
Perception of Solidarity in Israeli Society – The Arab Citizens of Israel

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This document presents the results of a survey investigating the perceptions of solidarity of the Arab citizens of Israel. The survey was conducted in November 2013 and is based on a representative sample of the Arab population.

1. Aim of the Survey

The aim of the survey was to continue the development of the index of social solidarity in Israel based upon a tool developed and used by German researchers. Taking into account that there were similarities with existing indices in Israel, the proposed solidarity index addressed additional and important areas not formerly investigated on a large scale in Israel. Theoretically the project was based on the work of Heitmeyer & Anhut (2000, 2002, 2005), and conceptually on the interrelationship of three concepts that were relevant to the framework of our study: the concepts of social polarization, integration, and solidarity (whereby the perception of social polarization influences the degree of integration on individual, structural and cultural levels) as well as the concept of the feeling of solidarity. These issues have not been studied extensively in Israel before.

In 2011, we conducted an initial survey on the behavioral and attitudinal aspect of solidarity amongst Israelis. The results of the survey were presented at a workshop held at Ruppin Academic Center in October 2012 and published in the brochure "Israeli Society: What Lies Ahead? Perceptions of Solidarity in Israeli Society". Based on these results, in 2013 we decided to increase the sample of the Arab population and add subjects that had not been clarified previously.

For the future, in order to construct an operational index, it is necessary to continue the survey over several years. In this way, we will be able to evaluate tendencies and changes of perceptions with regard to solidarity over time. Longitudinal data will enable us to establish a seismograph measure of solidarity behavior and attitudes within the Israeli population.

The 2013 survey presented here focused only on the Arab citizens of Israel. More specifically, it was intended to investigate the attitudes of the Israeli Arab population

towards the Israeli Jewish population as well as their identification with the State of Israel, their level of perceived integration, and their perceptions of solidarity. The attitudes of Arab citizens towards the state included perceptions of equal opportunities and perceptions about the distribution of the fruits of economic growth. The perception of solidarity included four dimensions, namely: political participation and involvement, attitudes of exclusion towards "others", social Darwinism, and solidarity behavior in terms of willingness to donate and volunteer.

2. Research Population and Sample

The survey sample included 454 Arab Israeli citizens above the age of 18. Table 1 outlines the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1: Demographic Data of the Sample

	Variable	Percent	N
Gender	Male	52.0	236
	Female	48.0	218
Education	Less than 12 years of school	43.2	196
	12 years of school	19.6	89
	Matriculation	13.4	61
	Secondary education	4.6	21
	Academic education	19.2	87
Religion	Muslim	79.1	359
	Druze	9.7	44
	Christian	11.2	51
Age	18 - 29	50.8	229
	30 - 44	28.6	129
	45 - 65	20.6	93
Family Income	Below average	85.9	387
	Average	4.2	19
	Above average	9.9	45
Employed	Yes	73.3	333
	No	26.7	121

Of the 454 participants in the survey, 52% were male, 43% had less than 12 years of schooling, and 79% were Muslim. 51% of the sample was between 18 and 29 years of age at the time of the survey. 86% of the families reported income below the national average, and 73% participated in the work force.

3. Main Questions Addressed

Within the framework of the full solidarity project investigating perceptions of solidarity in Israeli society, this survey focused on a number of specific questions posed to the Arab citizens of the country.

- a. What are the attitudes of Arab Israeli citizens toward political issues in terms of political participation (voting behavior), attitudes toward politics in general, and level of satisfaction with politicians. How do they evaluate the system of governance?
- b. What are the attitudes of Arab citizens of Israel toward "others"?
- c. What are the attitudes of Arab citizens of Israel toward social Darwinism?
- d. What is the extent of solidarity behavior of Arab citizens in Israel in terms of volunteering and donating?
- e. What is the attitude of Arab citizens toward the state?
- f. How do the Arab citizens perceive equality in terms of resource distribution and opportunities?

4. Findings

The following part of the report is divided into three subsections, with each subsection relating to attitudes of Arab citizens toward a range of aspects.

In the first subsection, perceptions of solidarity are presented in terms of:

- political components
- trust in and image of the "other"
- social Darwinism and social attitudes
- solidarity behavior

In the second subsection, we present findings concerning identification with Israel and their level of integration into society.

Finally, we relate to findings concerning distribution of socio-economic resources and general perception of the Jewish and Arab Israeli society.

In order to simplify the presentation of the data, the following tables show only percentages and numbers of respondents who definitely agreed or agreed partially with the statement or question.

