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SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND ACHIEVEMENT IN ISRAEL

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## סדרת ניירות מחקר

### משמעת והישגים בבתי ספר

יוסי שביט  
כרמל בלנק

נייר מחקר מס' 10-03

#### תקציר

בשנים האחרונות קיים עיסוק תקשורתי וציבורי הולך וגובר בבעיות המשמעת של התלמידים הישראלים מחד, ובציוניהם המידרדרים במבחנים בין לאומיים מאידך. מפתיע לגלות, כי למרות שנושא האלימות בבתי הספר נחקר לפני ולפנים, יש מעט עיסוק מחקרי משמעת בבתי ספר ובקשר שבינה לבין הישגי התלמידים הם. המחקר הנוכחי מהווה חלק מפרויקט בין לאומי בראשותו של פרופ' ריצ'ארד ארום (Richard Arum) מאוניברסיטת ניו יורק, העוסק בנושאים אלו בתשע מדינות (ארצות הברית, קנדה, צ'ילה, יפן, קוריאה, רוסיה, איטליה, הולנד וישראל). המחקר מתבסס על נתוני TIMSS 2003, אשר מתמקדים בהישגיהם של תלמידי כיתה ח' במתמטיקה ובמדעים. בנוסף, נשאלו התלמידים, מנהלי בתי הספר והמורים על סוגים שונים של בעיות משמעת, קורבנות ואלימות ותדירותן בבתי הספר. במחקר הישראלי השתתפו מעל 4000 תלמידים מכ-150 בתי ספר. ממצאי המחקר מראים כי בין הארצות שנחקרו, רמת המשמעת הבית ספרית בישראל היא נמוכה מאד. נתונים אלו אינם מפתיעים, שכן צפיפות הכתות בישראל, שכרם הנמוך של המורים והפערים החברתיים בין תלמידים בישראל ידועים. המחקר השווה את רמת המשמעת בבתי ספר ממלכתיים עבריים וערבים ובבתי ספר ממלכתיים דתיים, ומצא כי בבתי ספר ערבים המנהלים מדווחים על שכיחות נמוכה יותר של בעיות משמעת מאשר בבתי ספר יהודים חילוניים. בין בתי ספר דתיים ובתי ספר חילוניים במגזר היהודי לא נמצא הבדל משמעותי. נמצא גם שבעיות משמעת נפוצות יותר בבתי ספר בהם לומדים תלמידים משכבות חברתיות נמוכות יותר. הממצא המרכזי של המחקר הוא שרמת המשמעת בבית הספר משפיעה על ההישגים הלימודיים של תלמידיו. עם זאת, השפעת המשמעת על הציונים איננה גדולה כפי שאפשר היה לשער. ממצאי המחקר מלמדים שגם שיפור ניכר ברמת המשמעת בישראל לא צפוי לשפר את הישגי התלמידים במידה ניכרת.

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יוסי שביט, אוניברסיטת תל-אביב ומרכז טאוב לחקר המדיניות החברתית בישראל. כרמל בלנק, אוניברסיטת תל-אביב. כל הטעויות הן של המחברים. הדעות המובאות להלן הן של המחברים ואינן בהכרח משקפות את דעות מרכז טאוב לחקר המדיניות החברתית בישראל.

מותר לצטט קטעי טקסט קצרים – שאינם עולים על שתי פסקאות – ללא הסכמה מפורשת, ובלבד שיינתן אזכור מלא למקור הציטוט.

# SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND ACHIEVEMENT IN ISRAEL<sup>1</sup>

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## SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND ACHIEVEMENT IN ISRAEL **ABSTRACT**

*Israel is an unruly society. It is ethnically and economically stratified and, conflict-ridden. Its dominant Jewish culture celebrates informality, contempt for authority and defiance. Israeli classrooms are usually large, and teachers are poorly paid. These characteristics are reflected in a rather high frequency of disciplinary infraction in Israeli schools. While Israeli legislators are concerned with school discipline and violence, actual legislation has tended to safeguard students' civil rights, and to impose strict limitations on the sanctions that teachers and principals can employ in their attempts to enforce discipline in schools.*

*Employing the Israeli TIMSS data files of 2003 we study the school-level determinants of disciplinary infractions and of victimization in Israeli schools. We also study the extent to which disciplinary climate in schools and classrooms affects students' achievements in math and science, their educational expectations and victimization in schools. Our main and most important result is that school discipline is related significantly, if modestly, to students' achievements. We found significant negative effects of teachers' reports of classroom disruption and of student victimization on their test scores. Our results refute the hypotheses that school climate is more disciplined in religious schools than in secular ones. In addition and contrary to oppositional culture theory the results show that Arab students are more disciplined than Jewish students.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

*This paper is part of an international comparative study on school discipline headed by Richard Arum. The project aims to reveal the institutional factors affecting the level of discipline in schools and its effects on students' test scores and educational aspirations. The other countries represented in the study are: Canada, Chile, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Russia, and the United States.*

Israel is often said to be an unruly society. Formed through immigration and colonization, Israeli society is both ethnically heterogeneous and conflict ridden. Although a welfare state, income inequality in Israel is higher than it is in most European countries and is similar to that reported for less developed countries. Many residents of the state, whether Jewish or Arab, religious or secular, subscribe to an oppositional culture that is contemptuous of authority and of discipline and which celebrates defiance and cutting corners.

In addition to the macro-social and cultural factors that affect civil obedience, there are also specific characteristics of the school system in Israel that are conducive to lack of discipline among students. Classrooms are typically very large (except in religious schools that generally benefit from more funding than non-religious schools), teachers' salaries are low and they often complain that it is difficult for them to maintain an effective and orderly learning environment. Most schools do not require uniforms, children call teachers by their first name, and the class is a noisy place, where talking is done not by raising a hand but by spontaneous outburst. In addition, the disciplinary sanctions that teachers can legally employ are limited. Ironically, Israel's progressive legislation is more concerned with student's rights to avoid disciplinary sanctions than it is with students' and teachers' rights to an orderly learning environment, although it appears to be some change in attitude these days .

The chapter is organized as follows: the following section briefly describes ethno-religious diversity and conflict in Israel, and provide background information on the Israeli school system. This is followed by a discussion of Israeli culture of disobedience, a review of the institutional and legal context of school discipline in Israeli schools and a summary of the few previous academic studies on school discipline and violence in Israel. In the following section we summarize our main research questions, describe the data set and present the findings of our analysis. The chapter concludes with a summary of the results and a methodological note.

## **CONTEXT**

### ***Social diversity, inequality and conflict***

The main axis of social diversity, inequality and conflict in Israel lies between its Jewish and Arab communities. Israel's population numbers about 7.3 million people, excluding the inhabitants of the occupied West Bank and the Golan Heights. About 75% of the population identify themselves as Jews (whether ethnically, nationally or

religiously) and about 20% are Palestinian Arabs divided among Sunni Muslims (80% of Arabs), Christians (10%) and Druze (10%). Arabs and Jews have been engaged in a bitter political, often violent, conflict for decades. The State of Israel is founded on the hegemonic Zionist ideology which views it as a Jewish nation-state founded upon the memory of the ancient Jewish civilization which existed in the region during the first and second millennia B.C. and as a haven for Jews who have been persecuted by anti-Semitism which has been prevalent world-wide and which peaked in the *Shoah*. Israel was granted recognition by the UN in 1947 and barely withstood a massive military onslaught by several Arab armies. From the Arab perspective, Zionism is viewed as an occupying colonial movement which has sought to drive out the indigenous Palestinian population and gain control of Palestinian land for establishment of a racist and exclusionary Jewish society (Smooha 2002, Ghanem 1998).

