

are significant obstacles to the full integration of all three groups in the labor market and, as a consequence, in Israeli society. The 14-page English summary and the full report in Hebrew can be found online at www.ono.ac.il.

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Chapter 1: Employers Versus Employees—A Glass Ceiling Made of Reinforced Concrete . . .

An attitude questionnaire was completed by 568 college and university students studying at different institutions in Israel. Most of the Arab, Ethiopian-descent, and ultra-Orthodox students who completed the questionnaire expressed an identical feeling: In Israel 2009, there is no equal opportunity.

The questionnaire asked the students to relate to the following statements: "My resume is less attractive because of my identity group," "The areas in which members of my identity group can be hired are limited," "Only someone who belongs to my identity group truly wants to work with me," and "Academic education gives me an advantage at work." Additional statements related to giving equal opportunities at work, invitations for job interviews, salary levels, compromising on a workplace, the opportunity to work in a management position, the number of group members found in prestigious positions, job satisfaction, and employment security.

Simultaneously, the central employers in the Israeli economy received questionnaires that checked their attitudes and perspectives regarding the employment of Arab, Ethiopian-descent, and ultra-Orthodox college graduates. In order to prevent prejudicing the research, employers were asked questions regarding their perception of the attitudes and actions of other employers in their professional field. Answers [ranged] from 1 (very low) to 6 (the highest level). Employers were asked about an "exclusion profile" that included several variables: hesitant to employ at all, hesitant to promote, perceived difficulties integrating into the staff, tendency to pay a lower salary relative to other employees, and perceived difficulty in complying with demands of the job. In addition, 30 employers were interviewed as part of the qualitative part of the study.

The participants of Ethiopian descent had a negative self-image, but Arab college

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The following excerpts are from a summary of a 45-page study in Hebrew conducted by Ono Academic College, an Israeli university known for relatively high enrollments of ultra-Orthodox Israelis. It examines the presence of Israelis of Ethiopian descent, Israeli Arabs, and ultra-Orthodox Israelis in quality professions in Israel—capital markets; banks; advertising, media, law, and accounting firms; and the public sector—and analyzes their chances of integration and promotion, concluding that there

graduates [were] the most excluded. Students of Ethiopian descent saw themselves very negatively on the clear majority of the variables tested. Female ultra-Orthodox students considered themselves only negligibly excluded, in comparison to male ultra-Orthodox students, who did consider themselves excluded. The Arab students had mixed attitudes. Despite the fact [that] they considered themselves excluded on many variables, they did not think that employers had a prejudice against them and even thought that they would be promoted.

However, from the perspective of the employers, the Arabs were actually considered the most excluded group (average 3.64 out of 6), followed by the ultra-Orthodox (3.38 out of 6) and Israelis of Ethiopian descent (3.36 out of 6). The exclusion level of the control group was 2.25 during the research period (January–June 2009).

Most Students of Ethiopian Descent: Academic Education Does Not Provide an Advantage at Work

Unlike most of the groups, the students of Ethiopian descent did not think that academic education gave them an advantage at work. . . . It is likely this reflects the greater difficulty they experience. From the employers' responses, it emerges that the largest obstacle facing college graduates of Ethiopian descent is the hesitation to promote them. There was slightly less hesitation to employ them in general, there was a tendency to pay them less, and there was an assumption that they will have more difficulty integrating into a team of workers.

The verbal statements about college graduates of Ethiopian descent revealed an assumption that there is a cultural gap: "Underdeveloped," "Give up easily and have trouble passing evaluation center tests," and a lower ability to integrate than either the Arabs or the ultra-Orthodox, despite their desire to integrate. . . . Perhaps, this is [why] field data show that approximately 80 percent of college graduates of Ethiopian descent are employed within their community.

Ultra-Orthodox Men—Partially Excluded; Ultra-Orthodox Women—Not Excluded

Male ultra-Orthodox students perceive themselves as excluded on most of the

variables but not to the same extent as the students of Ethiopian descent, and they believe, to a certain extent, that an academic education does give them an advantage.

This result is supported by the quantitative study conducted of employers. It was found that employers' greatest hesitation was promoting ultra-Orthodox Jews within the organization. They are slightly less hesitant to hire them, assume that they will have difficulty integrating in the work team, show a tendency to pay them less, and, finally, assume that they will have difficulty meeting the requirements of the job. In contrast to the ultra-Orthodox men, the ultra-Orthodox women hardly consider themselves excluded. . . .

The main obstacle[s] facing the ultra-Orthodox [were] cultural difference . . . and fear of norms that would create conflict in the workplace (such as Sabbath observance and shaking hands with women).

Unlike the other groups, throughout the entire study, there were positive attitudes toward the ultra-Orthodox as having intellectual ability . . . and [being] hard-working. . . . Therefore, it can be assumed that the concern about promoting this population is rooted solely in a lack of desire to deal with cultural differences. . . .

Arabs—Varied Perceptions

The Arab population included in the study was found to have varied perceptions. It perceives itself as excluded on many variables but does consider an academic education an advantage in the job market, does not see itself working in odd jobs, does not think that employers have prejudices against it or that it would be laid-off first during cutbacks, expressed satisfaction from their work, does not fear failure, and even thinks that managers will promote members of the group.

However, in contrast to the self-image of the Arab students, employers expressed hesitation about the very idea of employing Arabs, unlike Israelis of Ethiopian descent or the ultra-Orthodox. Only after that did they express hesitation about promoting them within the organization, a tendency to pay them a lower salary, the assumption that they would have difficulty integrating into work teams, and, finally, the assumption that they would have difficulty meeting the job demands.

The most significant obstacle that employers raised was the lack of military

service, which they consider a platform for personal growth. Furthermore, they expressed concern about their ability to work with security-related clients. In the interviews, there was conspicuous concern about tension in the workplace over national security issues. It is possible that this is the reason that employers responding to the qualitative survey suggested that Arab employees have the most difficulty working on a team. . . .

The Barrier and the Springboard

On average, the study found that employers were more hesitant to promote employees from examined groups than they were to hire them. (This finding is primarily influenced by the data relating to the ultra-Orthodox and Ethiopian-descent groups.) This means that once hired, they would have a significantly lower chance of promotion than Jews who do not belong to one of these excluded groups. This is followed by hesitation to employ these groups in general (particularly to employ Arabs), a tendency to pay employees from the examined groups a lower salary than others, and the assumption that they will have difficulty integrating and meeting the demands of the job.

Therefore, it is no wonder that when the students were asked about the importance of education in their professional development, both the Arabs and the ultra-Orthodox considered it very important (Arabs: 4.96; ultra-Orthodox women: 4.32; ultra-Orthodox men: 3.53), a response that is much higher than the control group (2.84), which consisted of students who are not members of the excluded groups. It is likely that this is the result of their hope that their education will "compensate" for the perceived disadvantage of their identification group and allow them a "springboard" into prestigious professions. In light of this, the perception of the students of Ethiopian descent regarding the importance of education is particularly serious (2.22 comparison with 2.84 for the control group). It can be assumed that while the Arab and ultra-Orthodox students believe in the ability of education to be a springboard, the students of Ethiopian descent doubt the ability of education to give them an advantage in the employment market, an attitude that is likely to become socially explosive. . . .