

Abstract

Sikkuy, a shared organization of Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel which works to achieve full equality between Jewish and Arab citizens, has taken upon itself the civic responsibility for the development and presentation of the Equality Index of Jewish and Arab Citizens in Israel, for the third consecutive year. The Equality Index is the product of the work of many well-known experts in Israel, both Arabs and Jews, who contributed a great deal of their time and knowledge to constructing this unique index. During the third year of the index we learn of a continuing deterioration in the state of inequality between Arabs and Jews; in other words, a widening of the gaps between the two groups, to the detriment of the Arab population.

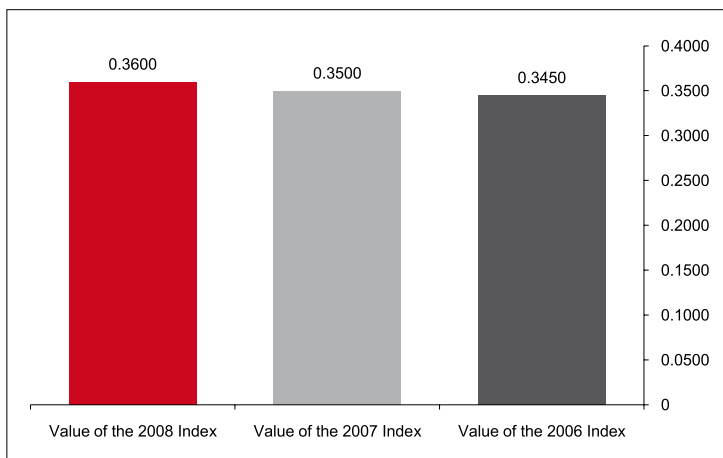
The Equality Index between Jews and Arabs is the first aggregate index in Israel that systematically analyzes the gaps between Jewish and Arab citizens of the country. By means of the index we aspire to present as broad a picture as possible of the state of equality between Jews and Arabs in various areas. This is, of course, subject to the limitations of the data at our disposal. The present index, like those published in previous years, focuses on the socio-economic aspect only. The index serves as a tool for comparing Jews and Arabs in the following areas: health, housing, education, employment and social welfare.

In order to carry out a quantitative assessment of the level of equality between Jews and Arabs in each of the selected areas, with suitable integration of the indicators and variables, there is need of an aggregate index, with which it is possible to combine all the variables and to weight them into one overall value. The aggregate index gives weight to each population group in accordance with its percentage in the general population, and takes into account the degree of difference between the two population groups in relation to each variable. In other words, the basic assumption is that in conditions of equality, each group's share in the overall resource pie corresponds with its percentage in the general population. The five aggregate indexes are combined into one weighted index. The weight of each of the areas (health, housing, education, employment and social welfare) in the Weighted Index is determined in accordance with its share in the total national expenditure on all five areas.

The range of values of the index ranges from (-1) to (1). A value of zero indicates complete equality. A value tending towards 1 indicates inequality in favor of the Jewish population, and a value tending towards (-1) indicates inequality in favor of the Arab population.

The value of the weighted Equality Index for 2008 indicates an increase in the level of inequality between Jews and Arabs, in other words, a widening of the gap between the two populations, to the detriment of the Arab population. The value of the 2008 Equality Index is 0.3600 – relatively higher than the 2007 index (which was 0.3500) and the 2006 index (0.3450). In other words, between the years 2006 and 2008 there was a distressing increase of 4.3 percent in the overall Equality Index between Jews and Arabs (see Diagram A, p. 12).

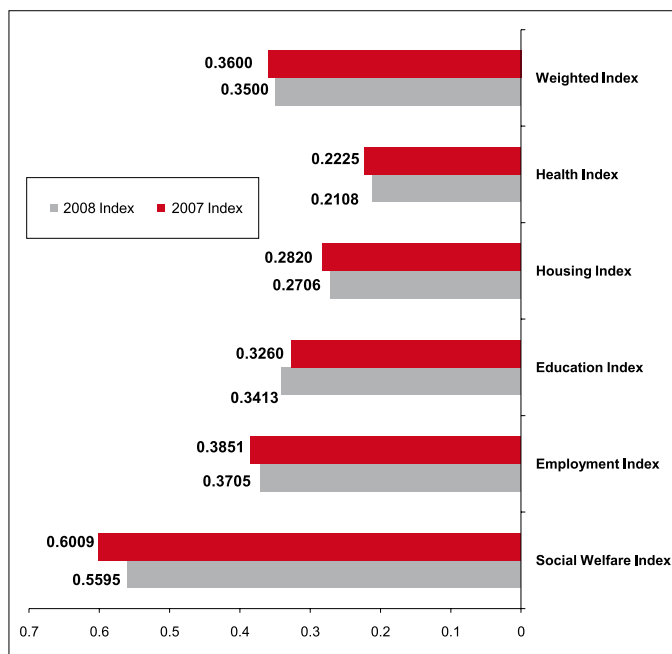
Diagram A: The values of the Weighted Indexes¹ 2006-2008



Unfortunately, the present index testifies to increasing inequality in four of the five areas examined (the exception is education). This continues the trend of an increase in the gap, which has been evident since the preparation of the first index in 2006.