Caught in the broader Israeli- Arab conflict, Palestinians are viewed by many Israeli Jews as a hostile minority, and are exposed to overt discrimination both collectively and as individuals. Collective discrimination is most pronounced in the allocation of public resources and the provision of social services to citizens living in Arab communities (e.g., Swirski and Yechezkel 1999). Individually, Arabs are overtly discriminated against in the competition for lucrative jobs in Jewish owned firms and businesses as well as in the civil service (Semyonov and Cohen 1990, Shavit 1990, Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 1994, Kraus and Yonay 2000). Israel's Palestinian Arabs would appear to fit Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) definition of a non voluntary minority group (Eisikovits 1997) and as such, one might expect Arab students to resist the state, to have little regard for the law and for the authority of the state and to behave in an oppositional manner in schools.

In addition to the Arab-Jewish conflict, there are striking inequalities between ethnic groups within the Jewish population, most notably, between *Ashkenazim* and *Mizrahim*. When the State of Israel was proclaimed, the majority of its Jewish population was of European origin (*'Ashkenazim'*). Historically, European Jewry was relatively well educated and middle class. With the creation of the state, large immigration waves arrived - including both Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors from Europe, and Jews from Middle Eastern countries (Sikron 1957, Goldscheider 2002). The immigrants from the Arabic-speaking Middle-eastern countries were referred to as *'Mizrahim'* (lit. Eastern). Their average educational level was lower than that of *Ashkenazim*, especially among women, and they were viewed by *Ashkenazim* as undeveloped and less modern (Swirsky 1990). Many *Mizrahi* immigrants were forced to settle in undeveloped periphery of the country where the provision of education and other social services was poorer than in the urban centers. As a consequence of both the initial educational differences between the two groups and discrimination, large inequalities developed between the two ethnic blocks.

Economic inequality in Israel is quite high by comparison to western democracies. In 2006, the Gini coefficient for pre-tax economic income in Israel was 0.38 (Adva Center, 2007), higher than most economically developed democracies (Wikipedia 2009).<sup>2</sup> It should be noted however, that the Israeli welfare state, through its progressive taxation and various transfer payments, is quite effective in reducing inequality in net income (Endeweld, Fruman and Gottlieb 2008).

Finally, there is the cleavage between veterans and recent immigrants. Since 1989 alone, about one million immigrants came from the former Soviet Union (FSU). On average, the immigrants from the FSU are educated and many of them hold

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<sup>2</sup> However, the Gini for Israel is about average by comparison to the other countries participating in this comparative study. Here are the coefficients for the other eight countries: Canada – 0.32, Chile – 0.55, Italy – 0.33, Japan – 0.38, Korea – 0.35, Netherlands – 0.31, Russia – 0.41, United States – 0.45.

professional, semi professional or technical occupations. Their children do well in school, and their grades are similar on average to those obtained by native Jewish students (Kristen, Shavit, Chachashvili-Bulotin, and Roth, in progress). However, Chachashvili-Bulotin (2006) reports that immigrant students from FSU families are also more likely than natives to dropout of school, and suggests that this may be due to the difficulties that some immigrant students encounter in the adaptation to the new and often denigrating local culture. Following on this logic, we hypothesize that disciplinary infractions and violence will be more prevalent in schools attended by large proportions of immigrants.

### ***Discipline in Israeli culture***

Studies on the sociology of both Israeli and Jewish culture portray them as anything but conducive to discipline. Almog (1997; 2004) discusses the *Sabra* culture, a native Jewish-Israeli youth culture that has emerged in Palestine before and since the establishment of the state. The term *Sabra* refers originally to the cactus fruit and is the nickname for the Israeli-born Jew who, like the fruit is prickly on the outside and is sweet on the inside. Stereotypically, the *sabra* is "young, naughty and rebellious" (Almog, 1997; pp. 18), independent, defiant and daring. Katriel (1986) writes about the *Dugri* speech, a unique form of Hebrew used by *Sabras*. It is direct, simple and does not mince words. *Dugri* speech is impatient with niceties and politeness and is often taken by outsiders to be rude. Israelis adopt *Dugri* speech in reaction to what they consider to be the bogus civility of Diaspora Jews.

An important derivative of the *Sabra* culture is the *Smokh* (literally: "Trust Me! Don't Worry!") attitude that is pervasive in Israeli society (Kamir, 1999). Kamir claims that this approach was necessary in the states' early days, when formal institutions were still undeveloped and people resorted to improvised solutions to



daily problems. The *Smokh* attitude has little respect for procedure and discipline and is conducive to negligence, haste, and a haphazard way of doing things.

Smooha (cited in Mendel, 2007) and Kfir (1997) find the roots of Israeli disrespect for authority and lack of discipline in Diaspora Jewish existence. Diaspora Jews were often surrounded by a hostile environment and developed a sense of alienation from its laws and customs. Diaspora Jewish culture, both in Europe and in the Arab world, relied on favors and dubious business deals designed to circumvent formal procedure (Kfir, 1997) and Jewish immigrants brought these attitudes and practices to Israel.

A study of fifty two countries found that Israelis hold the lowest regard for authority (Hofstede, 1994). In the 2002 World Value Survey parents were asked to assess the importance of eleven skills, qualities and traits that children can be taught at home. Eighty four percent of parents thought that "Tolerance and respect for others" is very important; 80 percent thought so with respect to "Good manners", and only nineteen percent thought that "Obedience" is a very important quality. The study revealed striking differences between Arabs and Jews: while only fifteen percent of Jews ranked obedience as very important, 65 percent of Arabs did so. This is consistent with the findings that both parents (Dwairy 1998) and teachers (Abu Sa'ad and Hendrix 1993) are more authoritarian on average than Jews.

### ***The Israeli school system***

The Israeli educational system reflects the different populations described above. Arabs and Jews are highly segregated in the school system, as in Israeli society at large. Most Arab students attend Arabic schools (Al-Haj 1995) and virtually all Jews attend Hebrew schools. Very few students, especially in Jaffa and other mixed towns, attend ethnically mixed schools. The Hebrew school system consists of three main

sectors: non-religious public schools which are attended by about 70% of Jewish students, religious public schools attended by about 20% of Jewish students, and ultra-orthodox 'independent schools'. Both the religious and ultra-orthodox sectors are nominally supervised and funded by the State but enjoy a great deal of cultural and administrative autonomy.<sup>3</sup> Most Arabs attend public schools (there are no public religious Arab schools) but a sizeable minority of Arab students, both Christians and Muslim, attend private parochial Christian schools that have been founded by various Christian denominations and which are generally regarded to be of better quality than the public schools.

At the age of 12, after a year in pre-school and six years in primary school, most Israeli children enter middle schools where they spend grades seven, eight and nine. Middle school is followed by upper secondary school in grades ten through twelve. Students in secondary school can choose between the academic track, which prepares them for academic studies, and the vocational track, which combines academic and vocational training. Vocational tracks are usually attended by scholastically weaker students who had not done well in middle school. Both tracks now prepare students for the matriculation examinations leading to a *bagrut* diploma that is required for higher education, however, matriculation rates are much higher in the academic track (Ayalon and Shavit 2004). Overall, 50% of the birth cohort obtains a *bagrut*.

