jobs.

The declaration of Israel as a Jewish state sparked a negative perception of equity before the law. Schulz (2019) suggests that the longstanding conflict between Israel and Palestine has greatly influenced views on equity within the Israeli legal system. For instance, Palestinians who reside in Gaza Strip, West Bank, or East Jerusalem tend to feel disadvantaged and marginalized by their experiences with Israeli legal institutions. Similarly, Brandes (2020) argues that policies like expanding settlements or setting up military checkpoints inevitably foster negative behavior against them, because they believe that it limits their access to justice.

The Israeli legal framework has garnered significant criticism concerning equality among its citizens. Unfortunately, Jabareen and Bishara (2019) suggest that negative perceptions stemming from criticisms against certain laws and policies only reinforce these beliefs. Concerns inevitably arose, creating a situation where other ethnic or religious groups felt sidelined. Jabareen and Bishara (2019) argue this action must be revised for Israel to uphold basic principles such as non-discrimination and equality with ease.

According to Waxma and Peleg (2020), Arab-Israeli citizens who roughly constitute 21% of Israel's population, have expressed reservations regarding unequal treatment within its legal system. Many have raised concerns about the discrimination they face in sectors such as land allocation, housing arrangements, and law enforcement (Waxma & Peleg, 2020). Their arguments highlight noticeable inconsistencies in resources available to Jewish versus Arab communities.

Israel is a diverse country with complex socio-political. Lustick (2019) suggests that existing identity-based divisions cement disparate treatment of different groups within Israeli society, notably among Jews versus marginalized minorities like Arabs. The current state of Israeli politics highlights how right winged or conservative parties tend to advocate for policies centered on Jewish rights or interests. These would be policies that do not necessarily reflect other subgroups like Arabs. According to Bassan-Nygate and Weiss (2022) this political leaning restricts the opportunities for adequate representation of marginalized communities such as Arabs in Knesset. Arab Israelis might be considered full citizens of the country and participate in democratic processes but they have historically faced some marginalization, which has hindered their right to positively influence policies that affect their communities (Bassan-Nygate & Weiss, 2022).

Further Bassan-Nygate and Weiss (2022) demonstrate that the unfair treatment of minority groups in Israel, such as Arab Israelis, Bedouins, & Ethiopian Jews, has led them to face severe socioeconomic inequalities compared to their fellow Jewish citizens. Limited access to primary resources like education alongside prejudiced labor practices has aggravated this problem. Discrimination and bias prevent disadvantaged communities from achieving desired social mobility reducing progress towards equality for generations.

As suggested by Harel (2021), Israel's Supreme Court has been critical in fostering equality amongst its citizens. For instance, Palestinian citizens in Israel and occupied territories had their rights protected by Supreme Court decisions that dealt with critical topics such as land expropriation conflicts or house demolition policies. The court ruled positively on some occasions demanding policy changes from Israeli authorities that would benefit the Palestinian people. Nevertheless, the outcomes of these decisions have also created disputes due to concerns regarding prioritization between national security issues versus human rights exercises or compliance with government demands.

Materials and Methods

This research used the criteria of efficiency and equity in the legal system, which were adopted from previous studies adapted to Israel. Our objective is to understand social frameworks that hinder or support the issue of equality by exploring how economic, political, or

cultural factors contribute to this determination. As such, we implemented several methodological approaches, including collecting data through surveys, interviews, and sampling for more detailed focus and employing various tools and instruments to ensure maximum accuracy and reliability.

Research Design

The objectives of this study obligate the use of a mixed-methods research design. This methodology empowers us with quantitative and qualitative tools, which would aid the researcher in collecting statistical data and allowing the researcher to make intricate observations about the subject from multiple perspectives (Gurenlian, 2023). Through conducting surveys and semi-structured interviews, the researcher expected to thoroughly comprehend the degree of equality among the Jewish majority and Arabs across Israel.

Sampling

The 200 participants for this research were chosen through a purposive sampling technique. This entails selecting individuals from Jewish and Arab communities within different regions across Israel based on socioeconomic backgrounds, age groups, and geographical locations. With the saturated principal approach applied when determining the appropriate sample size, data collection stops once no more significant information arises during analysis (Prior, et al., 2020).