A. Perceptions of Solidarity

Political Components

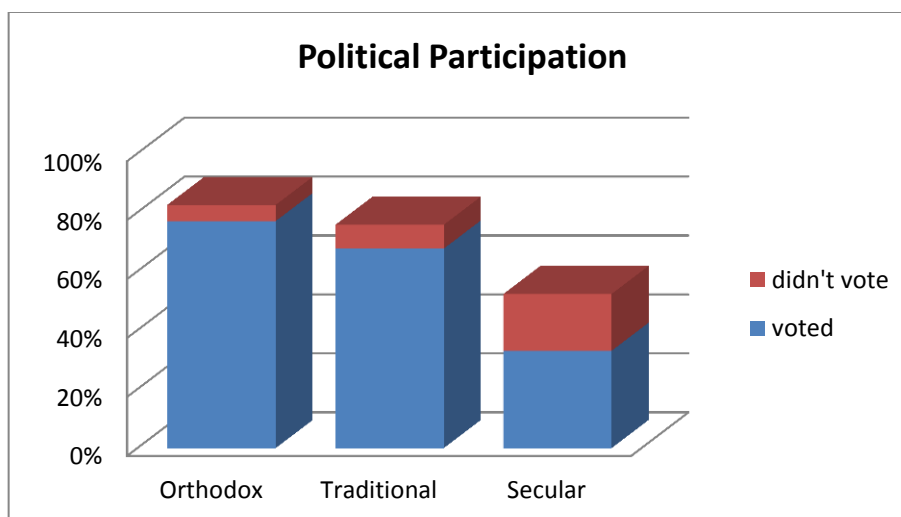
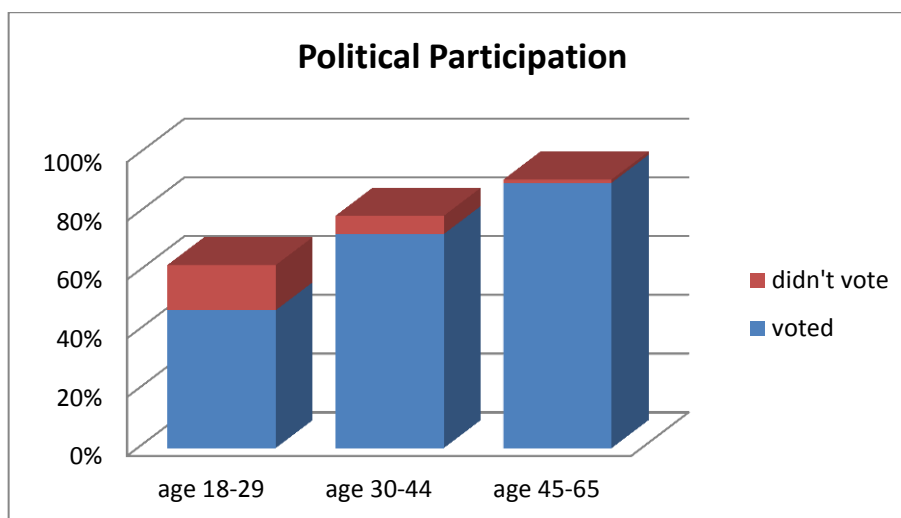
Political Participation

The findings presented in Table 2 show that political participation within the Arab population is high, especially in local municipal elections. 83% of the Arab citizens voted in the last municipality elections, and about 90% intend to do so in the future (elections were held some months after this survey was conducted). About two-thirds of them actively participated in the latest national elections, and 17% hold a membership in a political party.

Table 2: Political Participation

	Percent	N
Participation in the last Knesset elections (2013)	63.7	289
Participation in the last municipality elections	83.2	377
Intention to participate in the next municipality elections	89.9	408
Membership in a political party	17.4	79

The political participation component includes the first three questions (see Table 2) relating to participation in Knesset and municipality elections. Regression analysis of the socio-economic characteristics that influence the individual reveals that religious people, more educated people, and older people tend to take part in elections. We found no difference between males and females. In order to simplify the presentation of the data, the following figures show only percentages of respondents who answered yes to all three question above vs. those who did not vote at all.