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<sup>3</sup> There are numerous shades of orthodoxy in Judaism (Sharot, 1990). For the purpose of this paper we distinguish between three main categories: ultra-orthodox (*Haredim*), orthodox and non-religious Jews. The *Haredi* communities, which comprise about 15% of the population, do not fully respect the sovereignty of the Jewish states' secular institutions and believe strongly that *Halacha* (Jewish religious law) is the only legitimate law and sole basis of moral and political authority for Jews. *Haredi* students attend separate schools, which, although largely funded by the state, do not adhere to state sanctioned curricula. Although it would have been very interesting to study school discipline comparatively between *Haredim* and other communities, this group is not represented in our data because *Haredim* do not usually cooperate with social surveys.

Israeli education is severely under-funded. On the one hand, Israel spends large proportion of its GDP on education. In 2006 8.3% of GDP was spent on education (The OECD average is under 6% - CBS 2008). However, the fertility rate in Israel is high and a large proportion of the population is under 19 years old (37% compared with 28% of the OECD population). When standardized per student and PPP (purchasing power parity) the Israeli expenditure for education is low. In 2005 the Israeli annual expenditure per student was \$6,000 by comparison to the OECD mean of \$7,527. The corresponding figures for expenditures on primary education are: \$4,699 vs. \$6,252 and at the secondary level they are: \$5,495 vs. \$7,804 (CBS 2008, OECD 2008).

Under-funding has two important implications: classrooms are large and teachers are underpaid. At the primary level, the average class size in Israel is 27.5 students as compared with the OECD average of 21.5, and at the secondary level the Israeli average is 32.8 as compared with the OECD of 24.0.<sup>4</sup> In addition, there are marked inequalities in class size between the secular public schools (30.2) and the religious schools (25.1) as well as between Arab (31.2) and Jewish public schools (27.4) (Vergan, 2007). The OECD (2008) computes the ratio of teachers' salary after 15 years of experience to GDP per capita. The OECD mean ratio varies between 1.22 and 1.34 at the primary and secondary school levels. In Israel it is much lower (0.68).<sup>5</sup>

### ***The legal context and public discourse on school discipline***

In this section, we review the discussion of school discipline and school violence in four important arenas: the debates of the *Knesset* (the Israeli parliament) Committee

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<sup>4</sup> The mean class sizes at the primary level for the other countries participating in this project are: Chile – 30.8, Italy – 18.4, Japan – 28.3, Korea – 31.6, Netherlands – 22.4, Russia – 15.5, United States – 23.1 (data are not available for Canada). The rank-order of the countries is similar with regards to the mean class size at the secondary level.

<sup>5</sup> In the other eight countries the ratios for primary school teachers are: Chile – 1.11, Italy – 1.01, Japan – 1.54, Korea – 2.29, Netherlands – 1.15, United States – 0.97 (data are not available for Canada and Russia).

for Education, Culture and Sports; a “blue-ribbon” commission on school violence (the 'Vilnaya Commission); the directives of the Director General of the Ministry of Education which formulate the concrete policies of the ministry, and the Student's Rights Law which was legislated in 2000 and amended in 2004 and is now being amended yet again.

When the Knesset is in session, the Committee for Education, Culture and Sport assembles several times a week. Participating are Knesset members, education professionals (mostly from Ministry of Education) and teachers, headmasters and parent representatives. If needed, professionals from other fields are invited, such as police officers, psychologists and social workers. We scanned the protocols of the committee in the last ten years (1998-2008) and searched for mentions of the terms "school discipline" (*mishma-at* in Hebrew) and “violence” (*alimut* in Hebrew). We found six sessions in which school discipline was discussed. Of these, only two sessions focused on school discipline (and violence), while the other four dealt with the Student's Rights Law which we will discuss below. School violence was a more prominent issue. It was discussed in twenty meetings of the committee<sup>6</sup>.

Two committee protocols deal with Israeli students' failure in PISA 2000, and focused on the relevance of school discipline to students' achievements (protocol 96, 19.11.2003; protocol 152, 28.1.2004). Committee members agreed that Israel has a serious problem with its handling of school violence and discipline, and that the subject is related to the poor PISA tests results. In most of the protocols that we examined, there was also agreement among committee members that the main reason for these problems is lack of teachers' authority in Israel: "*the teacher doesn't have any authority...there are no deterring means in schools, teachers are afraid to confront students on the most ordinary things*" (Shilgy, 19.11.2003). It seems that

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.knesset.gov.il/protocols/heb/protocol\\_search.aspx](http://www.knesset.gov.il/protocols/heb/protocol_search.aspx)

teachers are caught in a bind between the students, parents, headmasters and 'student's rights', and do not receive institutional support or backup when attempting to deal with undisciplined or violent students (for example 19.11.2003, 27.3.2000, 11.12.2000).

The lack of respect for teachers, and for authority in general, was also lamented: "*We live in a time in which there is tolerance for smashing all the values...even ones we used to respect*" (Karni, 28.1.2004). An important part of the discussions in the committee concerned the debate whether responsibility for these problems should be placed with parents, who do not educate their children well, the Ministry of Education, which does not provide clear directives to teachers, or the schools which focus too much of their energies on reaching achievement standards and not enough on values. The discussions ended with a call to the Ministry of Education to state clearer policies concerning school discipline (Shilgy 28.1.2004, Orlev 26.7.1999, Orlev 27.3.2000, Orlev 9.1.2002). While the committee did initiate some legislation to address the subject of school violence, no concrete legislative steps were taken on the matter of school discipline.

By contrast, and ironically, Knesset was more effective in legislating the Student's Rights Law which severely curtails the practice of expulsion as a disciplinary sanction in schools. The law was passed in 2000 and was amended in 2004. The law aimed to "*...establish principles defending student's rights in the spirit of human dignity and the principles of UN Children's Rights Convention*" (Students Rights Law, Paragraph 1, 2000). The law as it now reads begins with the 2004 amendment which states that all students and their parents must be informed about students' rights as well as about the Ministry's guidelines concerning the need for mutual respect, discipline and the prevention of violence in school (Students Rights Law, amendment, 2004). The amendment, which is titled On the Dignity of Education

Workers, was introduced as an attempt to appease the teachers' representatives who claimed that the bulk of the law (below) severely curtails teachers' authority (protocol 73, 14.2.2000). The amendment was adopted despite the opposition of parents' organizations who argued that *"if the teacher can't handle the student and educate him, then maybe he shouldn't be a teacher"* (Arjuany, 30.11.2004). Most Committee members agreed with the teachers' perspective that the law does little to help them enforce discipline.

The law prohibits corporal punishment, as well as excluding students from various school activities, such as class trips. The most important section in the law concerns procedures for expelling students or for transferring them to another school. In both cases the student and his/her parents are granted a right to a hearing in front of a regional committee consisting of representatives of the school district, and representatives of student and parent organizations. Parents have the right to appeal the committee's ruling and the school can not expel a student till after the hearing and appeal, if at all. Thus, the law makes it very difficult to expel or transfer students from school.<sup>7</sup> The law was passed despite considerable opposition among teachers and some parents who were concerned that schools are losing control of discipline and that schools are becoming unmanageable. In the summer of 2009 the Ministry of Education tabled an amendment to the law which essentially overturns the thrust of the previous version. It allows schools to quickly expel severely disruptive and violent students and hold the hearing and appeals at a late date (Aharonowich 2009).