Data Collection

Survey questionnaire

This research study used a structured questionnaire to record quantitative data. The questionnaire was composed of multiple-choice questions that seek to address and assess various dimensions of equality, including income, poverty thresholds, employment opportunities, educational accessibility, healthcare coverage, and housing quality. The survey questions were distributed anonymously on online platforms to preserve confidentiality. Specifically, the questionnaires targeted a specific section of citizens. The same questions were posed to people from different religious and ethnic groups.

Semi-structured interviews

Furthermore, qualitative data was also gathered by engaging 10 participants in semi-structured interviews using a set of open-ended questions based on their experiences concerning perceptions or concerns about equality within Israel. This ensures that the research team can gain deeper insights based on personal beliefs while exploring narratives related to different dimensions, such as income, poverty thresholds, employment opportunities, educational accessibility, healthcare coverage, and housing quality. The interviews are sound evidence because they are audio-recorded & transcribed for detailed and anonymized analysis (Gurenlian, 2023).

Quantitative Analysis

This study is committed to utilizing appropriate software such as SPSS to conduct statistical analyses on the varying views surrounding inequality amongst Jewish persons compared with Arab individuals. Information regarding survey data summarizing demographic characteristics and responses were presented using descriptive statistics to gain a more comprehensive overview of collected data. Our research methodology required comparing potential significant differences between Jewish individuals versus Arab counterparts when reviewing equality indicators through various comparison techniques.

Qualitative Analysis

Our qualitative analysis turns towards thematic analysis on transcribed interview data employing a systematically guided approach by which recurring themes and patterns were identified during coding processes. Based on specified research objectives within relevant theoretical frameworks, our team utilized a deductive approach to ensure coherence within our findings across all sampling periods. By comparing identified themes, we aimed to provide nuances toward understanding participant perspectives and experiences surrounding inequality issues.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations play a pivotal role in this study. This study ensured that it follows through and obtains informed consent and ethical considerations from all participants before they take part in this study. Also, anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout data

collection and analysis. Furthermore, the research complied with safety guidelines and regulations to ensure individual views and preferences (McGregor, 2023).

Findings and Results

This research methodology intends to capture detailed information regarding equity levels within Israeli society among its Jewish and non-Jewish populations by investigating the different variables including: income, poverty thresholds, employment opportunities, educational accessibility, healthcare coverage, and housing quality . This step will be crucial in determining the distribution of resources among different communities. Drawing upon quantitative and qualitative measures and subjective accounts through interviews, we seek to obtain a thorough and multifaceted understanding evolving complexity often found within societal inequalities. Consequently, the findings from this research will likely contribute to the ongoing process of establishing policy interventions geared towards advancing communal parity and fostering social cohesion in Israel.

The results in both the quantitative and the qualitative parts reveal significant differences in the perceptions of Jewish and Arab citizens in Israel regarding various forms of inequality, on the different levels income, poverty thresholds, employment opportunities, educational accessibility, healthcare coverage, and housing quality

First, in the quantitative results, a comparative between Jewish citizen and Arab citizens in Israel regarding their agreement and disagreement of the inequality in Israel on the different variables in presented in the table below.

Table 1: Jewish Citizens' vs Arab Citizens' perception

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Jewish Citizens (%)</i>	<i>Arab Citizens (%)</i>
Agreement on Income Inequality	15	85
Agreement on Poverty Thresholds Inequality	22	78
Agreement on Employment Opportunities Inequality	11	89
Agreement on Educational Accessibility Inequality	38	62
Agreement on Healthcare Coverage Inequality	23	77
Agreement on Quality of Housing Inequality	9	91