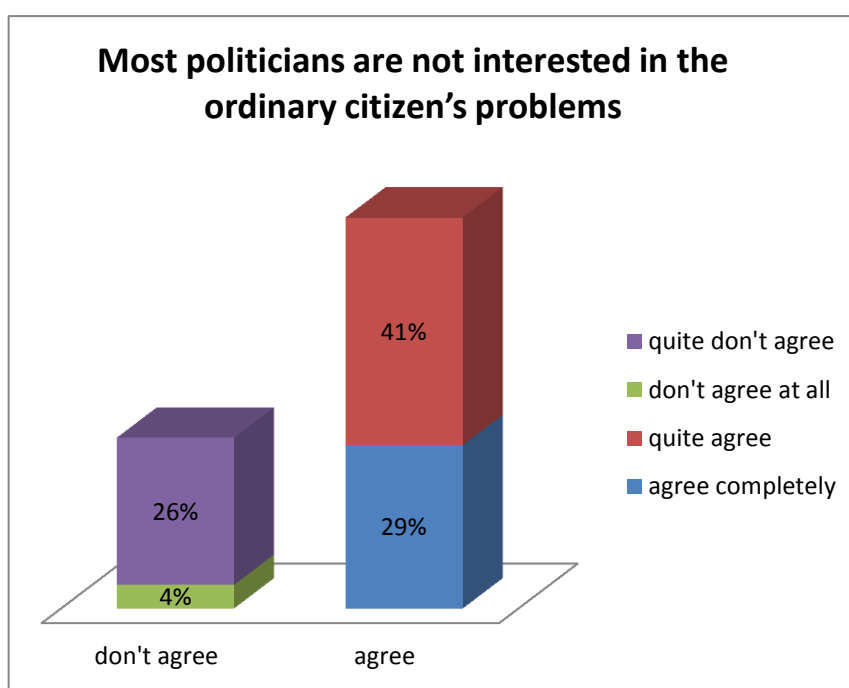


Attitudes toward the political system and its conduct

The data revealed that Arab citizens believe in implementing democratic systems of government in Israel and in their ability to influence government policy, but that they have no faith in politicians.

- The survey indicates that that only 33% of Arab citizens believe that the democratic system of government in Israel is not implemented and should be changed.
- The findings also show that only about 27% of the Arab citizens believe that the residents have no effect on government policy.

- However, most Arab citizens (70% and above) are distrustful of political parties and politicians: 70% of the public claim that most politicians are not really interested in the simple person's problems, and 73% agree that politicians are not going to keep their promises.



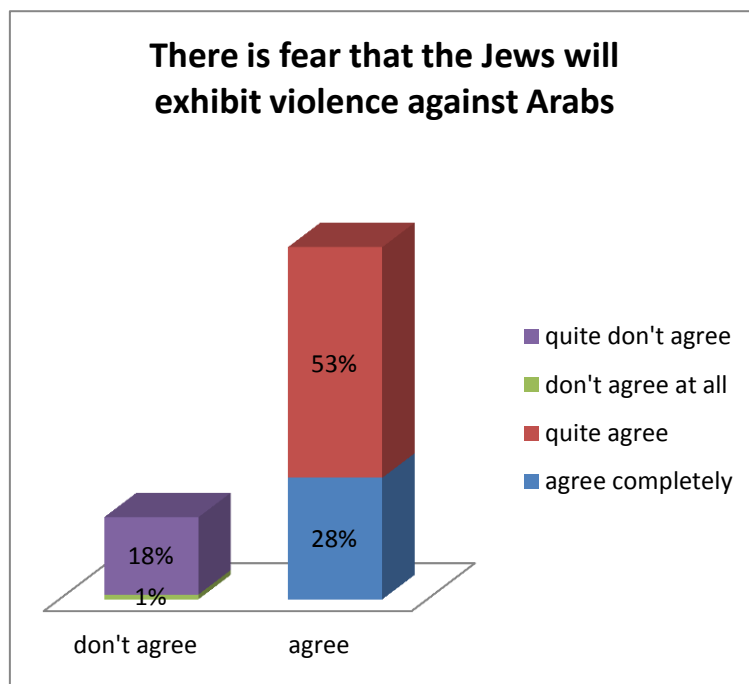
Regression analysis reveals that the degree of aversion to politics increases with level of education, age, and unemployment.

Trust in and image of the "other"

Examining the data on trust in "others" and image about the "other" indicates that there is a lack of trust between the Arab and Jewish populations, and that the Arab citizens have a negative perception of the Jewish population. Most Arab citizens (81%) fear that the Jews will exhibit violence against them, 74% do not trust Jews, 68% regard the Jews as racist, and only 20% of them consider Jews as sympathetic.