Much of the public discussion on school violence in Israel centers on the Vilnai Commission. The commission was appointed by the Minister of Education in

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<sup>7</sup> In addition, the law prohibits discrimination in schools on ethnic or socioeconomic grounds. Incidentally, there is no mention of discrimination on the grounds of gender, national identity (Arab versus Jewish) or religious affiliation. We suspect that such mention would not have received support from religious and nationalist Jewish *Knesset* members.

the late 1990s. It was chartered to study the determinants of violence among and children and adolescents and to formulate policy recommendations. The commission sought input from academic scholars working on the topic, especially from Benbenishty and Harel (see below), and adopted their ecological perspective on school violence. This perspective asserts that the prevalence of violence in schools is affected by variables at the levels of students, their families, the school and the community. Accordingly, effective policies aimed at reducing violence among student call for cooperation between agents at these various levels. More importantly, the commission called upon the Ministry and school administrators to formulate clear guidelines which would elucidate acceptable disciplinary sanctions that school staff can employ in their attempts to curtail disciplinary infractions and school violence. As is common in Israeli public administration, the commission's recommendations were not fully implemented, but a few were included in several of the Ministry of Education Director General's Communiqués (Ministry of Education, 1 December 2000, 1 November 2007). The communiqué called upon school principals to engage parents, teachers and students in the formulation of clear school policies regarding discipline and violence. It also listed the sanctions that schools and teachers are permitted to use when dealing with undisciplined and violent students<sup>8</sup>. One of the more concrete instructions issued by the DG was to score students' attendance and enter the grade in their report card (1 November 2007), but it is not clear if and to what extent, these directives are enforced by schools. As one read the protocols of the Vilnaya Commission, one is struck by the familiar tension between the will to curb violence and disciplinary infractions on the one hand, and the desire to safeguard

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<sup>8</sup> For example, the teacher must explain the punishment to the students, the punishment must be suitable to the infraction in its substance and severity and it should be limited in time. The students must be given a chance to explain his/herself in front of the teacher or headmaster, preferably before the punishment is executed. These instructions are followed by a detailed list of sanctions that teachers can employ.

students' rights and dignity. In August 2009, the Ministry of Education published a new Communiqué that abolished the instructions from 2000 and present new, presumably stricter, set of rules to handle violent or undisciplined student. It requires schools to build regulations that specify school norms and sanctions regarding appearance, welcoming the teacher in class, behavior during class and so on. The directions for handling school discipline infractions revolves around the familiar practices of talking to the student, warning, informing the parents etc. (section 3.2.5), but it includes an option to suspend students for a few days in severe cases of disrupting the class or repeated misbehavior. This is the first attempt to establish clear rules for schools regarding school discipline. (Ministry of Education, August 2009).

When summarizing the legal context for the past ten years, it seems that a prevalent political concern with school discipline and violence is moderated by a stronger concern with students' rights and dignity. Legislation, directives and public discourse tend to emphasize individual rights and provide teachers with very few effective sanctions with which to enforce discipline in schools. The recent amendment to the Law may tilt the balance towards more effective disciplinary measures. As a member in the team assigned to change the law said: *"We have debated a lot around the issue of individual rights versus team rights... a child coming to school should be free to learn and not be occupied by being afraid of violent students"* (Aharonowich, 18 September 2009).

The emphasis on individual's rights also emerges in our study of media discussion of school discipline. The issue has not received very much attention, and when discussed, we see once again, that there is a more prominent concern with students' civil rights than with their right to an infraction-free and violence-free learning environment. We scanned back issues from the past ten years of Israel's two main daily newspapers; *"Ha'aretz"* and *"Yediot Aharonot"* and searched for mentions



of the terms [(discipline OR violence) AND (school or education)] and analyzed all the articles that met the search criteria. We found only 16 articles on school discipline and 26 articles on school violence<sup>9</sup>. Of the 16 articles on discipline, none appeared on the first page and all but one appeared on pages 7 and up. Thus, it seems that the topic of school discipline is not given high priority by newspaper editors. On the other hand, the majority of the articles (10) extended on half a page or more suggesting that editors do assume that the topic has some public interest. Of the articles on discipline, seven discussed student absences from school, three discussed uniforms in schools and two articles focused on the Ministry of Education's decision to grade students for behavior. Considering the broad media coverage of Israel's poor performance on PISA and TIMSS one would have expected to see considerable media attention to behavioral infractions that may disrupt learning and lower students' achievements, such as tardiness, talking out of turn, or using cell phones in class. However, we found that the main concern was students' individual rights, including opposition to the uniform requirement. We were interested to know if the articles point fingers and who is 'blamed' for disciplinary problems in schools. About half the articles indicated that school staff is responsible for students' behavior and should enforce discipline. Two articles hold the Ministry of Education responsible for not providing teachers with the necessary tools to enforce discipline. Only two articles hold students responsible for their behavior and two articles blame the parents for their children's misbehavior.

The press reflects the public opinion, in which almost 80% are dissatisfied with the level of discipline in schools (Katz and Yablon, 2001). Eighty percent believe that the Israeli school system is inept at handling violence, alcohol and drug

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<sup>9</sup> Regarding school violence, we focused only on articles which discussed violence incidents that happened on school property or on the way to or from school. We did not include in our analyze reports on incidents that students were involved in outside school time.

problems. Teacher surveys show that sixty four percent of teachers claimed that they are ill-equipped to handle discipline and violence problems, and would request more authorities to deal with these (Smith and Pniel, 2003).

### ***Israeli studies of school violence and discipline***

While there is quite a bit of research in Israel on school violence, there are very few studies on other aspects of school discipline. Much of the work on school violence has been contributed by two teams of scholars headed by Harel and by Benbenishty and Astor respectively. Benbenishty, Khoury-Kassabri and Astor (2006a) report that nearly 80% of students in grades four to eleven have been exposed to recent verbal or indirect social violence (like gossip); that nearly 60% have been exposed to moderate physical violence, and that 20% have been exposed to severe physical violence. Astor Benbenishty, Vinokur, and Zeira, (2006), report that nearly 16% of elementary school students report that they skipped school at least once in the past month because they feared victimization by other students.

Arabs are more vulnerable than Jews to most forms of violence, especially to severe physical violence, from which they are about twice as likely to suffer (28% of Arabs versus 16% of Jews) (Benbenishty et al. 2006a, 2006b). Students from lower to middle social origins are more likely to suffer from school violence than those from more privileged social backgrounds (Khoury-Kassabri 2002, Khoury-Kassabri et al. 2009). All studies point out that girls are less likely to be victimized than boys (Benbenishty et al. 2006, Harel et al. 2003, Harel Alenbogen-Frankowitz, Molcho, Abu-Asba and Habib 2002, Laufer and Harel 2003).

Several school-level variables have been identified which seem to affect the level of school violence. First, school violence is more prevalent in primary school than in middle and upper secondary school (e.g., Benbenishty et al. 2006, Harel et al.