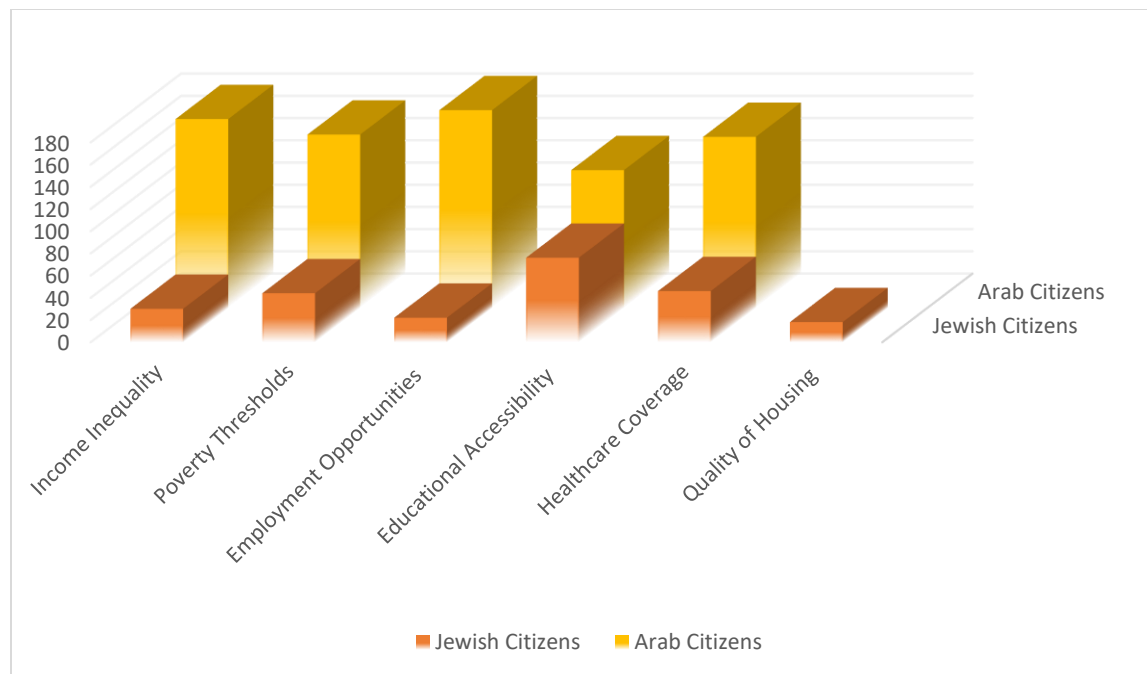


Figure 1: Jewish Citizens' vs Arab Citizens' perception

According to the results, a significant majority of Arab citizens (85%) agree that there is income inequality in Israel, compared to the Jewish citizens (15%). This suggests a significant difference in perception or experience of income inequality between the two groups.

Regarding the poverty thresholds inequality, more Arab citizens (78%) perceive poverty thresholds as unequal compared to Jewish citizens. This could reflect differences in economic conditions or perceptions between the communities.

Moreover, there is a significant difference in perception regarding employment opportunities. The majority of Arab citizens (89%) see this as an area of inequality, while very few Jewish citizens agree.

Furthermore, regarding the educational accessibility, while the gap is not as wide as in the previous categories, a larger proportion of Arab citizens (62%) still agree with the presence of inequality in educational accessibility compared to Jewish citizens (38%).

In addition, the majority of Arab citizens (77%) agree that there is inequality in healthcare coverage in Israel, whereas only 23% of Jewish citizens share this perception.

Finally, the majority of Arab citizens (91%) agree that there is inequality in the quality of housing in Israel, while only 9% of Jewish citizens agree.

To sum up, the data in the table reveals significant differences in the perceptions of Jewish and Arab citizens in Israel regarding various forms of inequality. Arab citizens consistently show higher levels of agreement with the presence of inequality in income, poverty thresholds, employment opportunities, educational accessibility, healthcare coverage, and quality of housing compared to Jewish citizens. These differences in perception may reflect underlying social and economic disparities between the two groups in Israel and highlight the importance of addressing these issues for social cohesion and equity.

Similar results came out from the qualitative part, from the thematic analysis of the interview five main themes emerged:

Theme 1: Income and Poverty Thresholds

Arab citizens in Israel often perceive a significant disparity in income and poverty thresholds when compared to their Jewish counterparts. A report by the Israeli National Insurance Institute revealed, "Arab families are disproportionately represented among the lowest income deciles in Israel" (National Insurance Institute, 2023). This quote underscores the systemic economic challenges faced by Arab citizens, often rooted in limited access to high-paying jobs and historical socio-economic marginalization. According to Salem (51, an employee): *"Compared to the Jews in Israel, we earn less for the same work. It's not just a feeling; it's a reality."* This quote reflects a perception of income disparity, suggesting that Arab citizens believe they are paid less than Jewish citizens for similar work, contributing to higher poverty rates among Arab communities. The higher incidence of poverty among Arab families can be attributed to a range of factors, including historical neglect of Arab communities in economic development plans and a lack of targeted financial support.

