

# Social Ostracism Among Pupils

Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit

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# Social Ostracism Among Pupils

Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit\*

## Abstract

This chapter presents findings from Israel concerning ostracism among pupils, its distribution between pupils and classes, and its causes and consequences. The chapter looks at Israel relative to international studies when discussing possible causes and implications of ostracism. School climate data collected as part of the Meitzav exams shows that the rate of pupils reporting ostracism in Israeli schools in 2015 was about 6 percent of all pupils, and in more than 60 percent of classes at least one pupil reported being ostracized in the previous month. Ostracism is particularly prevalent in primary school classes. There is a negative correlation between the chances of experiencing ostracism and the pupil's parental education level, as well as the average education level of the parents in the class. The share of pupils in schools in the Arab education system who reported they suffered from ostracism was particularly high at 11 percent of all pupils, compared to 4 percent of pupils in Hebrew education. Furthermore, there is a positive correlation between the chances of experiencing ostracism and low academic achievements in math and English (as a second language), even when controlling for the pupils' parental education. In light of the fact that pupils in the lower grades and Arab pupils report particularly high rates of experiencing ostracism, it is encouraging to find that between 2007 and 2015 there was a significant drop in the level of reports of ostracism, especially among these two groups.

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## Introduction

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*“...the other students thought me weird and never spoke to me. I tell you in all honesty that at one stage they refused to speak to me for 153 days, not one word at all .... That was a very low point for me in my life and on the 153rd day, I swallowed 29 Valium pills ” (Williams, 2009)*

Randall Collins (2008), one of the leading sociologists of our times, defined school as “an approximation of a total institution,” in which life is characterized by frequent interactions with others, repeated interaction with the same people, the necessity of participating in these interactions, and subjugation to teachers. This structure has a significant impact on status hierarchy in the institution, which is characterized, among other things, by the fact that “those at the bottom are reprehensible to an extent that is disproportionate to their structural location” and “seen as not only lowly, but degraded. Accordingly, they are avoided and often harassed and victimized” (Milner, 2004, p. 84).

In Israel, the lowest rung in the social hierarchy in schools are pupils experiencing a *herem*,<sup>1</sup> those who are ostracized. Anyone who grew up in the education system remembers school ostracism because the immense suffering caused to ostracized children leaves an indelible mark on them (Williams, 2007; 2009). This study seeks to offer current descriptive statistics of ostracism in Israel, and to interpret these data within the context of studies in Israel and abroad.

Most of the studies that focus on victims in the classroom use the term “bullying.” In order for an action to be considered bullying it must have three characteristics: (1) intentional violence; (2) repetition; (3) unequal power relations between the aggressor and the victim (Hymel and Swearer, 2015; Olweus, 2013). Studies on bullying distinguish between four kinds of bullying: physical bullying, verbal bullying, social/relational bullying, and cyberbullying (Hymel and Swearer, 2015). Relational bullying is defined

1 A term for school bullying used both by children and adults. *Herem* is a biblical word, its first known use is in the fifth book of the Torah in which God commands Israel to boycott the other nations living in the Promised Land (New Jerusalem Bible, Deuteronomy 7. 1-3). It is justified as a means of preventing inter-marriage that in turn might result in the worshipping of other gods (ibid.).

Among Jewish communities, the word is used to indicate the casting out of a community member. Two famous historical figures who were subjected to *herem* are Baruch Spinoza and Uriel da Costa. The word is also used to indicate economic boycott, e.g., both the economic boycott of South Africa and the Palestinian BDS movement.

Pupils in Israel are heavily preoccupied with *herem*.

as acts of spreading malicious rumors, engaging in gossip, isolation and exclusion from social activities.

Ostracism is therefore a special case of bullying, and is included in the category of relational bullying or severe relational bullying. Bullying, for its part, is a special case of violence — characterized by repetition and asymmetrical power relations. Accordingly, the study findings will be interpreted in the context of studies that examine relational bullying, bullying in general and school violence.

In countries where this phenomenon has been measured, between 10 and 50 percent of pupils have suffered from bullying in school (Chester et al., 2015; Craig et al., 2009; Nansel et al., 2001). In Israel, the range is between 8 and 36 percent (Berkowitz and Benbenishty, 2011; Tarablus, Heiman and Olenik-Shemesh, 2013; Rolider and Ochayon, 2005; Craig et al., 2009).<sup>2</sup>

Social isolation, exclusion and ignoring others are a major part of the bullying activities in school. A comprehensive study in the US found that 13 percent of children suffer from physical abuse, 26 percent suffer from exclusion, social isolation or having been ignored, and 32 percent suffer from rumors being spread about them (Wang, Lannotti and Nansel, 2009). A study in Israel found that 82 percent of the pupils experienced social-verbal violence, and 23 percent experienced social ostracism. The findings in Israel are based on surveys conducted between 1998 and 2002 and particularly on a survey from 1999 (Benbenishty and Astor, 2005).