Regression analysis of the socio-economic characteristics that influence the individual reveals that:

- Men exhibit more trust in and better perception of the Jewish population.
- Employed people exhibit more trust in and better perception of the Jewish population.



However, Arab citizens show openness and desire for social integration, so that 80% of them are interested in creating shared values and practices together with the Jewish population of Israel; higher support was found amongst secular people and amongst married people. Participation in the labor market and age have significant positive impact.

Social Darwinism and Social Attitudes

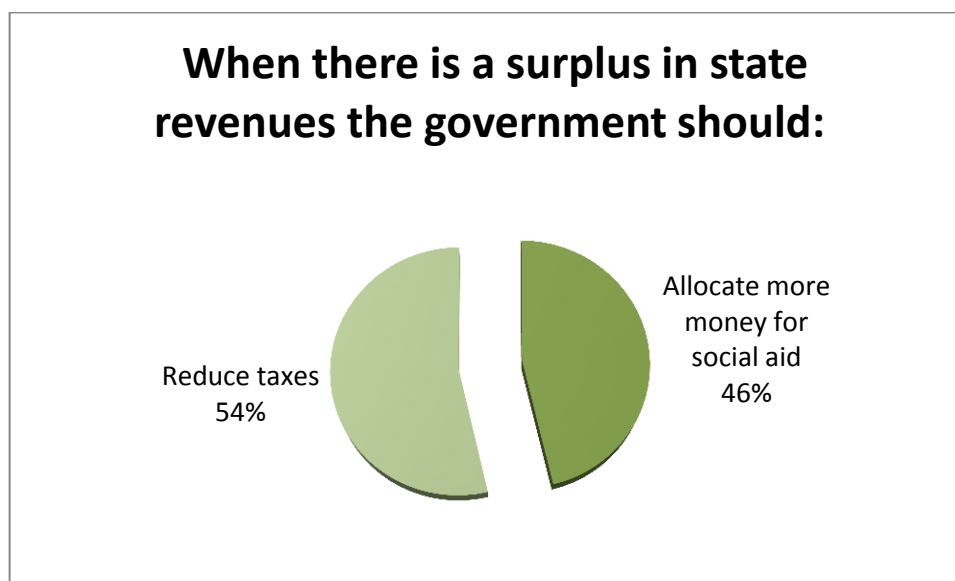
Data presented in Table 3 show that Arab citizens support social attitudes. The overwhelming majority of Arab citizens believes that the state has an obligation to ensure minimum income and to support families undergoing economic hardships (97%) and 100% are willing to pay taxes to enable the government to do so. Also, 74% agree that it is necessary to support the needy that were pushed into distress at no fault of their own.

Table 3: Social Attitudes

	Percentage	N
Tax payments are necessary so that we can help people who were pushed into distress and it is not their own fault.	73.8	335
The state should ensure minimum income and support families undergoing economic hardships.	97.4	442
I am willing to pay taxes so that the state can help others.	99.8	453

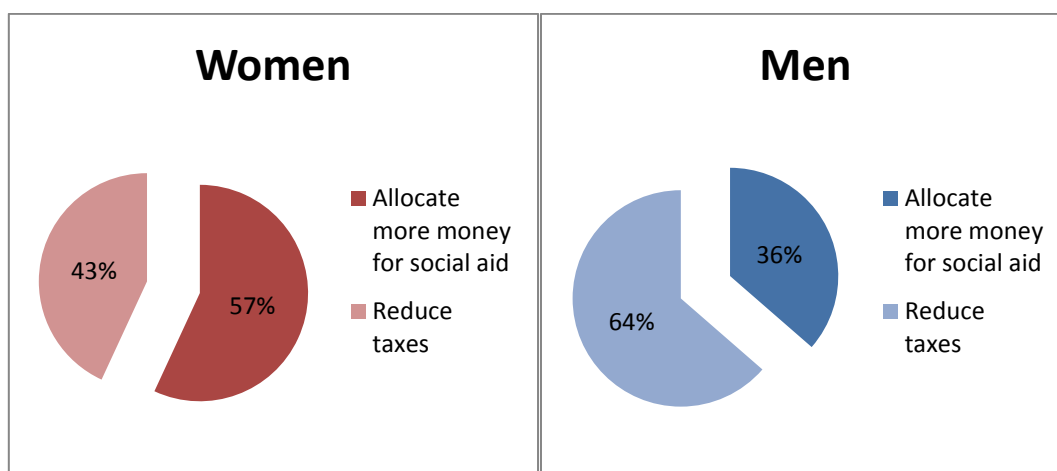
The social attitude component includes all three questions above.