Theme 2: Employment Opportunities

The gap in employment opportunities is another critical area where Arab citizens perceive inequality. Sanaa a hi tech graduate said: *"Despite my qualifications, I find myself repeatedly passed over for jobs in favor of Jewish applicants"* (Sanaa, 27). This personal account reflects a broader sentiment among Arab citizens about facing discrimination in the job market, especially

in certain industries or higher-level positions. Such perceptions point towards a potential bias in hiring practices and a need for more inclusive employment policies to ensure equal opportunities for all citizens.

Theme 3: Educational Accessibility

In terms of educational accessibility, Arab citizens often report feeling at a disadvantage. The Israeli Ministry of Education stated, "There is a significant gap in educational resources and facilities between Jewish and Arab schools" (Ministry of Education, 2023). This disparity affects the quality of education received by Arab students and their future academic and professional opportunities. According to Dina (43, a teacher) *"Our schools have fewer resources, and our children face barriers to higher education."* This suggests that Arab citizens perceive a disparity in educational resources and accessibility, with Arab schools being less well-equipped and their children facing challenges in accessing higher education. The lack of equitable educational resources for Arab communities signifies a systemic issue, which has long-term implications on the socio-economic mobility of Arab citizens.

Theme 4: Health Care Coverage

Disparities in health care coverage further worsen the perceived inequalities. Such disparities in healthcare accessibility and quality underscore the need for more equitable healthcare policies and resource allocation *"Healthcare facilities are not the same in our areas; we don't get the same level of service at in the Jewish settlements. For examples the level of hospitals in the center of Israel are much better than the ones in the periphery"* (Kamil, 52, A nurse). This quote reflects a belief that healthcare services and facilities available to Arab citizens are inferior to those available to Jewish citizens, indicating perceived inequality in healthcare coverage.

Theme 5: Quality of Housing Facilities

The quality of housing facilities available to Arab citizens often falls short when compared to those available to Jewish citizens. According to one architect *"Arab towns and villages in Israel face more significant challenges in housing planning and development, leading to poorer housing conditions"*. (Danny, 55, architect) This reflects systemic planning and investment disparities. The housing inequality is rooted in historical and ongoing discrepancies

in urban planning and investment, necessitating a more balanced approach to housing development across all communities.

To sum up, the perception of inequality among Arab citizens in Israel in these key themes is a reflection of deeper socio-economic and political issues. Addressing these disparities requires not only policy changes but also a concerted effort to foster a more inclusive and equitable society. Understanding and acknowledging these perceptions is the first step towards bridging the gap between Arab and Jewish citizens in Israel.

Discussion

The study's results, both in the quantitative and qualitative parts, shed light on the significant differences in the perceptions of Jewish and Arab citizens in Israel regarding various forms of inequality. These differences cover multiple dimensions, including income, poverty thresholds, employment opportunities, educational accessibility, healthcare coverage, and housing quality. Such findings emphasize the importance of understanding and addressing these disparities for the sake of social cohesion and equity within Israeli society.

In terms of income inequality, the majority of Arab citizens agree that it exists, compared to a small portion of the Jewish citizens. This significant suggests a profound difference in how the two communities perceive their economic standing within the country. Arab citizens believe they face economic discrimination, contributing to their perception of income inequality. According to Andblad and Dahan (2019), although that in the last two decades there has been a decrease in the visible and institutionalized discrimination of the Arab population, and at the same time there has been an improvement in the government's policy towards this population, and yet the proportion of the poor has increased.

Employment opportunities are another area of concern, with the majority of Arab citizens perceiving inequality compared to the Jewish citizens. Personal testimonies from Arab professionals point to discrimination in the job market, highlighting the need for more inclusive employment policies to level the playing field. According to Fox (2017), over the years, the employment rate of the Arab population was lower than those of the Jewish population, both in terms of employment rates and in terms of its characteristics (salary, the prestige of the

professions, etc.). For example, there are differences between the fields of employment of Arab academics and Jewish academics. Jewish men are employed at higher rates in the hi-tech industries, while Muslim and Bedouin men are employed at relatively higher rates in the education sector (Fox. 2017).