2002). Second, and importantly, the level of severe forms of violence is inversely related to the socio-economic composition of the student body in the school (e.g., Khoury-Kassabri et al. 2009, Khoury-Kassabri et al. 2005). Third, the level of violence and disruption are inversely related to the proportion of female students in the school (Lavy and Schlosser 2007). Fourth, school size arguably, enhances violence (Khoury-Kassabri et al. 2009) and fifth the level of violence is lower in schools with a clear school policy on violence (Khoury-Kassabri et al. 2005, 2006, Harel et al. 2003). Interestingly, the effects of other aspects of school climate seem to be spuriously related to the socioeconomic composition of the student-body (Khoury-Kassabri et al. 2009). Sixth, as noted, there is somewhat more violence in Arab schools than in Jewish schools but the difference is largely due to socioeconomic composition (Khoury-Kassabri et al. 2005). Finally, there are but small and inconsistent differences in the level of violence between religious and non-religious Jewish schools (Benbenishti et al. 2006, Khoury-Kassabri 2002).

Analyses of change over time reveal some decline in the rates of violence among Jews between the 1990s and the 2000s, but stability and possibly even an increase, among Arabs (Harel, Molcho and Tilinger 2002, Benbenishti, Khoury-Kassabri and Astor 2006). Harel and his associates (2002) report an insignificant decline in school violence over time.

A few studies compared the level of school violence in Israel to other settings. First, Harel and his associates (1998, 2002) have studied health behavior in school-aged children and collected, among other variables, information on victimization. Their study is part of an international effort, largely funded by the World Health Organization, and provides comparative analysis of school violence in Israel and other countries. Of the 28 countries compared, Israel ranks eighth in percent of students who had been victimized in the preceding year and it ranks eleventh in the percent of

students who had bullied or harassed other students. Of the other eight countries participating in the present study, only three participated in Harel's study: Canada, Russia and the USA. Israel ranks higher than Canada and the USA with respect to victimization but these countries are about similar with respect to perpetration. Russia is similar to Israel in both victimization and perpetration (Harel et al. 2002: 184-191). Benbenishty and Astor (2005) compared Israel to California and also found high levels of violence in the former.

By comparison to the abundant information regarding school violence, the data on school discipline in Israel is scant. School discipline is defined as: ?? Harel and associates (2003) asked students about absenteeism, and found that almost half of the middle-school students were absent from school at least once in the previous year, and that 25% of students were absent for more than three days. They also discovered that the absence rate is twice as high among Jewish than among Arab students.

Unfortunately, we were unable to find similar studies on school discipline that rely on representative data and which provide information on the prevalence of other forms of school disciplinary infractions. Thus, our study will probably be pioneering in this regard.

## **ANALYSIS**

### ***Research questions***

The theoretical questions facing this project are developed and discussed in the lead chapter of the book. The present chapter has two important roles. First, it provides a data point for the comparative analysis and to this end it adheres to the common guidelines set by the project leader. Second, it is the first study to use representative data on school discipline in Israel. Employing the Israeli TIMSS data files of 2003 we study the determinants of disciplinary infractions and of victimization in Israeli schools. We also study the extent to which disciplinary climate in schools and

classrooms affects students' achievements in math and science, their educational expectations and victimization in schools.

### ***Data***

The Israeli TIMSS file for 2003 includes information for approximately 4,300 eighth grade students who attended a stratified sample of 146 schools. The schools were sampled in three strata: Arab schools (38 schools), non-religious Jewish schools (69 schools) and religious Jewish Schools (39 schools). In each school questionnaires and test forms were administered to a science and a math class. In addition, data were obtained from about 390 mathematics and science teachers as well as from the principals of the schools in the sample (Martin et al. 2004). We analyzed the data according to the common methodological guidelines of the comparative project which are discussed elsewhere in this volume.

### ***Findings***

In Table 1 we present descriptive statistics for the variables of the study and compare their distributions in Israel and the other countries in this project. We also compare the statistics for non-religious Hebrew public schools, religious Jewish public schools and Arab schools. The table also includes a brief description of the variables. The comparison of Israel as a whole to the means of the other countries in this comparative project reveals a striking result: on the one hand, Israeli students benefit from higher than average levels of parental education and there are more books on average in their homes. Research has shown repeatedly (e.g., De Graaf et al. 2000) that these two variables are the most important determinants of students' educational achievement. Therefore, we would have expected the achievement of Israeli students in math and science to be relatively high. However, as seen in the table, their achievements are 45 points lower than the average achievement of students in the nine

countries. This result is consistent with results reported by other analyses of both TIMSS and PISA which have shown that Israeli mean scores rank below most economically advanced countries but above most developing ones (e.g., Yogev et al. 2009).

#### TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Consistent with our introduction about discipline in Israeli society, we note that Israeli students are less disciplined on average and are more likely to be victimized than the average student in the nine countries (see Appendix Table XX). Later in the chapter we examine the hypothesis that the low tests scores of Israeli students are due to their lack of school discipline.

The comparison of the three sectors within the Israeli school system reveals striking differences: Arab parents are least educated on average, they seem to read fewer books and their families are large. Religious families occupy an intermediate position with respect to their parental education, books at home and family size.

As one would expect, a large proportion of Israeli students are immigrants (14% as compared with 7% in the nine country sample) and a large proportion (55%) attend schools that are attended by 10% of immigrants or more. Surprisingly however, 9% of the Arab students in the sample were classified as immigrants and 31% attend schools in which 10% or more of students are immigrants. This seems peculiar because one often assumes that Palestinians are an indigenous, rather than an immigrant population. The finding may be due to the immigration of Palestinian families from the West Bank and Gaza into Israel proper. Much of this immigration is due to mixed marriages between Israeli citizen Palestinian and Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza (Blass and Duchan 2006). Mixed couples usually prefer to live in Israel and their children report that at least one of their parents were born abroad and are classified as immigrants. The finding may also be due to measurement error

(children are not always aware of their parents' place of residence) or to political semantics whereby some Palestinian residents of Israel refer to it as Palestine and their answers were coded as being born elsewhere.

Contrary to our hypothesis that Arab students may exhibit oppositional behavior in schools, Arab principals report lower levels of disciplinary disengagement than principals in the two Jewish sectors. However, Arab students report a higher frequency of victimization by other students (recall that virtually all Arab students attend all-Arab schools). Finally, and consistent with their lower social background, the mean *scholastic* achievement of Arab students is lower than those of both religious and non-religious Jewish students.

As seen, the math and science scores of students attending religious Jewish schools are higher than the other two groups. This result is familiar in the literature. Coleman and his associated (Coleman Hoffer and Kilgore 1982; Coleman and Hoffer 1987) argued that religious communities are more cohesive than secular ones and that teachers and principals in religious schools feel a strong commitment to serve their communities. In cohesive communities, there is also a high degree of mutual social control and students attending religious schools are less likely to misbehave. This would suggest that the higher achievement attained by students in religious schools due, in part, to the better disciplinary climate in their classrooms. However, contrary to the social capital hypothesis we do not find large differences between religious and non-religious Jewish schools in principal and teacher reports of discipline problems. Only victimization is lower in religious schools.

#### TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

In Table 2 we present Pearson correlations among the three measures of school discipline, as well as between each of these variables and students' achievement in math and science. Two results are noteworthy. First, although the

correlations among the three indicators of discipline are significant, their magnitudes are very small. This seems to suggest a Rashomon in which principals', teachers' and students' reports of school discipline differ quite a bit. Benbenishy and Astor (2005) conducted several large surveys of students, teachers and principals on school violence and victimization and also find medium to low correlations between the levels of school violence reported by these three groups of respondents. In an unreported analysis, we factor analyzed the component questionnaire items that comprise the three indicators of school discipline and find that they tend to form factors which generally represent the respondent - principals, teachers and students, rather than specific types of infractions (e.g., classroom disruption, violence among students, etc.). Evidently, as suggested by Benbenishty and Astor (2005) students, teachers and principals experience schools somewhat differently. Alternatively, the low correlations may suggest that the reliability of our measures of discipline is quite low.

The second important result seen in the table is the negative, albeit weak correlations between school discipline and students' test scores. In our multivariate analysis that follows we will test whether these correlations withstand statistical controls or whether they are spurious.

#### TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Turning now to Table 3, we present OLS regressions for the three indicators of discipline at the school level. There are fewer discipline problems in schools that are attended by students whose parents are well educated. The gender composition of the student body also affects discipline such that the frequency of classroom disruption and victimization are related to the proportion of boys in the school. Victimization is more prevalent in schools that are attended by immigrants and *ceteris paribus* the school climate in Arab schools is more disciplined than in Jewish schools. While the



descriptive analysis showed higher victimization rates in Arabs school, in the multivariate analysis victimization in these schools appears no higher than in the other sectors. This result is in line the argument (Khoury-Kassabri et al. 2005) that the greater violence experienced in Arab schools is due to their lower mean socioeconomic composition.

As seen in Table 1, none of the students in religious Jewish schools attend mixed schools. There is a strong relationship between school sector and the proportion male students in the school. Religious Jewish schools are fully segregated by sex (except for one school in the sample). Arab schools are mixed by sex but there is only one Arab school in the sample in which over 60% of the students are male. Therefore, only 2.8% of Arab students attend schools in which 61%+ are male. Only the non-religious Jewish schools display the full variation of gender composition. Therefore, the effects of gender composition of schools and of school sector are largely confounded and it may well be that the positive effects of the proportion male is in fact an effect of religious all-male schools. We explored this possibility by estimating school-level regressions of the three discipline variables within each of the three sectors. The results for the non-religious schools are essentially similar to those seen in Table 3: positive and significant effects of 46-60% males and of 60+% males on classroom disruption and on victimization and insignificant effects on disciplinary disengagement. In the Arab schools the effect of sex composition was positive and significant only on classroom disruption. Finally, among religious schools victimization is much higher in all-male schools than in all-female schools but no other significant effects of sex compositions on discipline were found. We conclude that school disciplinary disengagement as reported by principles, classroom disruption and student victimization are consistently enhanced by the proportion of males in the student body.

When sex composition was excluded from the three models, we found that by comparison to non-religious Jewish schools, there is significantly lower disciplinary disengagement and classroom disruption in Arab schools. This clearly refutes the oppositional culture hypothesis stated earlier. In addition, we found lower classroom disruption and victimization in religious schools. The results provide some, albeit weak, support for the hypothesis ~~which states~~ that religious schools are more cohesive and disciplined.

In columns 1-3 of Table 4 we present the results of hierarchical linear models of students' test scores. The first model includes only student-level variables. As seen in all other countries boys obtain higher scores than girls. Younger students do better than older ones (presumably because among the older students are some who are weaker and had been left back a grade), parental education and the number of books at home are related positively to test scores, and immigrants score lower than natives<sup>10</sup>.

#### TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

The model shown in column 2 of Table 4 also includes several school-level predictors of students' test scores. As seen the socio-economic composition of the school, as indicated by mean parental education, enhances students' test scores. In addition, socio-economic diversity in the school (indicated by the coefficient of variation of parental education in the school) is also positively related to students' test scores. This latter result should be treated with caution because it is inconsistent with findings reported for other countries in this volume, some of which find negative effects of within school socioeconomic diversity on student achievement.

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<sup>10</sup> It is unfortunate that TIMSS does not provide information on immigrants' country of origin. The immigration handicap varies considerably between immigration groups. In Israel, there are large differences in the achievements of students who immigrated from Russia and the Western republics of the former Soviet Union and those who arrived from the southern republics or from Ethiopia (Chachashvili-Bulotin 2007). As Hauser (2009) notes, the immigration handicap in educational achievement is related to the cultural difference between the countries of origin and destination.

The effects of all three school-level indicators of discipline on students test scores are negative. The effect of teachers' reports of classroom disruption is statistically significant, as well as the effect of student-level victimization; the effect of principals' reports of students' disciplinary disengagement and that of school-level victimization (net of student-level victimization) is not significant.

Controlling for discipline increases the net effect of Male on test scores from 23.2 to 26.6 suggesting that were it not for boys' tendency to misbehave their advantage over girls would have been somewhat greater than the one we observe. In addition, controlling for discipline reduces the net advantages associated with high SES (as indicated by parents' mean education), religious and Arab schools.

Are the negative effects of school discipline large enough to account for the relatively low test scores of Israeli students? The answer depends on our choice of hypothetical alternative to the present state. If discipline had no effect on test scores or if Israeli students were perfectly disciplined, the national mean test score would have increased by about 140 points. Clearly, however, this is not a reasonable hypothetical. How about a scenario in which school discipline in Israel approximates the international averages? In that case, the Israeli mean test score would have increased by just about 12 points (recall that the Israeli mean test score falls below the international mean by about 41 points). In short, lack of discipline may explain only a small part of Israel's relatively low test scores.

#### TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Table 5 presents the variance components and the percent variance within and between schools by the three HLM models of test scores. As seen, most of the variance in student test scores lies within (63%), rather than between schools (34%). This means that for all their socioeconomic and other differences, schools account for

but a third of overall inequality in test scores. The lions' share of inequality is due to student and family characteristics rather than to the kinds of schools they attend.

As is often the case with hierarchical models in education our model explains a large proportion of the variance between schools in test scores. Most of the explained variance between schools is attributed to the differences between schools in the social composition of their student body. The student characteristics account for 30% of the between school variance and their aggregation to the school level explain an additional 23% (Note that among the school level variables added in model 2. the single highly significant effect is that of mean parental education). Our model is much less effective in explaining within-school, between-student inequality in test scores because it does not include important student characteristics that affect learning such as aptitude, motivation, etc. Most importantly, from the standpoint of this project, is that although school discipline contributes substantially (5%) to explaining between-school variance, it does not add explanatory power at the student-level.

As a next step in the analysis (columns 4 in Table 4) we estimate a non-linear hierarchical (logit) model for students' college expectations. We find positive effects of student's test score, parental education and books at home. In addition, in Israel, as in most other countries, boys are marginally less likely than girls to expect a college education and school discipline does not effect college plans (except for a marginally positive effect of school-level victimization).