Regression analysis reveals that the level of social attitudes in term of perception of necessity and willingness to pay taxes is higher for academics than for non- academics. However, only 46% of the public prefers increasing the expenditure on support to the needy rather than tax cuts when there is a surplus in state revenues.



Women reflect a higher tendency to support involvement of the state by means of increasing public expenditure.

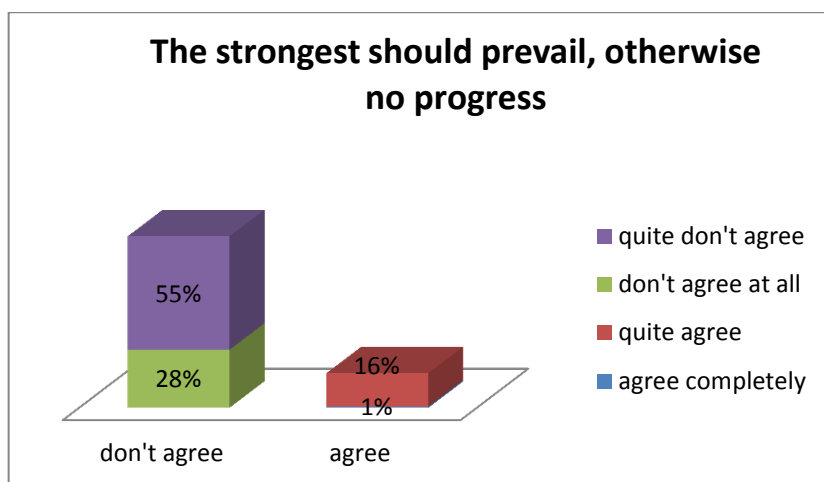
When there is a surplus in state revenues the government should:



Concerning social Darwinism, the study shows that only 22% of Arab citizens believe that people should think mainly about themselves, and 29% think that it is impossible to consider everybody since under these circumstances no progress can be made. Only 17% hold typical Darwinist attitudes and believe that the strongest should prevail, otherwise society will not progress.

Regression analysis of the socio-economic characteristics that influence the individual reveals that:

- Darwinist views of religious people are more moderate.
- Men tend to exhibit more moderate Darwinist views than women do.
- Darwinist views of married people are more moderate.



Solidarity Behavior

Table 4 depicts behaviors with regard to volunteering and donating amongst Arab Israeli citizens. About half of the Arab citizens (53%) were engaged in volunteer work or attended civilian initiatives, with a rate of 58% engaged in such activities for the Jewish and Arab population. 43% of the Arab citizens volunteered only within their own community. Similar results were obtained in the context of donations. About 82% of Arab citizens donated money to organizations, associations and/or individuals in general, with about 60% of them donating to Arab organizations and individuals and about 40% donating to Jewish as well as Arab organizations and/or individuals. None of the respondents volunteered in or donated to solely the Jewish sector.

Table 4: Volunteering and Donating

	Percentage	N
Engaging in volunteering or participating in civic initiatives	52.9	240
For (or in favor of) only the Arab community	42.5	102
For (or in favor of) Jews and Arabs	57.5	138
For (or in favor of) only Jews	0.0	0
Donating money to organizations or associations and/or individuals	81.7	371
Arab organizations and individuals	60.4	224
Arab and Jewish organizations and individuals	39.6	147
Jewish organizations and individuals	0.0	0

Regression analysis of the socio-economic characteristics that influence the individual reveals that:

- Religious people tend to exhibit more behaviors of solidarity in terms of donation and volunteering;
- Employed people tend to exhibit more behaviors of solidarity in terms of donation and volunteering.

B. Identification and Social Integration

Table 5 indicates Arab citizens' ambivalent attitude toward the Israeli state. On the one hand, Arab citizens feel part of the state (63%), identify with its problems (71%), and believe that there is a similarity in lifestyle and behavior between them and the Jews (90%).

However, about 41% feel rejected and strangers in the country, and only about 46% of them feel partial or full pride in Israel's achievements. At the same time, about 90% identify with the Arab Palestinian state rather than with the State of Israel.