Educational accessibility is also a significant issue, as the majority of Arab citizens perceive inequality in this domain, compared to the Jewish citizens. This perception aligns with the documented disparities in educational resources and facilities between Jewish and Arab schools, which can impact future academic and professional opportunities for Arab students. The limited educational infrastructure offered in the Arab settlements impacts the Arab people and undermines the Israeli government's efforts to provide education for all its people (Refaeli, et al.,2022). It is concerning to note the impact this continued problem has had on these Arab students' education; students cannot quickly further their education at higher institutions due to logistical constraints hampering them from pursuing schooling elsewhere. Due to these challenges, Arab student's dropout rates remain alarmingly high, indicating a clear lack of access to quality education at each level despite living in a technologically advanced region of Israel. Promoting education equality and inclusivity throughout every sector of Israeli society demands attentiveness toward its profound inequalities to ensure no region is left behind (Ayalon et al., 2019). In light of this issue, however, there appears room for real progress through targeted policies from educators, school administrators, local authorities, and policymakers at the state level with civil society support, particularly towards education discrimination faced by underprivileged citizens. Allocation of adequate resources and setting up appropriate infrastructural development with basic premises in disadvantaged regions gives access to quality education to all aspiring youths regardless of ethnic background or geographic origin.

Disparities in healthcare coverage are evident, with most of Arab citizens perceiving inequality compared to Jewish citizens. This perception reflects differences in healthcare services and facilities available to the two communities, signaling a need for more equitable healthcare policies and resource allocation. According to Katz (2020), similar to most countries in the world, in Israel too there is inequality in health, and there is a correlation between socioeconomic status and the level of health, especially between Jewish and Arab, for example the life expectancy of Israeli Arabs was 79.5 years, compared to 83.1 for Jews. Moreover, her also found

a difference in both the quality and the availability between Arab and Jewish settlements (Katz, 2020).

Lastly, the quality of housing facilities is a key concern for Arab citizens, with 91% perceiving inequality compared to only 9% of Jewish citizens. This disparity arises from historical and ongoing discrepancies in urban planning and investment, necessitating a more balanced approach to housing development. Arab society suffers from poor planning and housing policies. This policy created severe hardship in the area of housing, employment and public services among the Arab communities. Distress, which is characterized by high housing density, the absence of housing solutions, infrastructure, public and industrial buildings and a fairly low level of services, is considered a known fact (Bana, 2014).

The qualitative findings of the study further support these perceptions. Five main themes emerged, covering income and poverty thresholds, employment opportunities, educational accessibility, healthcare coverage, and the quality of housing facilities. These themes reinforce the need for policy changes and a more inclusive and equitable approach to address the underlying socio-economic and political issues driving these disparities.

For democratic societies, equality means affording all individuals uncensored access to opportunities and representation and exercising their fundamental rights irrespective of ethnicity or religion. In this sense, the Israeli government must determine how to preserve Israel's distinct identity while ensuring equality in all sectors. Additionally, we must broaden our stance when evaluating these findings by centering them within an understanding of democratic principles anchored in seeking equitable outcomes. While appreciating Israel's unique history and cultural richness, the government must implement policies that uphold the values of pluralism, inclusivity, and equality.

Since it became an independent country in 1948, Israel has been strongly influenced by Zionist ideas. These ideas have shaped who gets power and opportunities, including who gets important roles in the judicial system. The goal of making Israel a homeland mainly for Jewish people has probably also influenced which citizens get high-ranking jobs. Non-Jewish people might find it harder to advance in their careers, because of these biases. Discrimination, whether obvious or hidden, can affect who gets hired or promoted. This could be why there are more Jewish people in top positions than non-Jewish people.

While historical factors and perceptions of bias and discrimination are important, they are not enough to prove that there are still ongoing inequalities in the Israeli legal system. However, by considering these historical factors and potential biases, we can better understand what's happening today and how we can work towards a fairer system. To achieve this, the Israeli government should build an inclusive legal system that embraces diversity and ensures equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of their background or status. This will help create a more just and inclusive society.

Finally, the issue of how where someone comes from affects their chances of doing well in society is a big concern when it comes to how Israel's legal system works. It suggests that there might be unfair obstacles or biases in the legal and administrative system that actually make social inequalities worse instead of better. These obstacles could happen because resources are not distributed evenly, some areas don't have good access to education or healthcare, and there are limited job opportunities in places that are not well-off. So, to make the Israeli legal system fairer, we need to take a comprehensive approach. This means making sure that everyone, regardless of their background, has equal access to good education, healthcare, and job opportunities. We also need to help communities that have historically been at a disadvantage by giving them support and the resources they need to improve their social and economic status.

