

# EFFECT OF GENDER ON ETHNIC HOMOPHILY OF JEWISH AND ARAB PUPILS IN ISRAEL

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## Introduction

Social segregation of Arabs and Jews in Israel is high. Most Arab and the vast majority of Jews live in ethnically homogeneous towns. Reflecting this high degree of residential segregation, Arab and Jewish youth are largely segregated in the Israeli school system, too. While the bulk of Arab and Jewish students thus attend segregated schools, in recent years a small but growing number attend mixed Arab-Jewish schools.

Mixed education is on the rise because a growing number of Arabs, especially middle-class families, are moving out of all-Arab towns in search of quality housing and improved living conditions. The poor state of the Arab education system, prompt certain Arab parents to prefer Jewish education, which they see as being of higher quality. The growing number of mixed schools should also be attributed to the deliberate efforts of non-profits and parents' groups interested in affording their children a mixed and bilingual education.

## Background

Girls' friendships are more intimate on average than boys' friendships. As inter-ethnic friendships are often less intimate than same-ethnic friendships, it is possible that boys' networks are more ethnically diverse than those of girls. On the other hand, girls are more pro-social, aware of exclusion, and have more positive interethnic attitudes than boys. In addition and irrespective of gender factor, children's awareness of ethnic and social distinctions increases with age and may thus result in heightened boundaries.

In conservative societies, particularly in Arab society in Israel, women are often seen as responsible for inter-generational cultural transmission of traditions. Women's commitments to ethnic collectivity may hinder their association with boys from other ethnic groups.

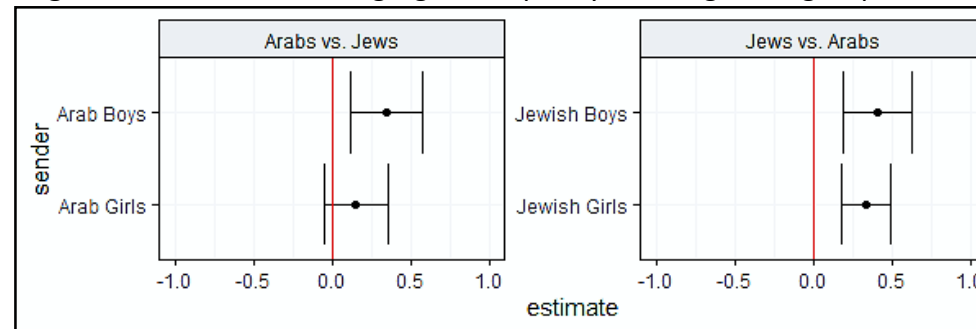
## Main Findings

**Table 1.** A comprehensive ERG model of tie formation. 'ego=Arab girl & alter=Arabs' is the reference category.

Estimation method: REML			
	Estimate	Std. Error	P-value
Mutual	1.56	0.08	***
GWESP.fixed.0.5	1.54	0.27	***
Gender nodematch	1.02	0.07	***
Edgecov ego=Arab girl & alter=Jews	- 0.15	0.11	
Edgecov ego=Jewish girl & alter=Arabs	- 0.35	0.12	**
Edgecov ego=Jewish girl & alt=Jews	- 0.02	0.09	
Edgecov ego=Arab Boy & alter=Arabs	0.19	0.11	
Edgecov ego=Arab boy & alter=Jews	- 0.15	0.13	
Edgecov ego=Jewish boy & alter=Arabs	- 0.37	0.11	***
Edgecov ego=Jewish boy & alter=Jews	0.03	0.09	

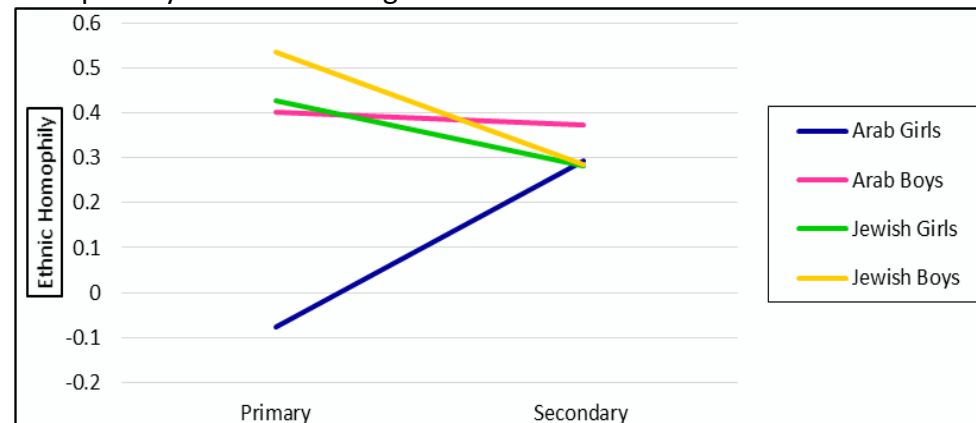
\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001

**Figure 1.** Level of ethnic segregation, split by ethnic/gender group.



Note: Point estimates of linear combinations and 95% confidence intervals.

**Figure 2.** Ethnic Homophily of an ethnicityXgender interaction groups, compare by educational stage.



## Hypotheses

- ❖ H1: Girls are more ethnically homophilous than boys.
- ❖ H2: Ethnic homophily of Arab girls is higher, compared to all other sub-groups (Arab boys, Jewish boys and Jewish girls).
- ❖ H3: Arab girls in secondary schools are more ethnically homophilous than in primary school.

## Data and Methods

**Data:** social networks data from Shavit & Shwed project of *Arab-Jewish Integration in Israeli Schools* (<https://arab-jewish-integration.tau.ac.il>).

**Sample selection:** 4<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> graders within classes that includes more than 7 percent of Arabs and Jews.

**Dependent variable:** Ethnic homophily in friendships (50 networks).

**Independent variable:** gender, ethnic identity (Arab or Jew) and educational stage (primary or secondary).

**Method:** multivariate random-effects meta-analysis accounts for controlling confounders: gender-based homophily, network density, reciprocity and transitivity.

## Conclusions

- ❖ Contrary to hypotheses H1 and H2, Figure 1 shows that by comparison to Arab girls, Arab boys, Jewish boys and Jewish girls show greater preference for same-ethnic friendships.
- ❖ Consistent with H3, Figure 2 shows that among Arab girls the tendency for ethnic homophily is higher among secondary than among primary school students.
- ❖ By contrast, Figure 2 also shows that ethnic homophily of Jewish boys and Jewish girls, in primary schools, is stronger than in secondary schools. This decline may reflect an accommodation over time of Jews who attend ethnically mixed schools to socializing with Arabs, or it may be due to the flight, between primary and secondary schools, of Jews from mixed schools.