Table 5: Components of Identification with the State of Israel

	Percentage	N
When Israel gets a prize, I feel pride in the country.	45.5	206
Lifestyle- and behavior-wise, Arab citizens of Israel are more like Jews than like Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.	89.9	408
Most Arab citizens identify with the Palestinian state rather than with Israel.	90.3	409
As an Israeli citizen, I feel like a stranger and rejected in Israel.	40.8	185
I feel part of Israel.	62.8	285
I sympathize with the problems of the State of Israel.	70.5	320

A closer look at the issue of identification with the state of Israel in terms of the above questions reveals that:

- Participation in the labor market has a positive impact on identification with the state.
- Secular people rate higher on identification than orthodox and traditional people do.
- Gender and age have no impact on identification with the State of Israel.

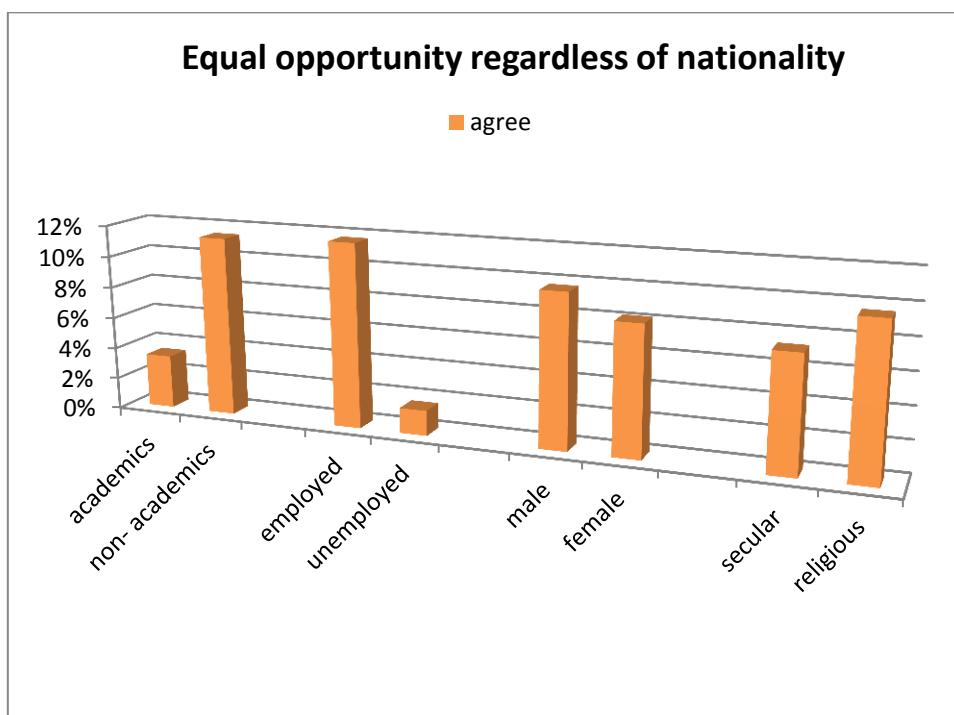
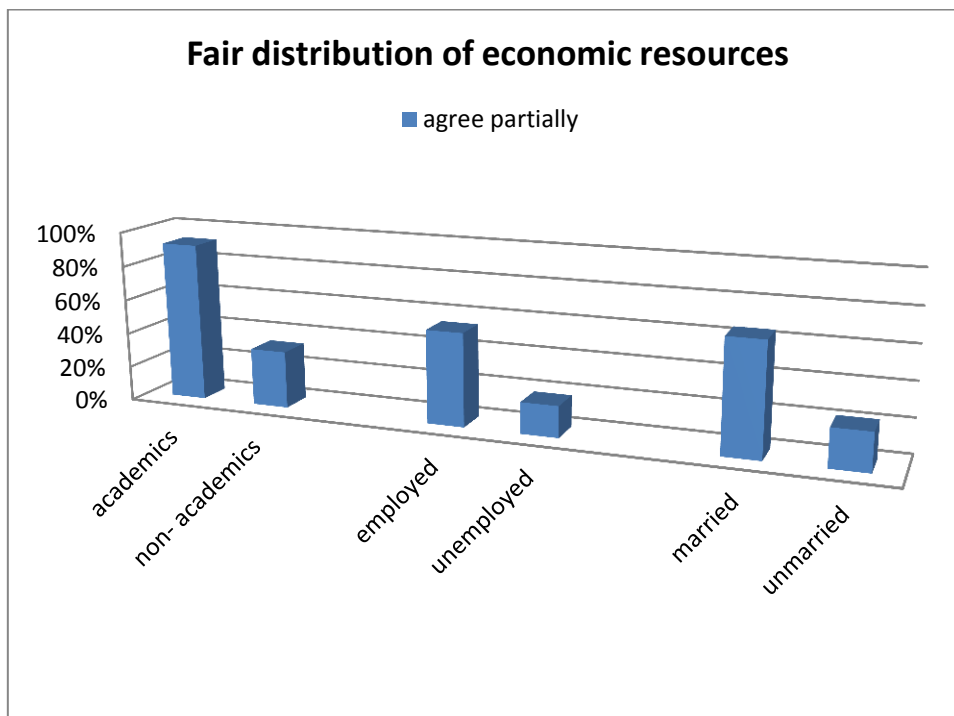
Distribution of socio-economic resources and perceptions of equality