Finally, we study the determinants of student victimization (columns 5 in Table 4). Expectedly (Benbenishty et al. 2006, Harel et al., 2002) boys are more likely to be victimized than girls. In addition, older students are less likely to be victimized than younger ones, presumably because they are physically stronger. Immigrants are more likely to be victimized and, in addition, victimization is more prevalent in schools that are attended by immigrants. Victimization is less prevalent in religious

than in non-religious schools and is more prevalent in schools in which principals report higher levels of disciplinary disengagement.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Israeli society at large and its school system in particular, have all the ingredients that have been found to erode school discipline. Israel is an ethnically stratified and an immigrant society which is deeply divided and conflict-ridden. The state has also been engaged for many decades in violent conflict with the Arab world both outside and within its borders. Economic and educational inequalities are higher in Israel than in most other economically developed societies. Its dominant Jewish culture celebrates informality, contempt of authority and defiance. Israeli classrooms are usually large, teachers are poorly paid and most of them feel ill-equipped to handle undisciplined and violent students. While Israeli legislators share teachers' concern with school discipline and violence, actual legislation and policy directives tend to safeguard and promote students' civil rights, and to impose strict limitations on the sanctions that teachers and principals can employ in their attempts to enforce discipline in schools.

Little wonder then that school discipline in Israel is low by comparison to the other countries that are represented in this project. This finding is consistent with findings based on the 2002 PISA data which show that student absenteeism is more frequent in Israel than in any of the other 41 countries that participated in the project and that it scores well below the international average on other measures of discipline (Kramarski and Mevorach 2004).<sup>11</sup>

Our main and most important result is this: school discipline is related significantly, if modestly to students' achievements. We found significant negative

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<sup>11</sup> Although, another comparative studies (Harel et al. 1998, 2002) places Israel at about the middle of the international hierarchy of the discipline scale.

effects of principals' reports of students' disciplinary disengagement, of teachers' reports of classroom disruption and of student victimization on their test scores.

We estimated both descriptive statistics and analytic models for three main sectors in the Israeli school system: non-religious Jewish schools, religious Jewish schools and Arab schools. The descriptive results reveal the familiar disadvantage of Arab students, relative to Jews in mean socio-economic characteristics and academic achievements. We also find the familiar advantage in school performance of religious students relative to those attending non-religious schools (Feniger 2009).

Our multivariate analysis of students' test scores reveals the familiar positive effects of social origins and of the socioeconomic composition of schools. Controlling for these variables, we do not find significant differences between religious, Arab and non-religious schools in mean test scores. Our result refutes the hypotheses (Coleman Hoffer and Kilgore 1982; Coleman and Hoffer 1987) that: (i) the school climate is more disciplined in religious schools than in secular ones, and (ii) that this contributes to the achievement of their students.

Oppositional culture theory (Fordham and Ogbu 1986) views Arab citizens of Israel as a non-voluntary minority (Eisikovits 1997) and predicts that they would resist Zionism and its school system<sup>12</sup>. The results show that Arab students appear to be more disciplined than Jewish students. This may be due to authoritarian educational norms employed by Arab teachers (Abu Sa'ad and Hendrix, 1993). While there seems to be more victimization in Arab schools, it is statistically accounted for by differences between sectors in the socioeconomic composition of schools.

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<sup>12</sup> Although, virtually all Arab students attend all-Arab schools, these schools are supervised by the central Ministry of Education which appoints teachers and sets the curriculum. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to expect some Arab students to view the school system as a whole as an agency of the Zionist state.

The comparison of Israeli data to the other eight countries reveals a surprising result: on the one hand, Israeli students benefit from higher-than-average levels of parental education, their parents own more books (a proxy for reading behavior which has been shown repeatedly to enhance learning), and they tend to hold higher educational expectations, while on the other hand, their actual achievements are substantially lower when compared to the nine country average. We explored the possibility that the under-achievement of Israeli students is due to their relatively low level discipline and found that it probably accounts for a fourth of the gap in test scores between Israel and the nine country mean.

Israeli politicians and public opinion are very concerned with the mediocre test scores that Israeli students achieve in international comparative studies and there is a pervasive tendency to attribute this failure to the lack of discipline in Israeli schools. Our study shows that school discipline does affect students' achievements; however, its effect is not large and account for but a small proportion of the variation in test scores among students. The bulk of the variation, both between Israeli students as a whole and between schools is due not to discipline but rather to the socioeconomic composition of the student body. Namely, inequality between students in their social origins is responsible for a large share of the explained differences among them in test scores. This result is consistent with those reported by most studies of educational stratification in economically developed societies (e.g., Shavit and Blossfeld 1993) and is highly robust. Its implications for social policy is clear: educational inequality of opportunity can not be reduced substantially unless social inequalities are reduced themselves. Reforms targeted at enhancing school discipline are important in their own right but even if effective, they are not likely to boost achievement by much. We should not lose sight of the fact that these inequalities are largely reflections of the class structure of our society.

## A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

We conclude with several sobering methodological qualifications. Our discussion of the relationship between school discipline, as reported by principals and teachers on the one hand, and students' test scores on the other hand, implied a causal effect of the former on the latter. However, it may also represent reverse causality: teachers and principals may allocate blame for students' low achievements on students' disengagement and disruptive behavior rather than vice versa. Sorting out the causal direction between school discipline and student achievement would require panel data which would measure both variables at two or more points in time (see the Dutch chapter in this volume). Unfortunately TIMSS is cross-sectional and longitudinal data, which include measures of both variables, is not currently available for Israel.

A related methodological remark concerns the validity of the TIMSS measures of school discipline. Principals and teachers may exaggerate their reports of disciplinary problems in attempt to justify poor test scores in their schools and classrooms, but at the same time, they may under-report disciplinary problems in an attempt to make their school and classroom look good. This may explain the low frequency of disciplinary disengagement reported by Arab school principals as opposed to the high victimization rates reported by their students. In addition, principals' and teachers' reports are largely affected by their expectations. A teacher working in a highly disciplined school may consider even the slightest infraction disruptive while one working in a very disruptive environment may take it for granted. In short, our measures of disciplinary disengagement and of classroom disruption may confound systematic biases that put into question their validity. Future research should try to measure school discipline independently of teachers and principals. One possibility could be to employ trained observers to collect quantifiable



information on students' and teachers' behavior in school. Pending the availability of suitable data, our results must be viewed as tentative.

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**Table 1. Means and standard deviations of variables by school sector**