Limitation

This research is crucial in understanding the degree of justice and fairness within the Israeli legal system. One limiting aspect of this research that needs consideration is sampling bias. The selection of participants or data sources may not wholly represent Israel's entire population and might adversely influence the outcome of this study. Suppose many questions rely on survey responses; biases regarding who participates could lead to skewed findings concerning equality before the Israeli legal system. Furthermore, relying on self-reported data adds to the limitations of this study since it cannot perfectly capture all factors influencing equality before Israeli laws comprehensively and accurately, given that laws are subject to change over time.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study highlight the profound disparities in the perceptions of equality between Arab and Jewish citizens in Israel across various dimensions, including income, employment opportunities, educational accessibility, healthcare coverage, and housing quality. These disparities are not only evident in the quantitative data but are also supported by qualitative findings that emphasize the need for policy changes and a more inclusive approach to address these issues. The perception of inequality among Arab citizens in these crucial aspects of life is a matter of concern and demands attention from both the Israeli government and civil society.

To uphold the principles of democracy and ensure equality for all citizens, the Israeli government must carefully balance its unique cultural identity with a commitment to inclusive policies that promote equitable outcomes. Historical factors and biases, whether overt or subtle, should be acknowledged and addressed to create a more just and inclusive society. Building an inclusive legal system and providing equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of their background, is essential to achieving this goal. Additionally, addressing systemic obstacles and biases that perpetuate social inequalities is crucial to improving the overall fairness of Israel's legal and administrative system.

In summary, achieving equality between Arab and Jewish citizens in Israel is not just a matter of perception but a fundamental challenge that requires comprehensive policy changes, resource allocation, and a commitment to promoting inclusivity and diversity within Israeli society. It is through these efforts that Israel can continue to evolve as a democratic nation while ensuring equal opportunities and representation for all its citizens.

References

- Adolfsson, J. (2023). *A new storm over the Naqab: The temporality of space in Israeli settler colonialism*. Stockholm University, Department of Human Geography
- Andblad, M. & Dahan, M. (2019). The puzzle of the increase in the poverty rate of Arab families. *Social security, 107*, 57-25.
- Ayalon, H., Blass, N., & Feniger, Y. (2019). *Educational Inequality in Israel From Research to Policy*. Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel. <https://taubcenter.org.il/wp-content/uploads/educationinequalityinisraeleng.pdf>
- Bana, A. (2014). *The planning policy in the Arab settlements discrimination and barriers*. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel.
- Baruch, P. & Kurz, A. (2006). *Law and National Security: Selected Issues*. Institute for National Security Studies
- Bassan-Nygate, L., & Weiss, C. M. (2022). Party competition and cooperation shape affective polarization: evidence from natural and survey experiments in Israel. *Comparative Political Studies, 55(2)*, 287-318. <https://preprints.apsanet.org/engage/api-gateway/apsa/assets/orp/resource/item/5e3c2a3659fb750019f8583a/original/party-competition-and-cooperation-shape-affective-polarization-evidence-from-natural-and-survey-experiments-in-israel.pdf>
- Beinin, J. (2015). Coexistence, Equality, and Universal Principles in Israel/Palestine: Regrouping in the Absence of a Two-State Solution. *Tikkun 30(2)*, <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/578179>.
- Berman, Y. (2020). *Inequality, Identity, and the Long-Run Evolution of Political Cleavages in Israel 1949-2019*. <https://wid.world/document/inequality-identity-and-the-long-run-evolution-of-political-cleavages-in-israel-1949-2019-world-inequality-lab-wp-2020-17/>
- Brandes, T. H. (2020). Basic law: Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people: Implications for equality, self-determination and social solidarity. *Minn. J. Int'l L.*, 29, 65.
- Einhorn, T. (2016). The Common Law Foundations of the Israeli Draft Civil Code: A Critical Review of a Paradigm-Shifting Endeavor. *Rabels Zeitschrift Für Ausländisches Und Internationales Privatrecht / The Rabel Journal of Comparative and International Private Law, 80(1)*, 93–129. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24900154>
- Fisher, N. (2019). “Israeli” Halakha: The Chief Rabbinate’s Conversion-To-Judaism Policy 1948–2018. *Modern Judaism-A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience, 39(1)*, 61-92. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/717257/pdf?casa_token=vnAhVgwWKXIAAAAA:RIlksC-njLgjWGxatS0QOyYGWvU7_PUUnBJdhc0p6nHQnvO3AeZfj3A04zRZu8vIvM2Ysl7dChA
- Fox, H. (2017). *Education and employment among young Arabs*. Taub Center for Social Policy Research in Israel
- Friesel, E. (2021). Israel in modern Jewish identity: an internal debate. *Israel Affairs, 27(1)*, 57-67. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13537121.2021.1864848>
- Ghanem, A. (2000). The Palestinian Minority in Israel: The “Challenge” of the Jewish State and Its Implications. *Third World Quarterly, 21(1)*, 87–104. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3993526>
- Gurenlian, J. (2023). Mixed Methods or Mixed Up?. *Journal of dental hygiene : JDH. 97.* 70-72.
- Harel, A. (2021). Basic Law: Israel as the Nation State of the Jewish People. *Nationalities Papers, 49(2)*, 262-269.

