

Social and Educational Changes vs. Social Activism – Evidence from the Arab Community in Israel

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Abstract

Arab Community in Israel constitutes one fifth of Israel population. My presentation attempts to explain the steep rise in the level of self-confidence of the Arab-public in Israel in the last two decades. In principle, I propose an analysis that links two key variables in the existence of Arabs in Israel. First, the rise of the middle class and its strengthening over the years in light of a significant increase in the level of education and social developments that accompany an increase in the level and patterns of social activism. And secondly, the connection between this increase in the level of human capital of the Arabs in Israel and the willingness to contribute to the public sphere, that is, the willingness to participate in initiating social and cultural changes concerning the collective achievements of the Arab minority in Israel. The main argument of my lecture is that the accumulation of human and social capital, at both the individual and the collective levels, is a fundamental element for social, cultural growth and development and a source of "social immunity". "Social immunity" is the degree of interdependence and social cohesion that makes it easier for a society to overcome challenges and progress. It involves the willingness of individuals to contribute their own resources, such as time, financial resources and personal capabilities in the public sphere in order to ensure their society's development and prosperity. In the presentation I will present recent public survey data among Arabs in Israel conducted recently and it sheds light on the connection between major variables that are related to my argument. The survey included a representative sample of 300 participants, selected to reflect the religious, geographical, gender, and cultural composition of Arab society in Israel.

Keywords

Arab Minority, Palestinians in Israel, Israel, Middle Class, Social Capital