Variables	Variable Description	Israel-All		Non-Religious Jewish Schools		Religious Jewish Schools		Arab Schools	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
<b>Student Characteristics</b>									
Male	Dummy: respondent is male	0.481	0.016	0.501	0.500	0.422	0.494	0.470	0.499
Age	Student's age in years.	14.032	0.455	14.073	0.454	13.981	0.465	13.963	0.439
Immigrant status	Dummy: respondent is foreign born.	0.138	0.345	0.167	0.373	0.101	0.302	0.090	0.286
Highest parental education	Highest education for either parent in 8 categories.	5.71	1.94	6.13	1.77	5.99	1.95	4.64	1.88
Number of books in household	Number of books in household in 5 categories.	3.37	1.17	6.43	1.13	3.81	1.13	3.33	1.22
Household size	Number of people in household.	5.33	1.45	4.79	1.18	5.99	1.38	6.29	1.45
College plans	Dummy: respondent expects to finish college or university	0.71	0.45	0.74	0.44	0.74	0.44	0.64	0.48
<b>School and Community Characteristics</b>									
School size (log)	The log of the number of students in the school	6.38	0.59	6.43	0.62	6.02	0.58	6.51	0.34
School highest grade level	School's highest grade	9.86	1.48	9.66	1.42	10.81	1.53	9.79	1.37
Community size	Community size	3.35	1.33	3.65	1.26	3.63	1.42	2.40	0.93
<b>Male Students</b>									
46-60%	Dummy: School is 46-60% male	0.43	0.50	0.49	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.56	0.50
61% +	Dummy: School is 61%+ male	0.15	0.36	0.13	0.34	0.41	0.49	0.03	0.16
<b>Immigrant Students</b>									
1-10%	Dummy: School has 1-10% immigrants	0.31	0.46	0.25	0.43	0.33	0.47	0.43	0.50
10% +	Dummy: School has 10%+ immigrants	0.55	0.50	0.67	0.47	0.43	0.50	0.32	0.47
Average parental education	School mean of parental education.	5.72	1.00	6.10	0.76	5.94	0.99	4.62	0.70
Variation in parental education	Coefficient of variation for the school average parental ed.	0.31	0.11	0.27	0.07	0.30	0.11	0.40	0.12
<b>Disciplinary Climate</b>									
Principal Reports	Average of principal responses to how frequently students are late, absent, and skip class	2.85	0.91	3.04	0.89	2.90	0.89	2.32	0.76
Teacher Reports	Mean of math/science teachers' report on extent to which disruptive students are a problem in class	3.61	0.67	3.70	0.66	3.44	0.79	3.50	0.56
Student Reports									
Victimization, student level	Sum of student responses to whether or not they had something stolen, were hit/threatened, or made fun of	0.71	0.93	0.72	0.93	0.57	0.87	0.77	0.95
Victimization, school level	School level mean of student reports	0.71	0.30	0.72	0.25	0.57	0.46	0.78	0.24
<b>Cognitive Performance</b>									
Math and science test score (combined)	Sum of Math and Science Test Scores	983.8	151.4	998.2	153.5	1012.2	140.4	928.8	139.5
N		4,318		2,069		1,093		1,156	

**Table 2. Correlations of Disciplinary and Cognitive Performance**

	<b>Frequency of Disciplinary Disengagement</b>		<b>Frequency of Classroom Disruption</b>		<b>School Level Student Victimization Index</b>
<i>Disciplinary Climate</i>					
Principal Reports					
Frequency of disciplinary disengagement					
Teacher Reports					
Frequency of classroom disruption	0.315	***			
Student Reports					
Victimization incidents, school level	0.173	***	0.277	***	
<i>Cognitive Performance</i>					
Math and science test score	-0.089	***	-0.200	***	-0.147 ***



**Table 3. Regression models predicting disciplinary disengagement, classroom disruption and school-level victimization**

Variables	Frequency of Disciplinary Disengagement	Frequency of Classroom Disruption	School-Level Victimization
<b><i>School and Community Characteristics</i></b>			
<i>School and Community Variables</i>			
School size (log)	0.288 * (0.144)	-0.058 (0.112)	-0.034 (0.059)
School highest grade level	-0.027 (0.056)	0.023 (0.043)	0.024 (0.020)
Community size	0.057 (0.058)	-0.056 (0.045)	-0.014 (0.020)
<i>School Level Student Characteristics</i>			
Average parental education	-0.319 * (0.155)	-0.358 ** (0.120)	-0.095 (0.054)
Variation in parental education	-0.848 (1.303)	-1.752 ~ (1.005)	-0.134 (0.454)
<b><i>Student Body Characteristics</i></b>			
<i>Male</i>			
46-60%	0.212 (0.183)	0.370 ** (0.141)	0.205 ** (0.063)
More than 60%	0.158 (0.197)	0.351 * (0.153)	0.363 *** (0.069)
<i>Immigrants</i>			
0-10%	0.199 (0.206)	0.068 (0.160)	0.152 * (0.072)
More than 10%	0.026 (0.196)	0.290 (0.153)	0.192 ** (0.069)
<b><i>School Sector</i></b>			
Religious Jewish Schools	-0.047 (0.202)	-0.182 (0.155)	-0.125 (0.069)
Arab Schools	-1.217 *** (0.244)	-0.568 ** (0.189)	-0.020 (0.084)
Intercept	3.357 * (1.554)	6.299 *** (1.203)	1.018 (0.545)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.190	0.145	0.331
N	140	145	146

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

**Table 4: HLM models estimating the effects of student and school level characteristics on test score, college plans and victimization**

Variables	Test Scores			College Plans	Victimization
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Male	22.912*** (4.011)	23.200*** (3.996)	26.595*** (4.058)	-0.200* (0.104)	0.348*** (0.030)
Age	-16.968*** (4.213)	-17.179*** (4.214)	-17.736*** (4.210)	-0.059 (0.101)	-0.082* (0.033)
Immigrant status	-23.554*** (5.734)	-23.093*** (5.746)	21.739** (5.749)	0.020 (0.140)	0.192*** (0.044)
Highest parental education	13.176*** (1.253)	12.057*** (1.264)	12.126*** (1.262)	0.307*** (0.033)	0.012 (0.010)
Number of books in household	14.927*** (1.769)	14.570*** (1.772)	14.711*** (1.769)	0.098* (0.040)	0.016 (0.014)
Household size	-0.780 (1.493)	-0.184 (1.506)	-0.224 (1.504)	-0.001 (0.038)	-0.012 (0.012)
Math and science test score				0.006*** (0.000)	
School size (log)		14.820 (11.127)	10.983 (11.205)	0.007 (0.129)	-0.114** (0.043)
School highest grade level		-6.351 (4.561)	-5.443 (4.436)	0.043 (0.047)	0.029 (0.018)
Community size		3.857 (4.746)	1.545 (4.561)	-0.001 (0.060)	0.015 (0.018)
1-10% Immigrant Students		-5.027 (16.838)	-1.336 (16.133)	0.091 (0.179)	0.064 (0.065)
10%+ Immigrant Students		-8.239 (16.683)	0.295 (16.360)	0.099 (0.204)	0.124~ (0.066)
Average parental education		64.747*** (12.339)	51.670*** (12.202)	0.132 (0.106)	-0.070 (0.049)
Variation in parental education		203.320~ (105.690)	142.400 (101.860)	1.340 (1.054)	-0.342 (0.410)
Religious Jewish Schools		18.509 (15.846)	7.810 (15.615)	-0.148 (0.179)	-0.124~ (0.064)
Arab Schools		11.322 (18.815)	-11.078 (19.801)	0.060 (0.202)	0.115 (0.079)
Disciplinary disengagement			-11.612 (6.948)	0.001 (0.070)	0.069* (0.027)
Classroom disruption			-21.953* (8.858)	0.044 (0.103)	0.064 (0.035)
Victimization, school level			-11.640 (18.999)	0.400~ (0.220)	
Victimization, student level			-7.910*** (2.091)	-0.028 (0.057)	
Intercept	1107.070*** (60.717)	640.290*** (137.950)	890.780*** (147.110)	-7.967*** (2.090)	2.095** (0.705)

~p<.10, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

**Table 5: Within and between school variance components of test scores and percent variance explained**

	Intercept only		Student level variables		Student and school level variables		Student, school and discipline	
	Variance Components	%	Variance Components	% Variance explained	Variance Components	% Variance explained	Variance Components	% Variance explained
Between Schools	7873.51	34.14%	5541.34	30%	3710.7	53%	3316.2	58%
Within Schools	14570	63.18%	13041	10%	13039	11%	12997	11%
Total	23,062	100.00%	18,823		16,856		16,142	