Below are the changes in the index between 2007 and 2008 in the various areas:

Diagram B: The values of the aggregate indexes in health, housing, education, employment and social welfare and the weighted Equality Indexes 2007-2008



¹ In order to enable a comparison between the 2006 index and those of 2007 and 2008, we have merged the basis for calculation by means of a moving average, so that the 2006 index was recalculated in the format of the 2007 index in the following manner: The calculation was done only for the Housing Index and the Social Welfare Index (for which there was a change in the basis of calculation beginning in 2006) for 2006 in the 2007 format, by reducing the value of the 2007 index in these two areas by the percentage of the increase in these indexes between the 2006 index and the 2007 index in the 2006 format.

◆ **The value of the 2008 Health Index**

This is the lowest of all five indexes. However, this is the third year in which there has been an increase in the value of this index – an increase that indicates the widening of the gap in favor of the Jewish population. The 2008 Health Index is 0.2225 as compared to 0.2108 (the 2007 index) and 0.2076 (2006). These findings indicate a worsening of the situation, in other words, an increase of about 7.1 percent in inequality in the area of health, beginning in 2006, to the detriment of the Arab population.

◆ **The value of the 2008 Housing Index**

The index is significantly higher relative to previous years: 0.2820 as compared to 0.2076 (2007 index) and 0.2678 (2006)². These findings indicate a worsening of the situation and an increase of about 5.3 percent in the inequality between Arabs and Jews in the area of housing, beginning in 2006, to the detriment of the Arab population.

◆ **The value of the 2008 Education Index**

Indicates a decrease in recent years: 0.3260 as compared to 0.3413 (2007 index) and 0.3420 (2006). These findings indicate a decrease of about 4.7 percent in inequality between Arabs and Jews, beginning in 2006.

◆ **The value of the 2008 Employment Index**

The index indicates an increase: 0.3851 (2008) as compared to 0.3705 (2007) – an increase of about 3.9 percent. This is as compared to a decline of about 4.7 percent between 2006 and 2007 – from 0.3882 to 0.3705. The general trend indicates stability in the Employment Index.

◆ **The value of the 2008 Social Welfare Index**

This is the highest of all the aggregate indexes, and this year is 0.6009 as compared to 0.5595 (2007) and 0.5386 (2006)³. This is the third consecutive year in which the value of the Social Welfare Index has increased; in other words, the gaps between Arabs and Jews are widening in favor of the Jewish population. There was a steep increase of 11.5 percent between 2006 and 2008.

Summary

The 2008 Equality Index presents a harsh picture to the public and to decision makers in the country. The inequality between Jews and Arabs stems from the gap between government inputs and from the gap between the results of implementation of government policy over time for Arabs and Jews – in other words, the results of the quality of implementation⁴ of this policy. This gap is reflected in the following areas:

- ◆ In the area of health, the quality of government implementation for a single Jew is the same as for 1.28 Arabs.
- ◆ In the area of housing, the quality of government implementation for a single Jew is the same as that for 1.39 Arabs.
- ◆ In the area of education, the quality of government implementation for a single Jew is the same as for 1.48 Arabs.

² See footnote 1.

³ See footnote 1.

⁴ The quality of implementation is reflected in the value of the index variables, whether they are variables reflecting direct investment of inputs (such as the budget of the welfare bureaus, teaching manpower et al) or variables reflecting outputs (such as education level, poverty, employment et al).

- In the area of employment, the quality of government implementation for a single Jew is the same as for 1.62 Arabs.
- In the area of social welfare, the quality of government implementation for a single Jew is the same as for 2.5 Arabs.
- Overall, the quality of government implementation for a single Jew is the same as for 1.56 Arabs.

The results of this index, after three years of follow-up, unfortunately indicate an increase in the inequality between Arab and Jewish citizens for the third consecutive year. The index shows that in the past year the inequality has increased in every area except for education. The picture we receive from these findings is a matter of great concern, and should serve as a warning signal to decision makers and to the general public. We call on the government to act immediately to narrow the gaps.