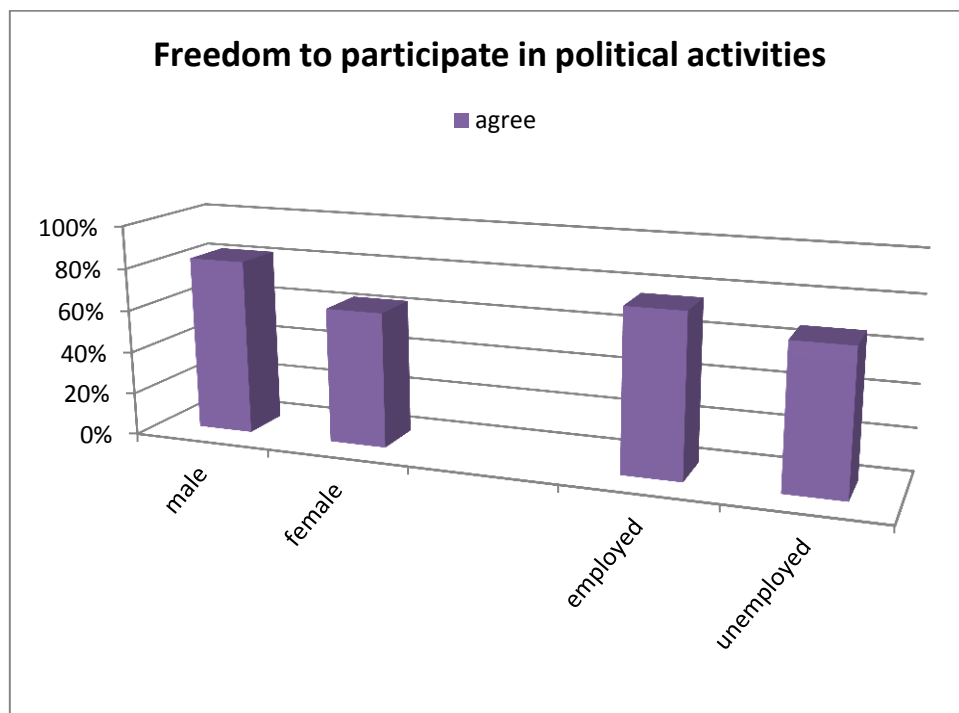
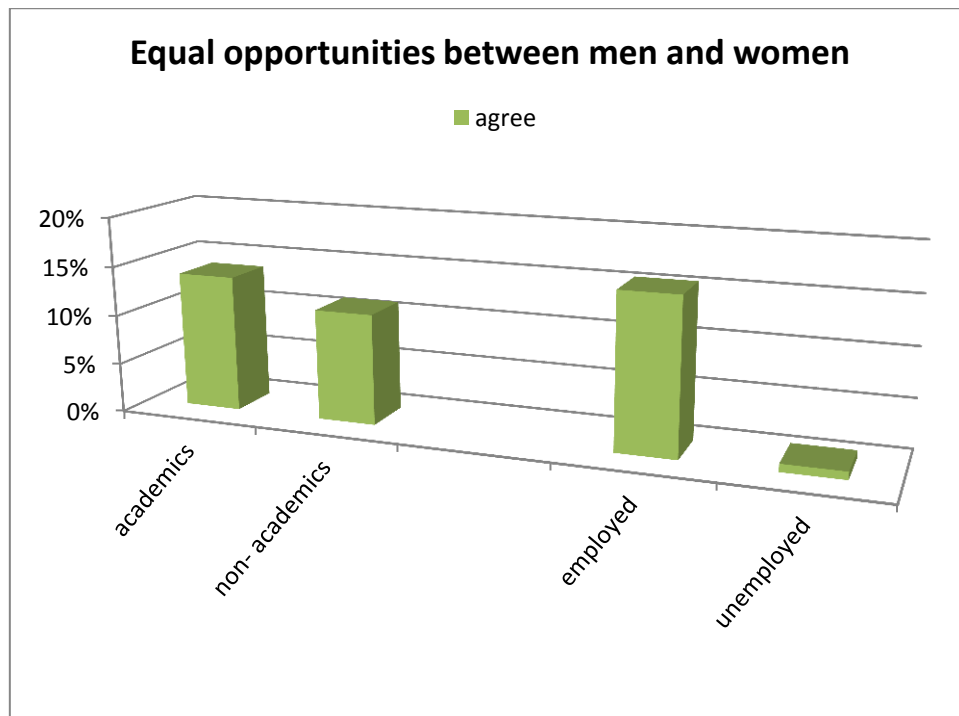
Most of the Arab citizens do not believe that full or semi-full equal opportunities exist in Israel.