- Harrison, B. (2021). *Antisemitism. What It Is. What It Isn't. Why It Matters*. By Julia Neuberger. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 201. *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism*, 4(1), 129-136.
<https://doi.org/10.26613/jca.4.1.78>
- Jabareen, Y. (2007). *An Equal Constitution for All? On a Constitution and Collective Rights for Arab Citizens in Israel*. Mossawa Center- The Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel
- Jabareen, H., & Bishara, S. (2019). The Jewish nation-state law: antecedents and constitutional implications. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 48(190), 46-55.
- Katz, U. (2020). *Inequality in health in Israel - situational picture and practical recommendations*. Ecclesiastical Forum, The People and his world, 8, Jerusalem
- Lustick, I. S. (2019). The political road to binationalism: Arabs in Jewish politics. In *The Emergence of a Binational Israel* (pp. 97-123). Routledge.
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9780429310430/emergence-binational-israel-ilan-peleg-ofira-seliktar>
- Madhala, S. (2019). *The risk of automation in the Israeli labor market*. State of the nation report: Society, economy and policy in Israel, 163-196. <https://www.taubcenter.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/theriskofautomationintheisraelilabormarket2019eng75.pdf>
- McGregor, S. (2023). Ethical Considerations in Research about Organizations: Compendium of Strategies. *ETHICS IN PROGRESS*, 14, 4-23. 10.14746/eip.2023.2.1.
- Prior, S., Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Shearer, T., Walker, K. & Young, S. (2020). Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25. 10.1177/1744987120927206.
- Rajjman, R., Hochman, O., & Davidov, E. (2022). Ethnic majority attitudes toward Jewish and non-Jewish migrants in Israel: The role of perceptions of threat, collective vulnerability, and human values. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 20(1), 17-32.
- Refaeli, T., Alnabilsy, R., & Sold, A. (2022). Barriers to Post-Secondary Education among Young Arab-Bedouin Women in Israel. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 42(3), 350-368.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13602004.2023.2176069>
- Schulz, M. (2019). The security implications of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. In Routledge *Handbook on Middle East Security* (pp. 80-95). Routledge.
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315180113-6/security-implications-israeli%E2%80%93palestinian-conflict-michael-schulz>
- Sten, R. (2021). Legal Liminalities: Conflicting Jurisdictional Claims in the Transition from British Mandate Palestine to the State of Israel. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 62(2), 359–388
- Totry-Jubran, M. (2023). Constitutionalising Israel's Constitutional System. *Israel Law Review*, 56, 1-14. 10.1017/S0021223723000134.
- Waxman, D., & Peleg, I. (2020). The nation-state law and the weakening of Israeli democracy. *Israel Studies*, 25(3), 185-200.
https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/3/article/760759/pdf?casa_token=KghJl8Hc2DEAAAAA:VG2DnZOTYfoFqkBpzoevlXdXeQmUAa9YWj1mCjA_7lyhQtKjKzuqF8ENznEuh-2l01xiFAXqqYqj
- Zielińska, K. (2021). *ISRAEL'S PALESTINIAN CHALLENGES THE STATE'S IDENTITY, A LEADERSHIP CRISIS AND THE "NEW" MIDDLE EAST*. Centre for Eastern Studies