- 45% of Arab citizens believe (partially or wholly) that there is a fair distribution of economic resources.
- Only 9% of the Arab public feel that equal opportunities exist fully or partially in Israel regardless of nationality.
- A minority of 12% believes that full or partial equality exists between men and women.
- However, 74% of the Arab public are of the opinion that freedom to participate in political activity exists in Israel partially or fully.

A closer look at these questions reveals, that a number of independent variables affect perceptions of the Arab population in Israel on these issues.

See figures below:





The regression models reveal that:

- Academics rate higher on the perception of fair distribution of economic resources and on gender equality, but lower as to equal opportunities regardless of nationality.
- Women exhibit a lower perception of equal opportunities regardless of nationality and freedom to participate in political activities.
- Married people rate higher on the perception of fair distribution of economic resources.
- Working people rate higher than non-working people do on perception of distribution of economic resources, equal opportunities regardless of nationality and gender, and freedom to participate in political activities.

5. Conclusions

This is the second report of the 'Ruppin Solidarity Project'. The project is aimed at investigating the behavioral and attitudinal aspect of solidarity amongst Israelis, focusing on the interrelationship of three concepts: social polarization, integration, and solidarity. The first report, published in 2012, summarized the main findings on the perceptions of solidarity among the Israeli public based on the 2011 initial survey. This report presents the findings of the 2013 survey, based on a representative sample of the Arab population only. It covers the attitudes of the Israeli Arab population towards the Israeli Jewish population as well as their identification with the State of Israel, level of perceived integration, and their perceptions of solidarity.

The main findings with regard to the four dimensions of the perception of solidarity are as follows:

- a. Arab citizens believe in the implementing of the democratic system of government in Israel and in their ability to influence government policy, but they have no faith in politicians.

- b. Arab citizens lack trust in the relationship between the Arab and Jewish population, and they have a negative perception of the Jewish population.
- c. Arab citizens support social attitudes and reject social Darwinism.
- d. Despite feelings of mistrust towards the Jewish population of Israel and their negative perception of the Jews, most of the Arab population wants to create common values and practices together with the Jewish population.

The main findings with regard to the attitudes of Arab citizens towards the state are two:

- a. Arab citizens of Israel have an ambivalent attitude towards the state.
- b. Arab citizens feel that the distribution of social and economic resources in the country is biased against their community.

The findings indicate that there are similarities in certain aspects of the attitudes of the Arab citizens and those of the Jewish citizens found in the 2011 survey. Both groups clearly expressed dissatisfaction with the degree of the public's impact on the government and lack of faith in political parties "seeing" the citizen.

Parallel to the negative attitudes of the Jewish population toward Arabs citizens, the Arab Israeli citizens express distrust towards the Jewish citizens and perceive them as racists and violent. Both groups do not believe in social Darwinism; thus, Arabs and Jews in Israel do not think that social behavior is motivated by individual self-interest rather than public interest, and both groups agree that the stronger should not "get their way."

The findings also indicate that the majority of Israelis believes that equal opportunities exist at least partially, as well as freedom to participate in political activities. The majority of both groups feels that the fruits of economic growth are not distributed justly, and the Arab citizens believe that their being 'Arab' is the reason for unequal distribution of resources.

In addition, both populations consider it the state's obligation to ensure minimum income and to support families undergoing economic hardship, even if there are too many needy people.

Findings with regard to negative attitudes amongst the Israeli Arab citizens towards the Jewish public and negative attitudes of Israeli Jewish citizens towards the Arab public are not unique to our survey. These mutual negative attitudes constitute the weak link of social solidarity in Israel, and should be addressed by actions in a variety of fields to create opportunities to discuss cooperation and to find mutually agreeable solutions.