This chapter presents current data on ostracism — severe relational bullying — in Israel. The analysis focuses on the correlation between experiencing ostracism and sector, class, gender, and grade level, and reviews changes in patterns of ostracism over time.

## Data

This chapter is based on Meitzav school growth and effectiveness indices — a series of tests, questionnaires and surveys Israel conducts in primary and middle schools each year.<sup>3</sup> There are two kinds of indices: academic tests, which examine pupils' abilities in English (as a second language), math and language arts (Hebrew or Arabic), and pedagogical climate and environment questionnaires that focus on issues such as “relations among the school

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2 The gaps arise in part from the way of measuring bullying; some of the studies examine behavior in the last two weeks, others — in the last month (Rolider and Ochayon, 2005) or the last two months (Craig et al., 2009), and yet others in the school year of the study (Berkowitz and Benbenishty, 2011). Some of the researchers do not note the exact wording of the question that was asked (Tarablus, Heiman and Olenik-Shemesh, 2013).

3 Meitzav is the Hebrew acronym for Measurement of School Growth and Efficiency.

population (teachers, pupils and parents), the pupil's self-efficacy and motivation to learn, social engagement and contribution to the community, sense of protection and security, active and relevant learning."<sup>4</sup> Until 2014, the Meitzav questionnaires were administered to half of the schools in Israel every year; since 2014, they have been administered to one-third of the schools every year. The academic tests are given in grades 2, 5 and 8, and the pedagogical climate and environment questionnaires on which this article is based are given in fifth and ninth grade. Since 2007, the climate questionnaires have included questions concerning experiences of violence, including the question of whether the respondent had been the victim of ostracism in the previous month.<sup>5</sup>

The chapter's analysis of the correlation between ostracism and collective characteristics, such as the share of pupils experiencing social exclusion and ostracism, sector and grade level, is based on educational climate data from 2015. This includes 144,918 pupils who answered the question relating to ostracism in the previous month. The analysis examining ostracism relative to individual variables such as gender, pupil's parental education and sector, is based on 2009 data including 201,802 pupils who answered the question. Due to a change in the policy of the National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education (RAMA), these are the most current data available on the individual level.

## 1. The extent of the phenomenon of ostracism

Figure 1 shows the percentage of pupils who, in 2015, reported being victims of different types of violence in the past month. The figure divides the kinds of violence by types: physical violence, social/relational violence and cyber violence (Hymel and Swearer, 2015). As a rule, these data do not establish whether pupils are reporting isolated experiences of violence or bullying, but ostracism is the exception: ostracism is violence for which asymmetry and repetition are necessary by definition, which is to say it is a kind of

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4 Ministry of Education website, <http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/Rama/Meitzav>.

5 It should be noted that on the Meitzav questionnaires the pupils were not asked whether they themselves ostracized another pupil, and, therefore, there is no data about the characteristics of the ostracizers.

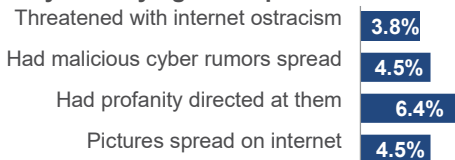
violence that is essentially bullying.<sup>6</sup> This may be the reason that *herem* is the word Israeli children use themselves to describe bullying.

As can be seen in the figure, in 2015, almost 6 percent of the pupils reported that in the previous month they had been ostracized, and nearly 4 percent reported that there had been a call to ostracize them Online as well (for more on this, see the Appendix).

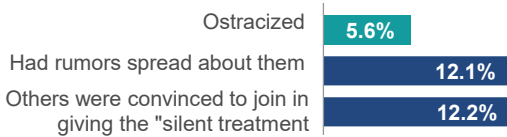
**Figure 1. Rate of reporting of experiencing different types of school violence, 2015**

**Self report**

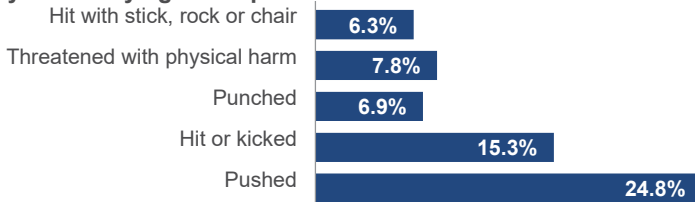
**Cyberbullying in the past month**



**Relational bullying in the past month**



**Physical bullying in the past month**



Source: Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit, Taub Center | Data: RAMA, School Climate and Pedagogical Files, 2015

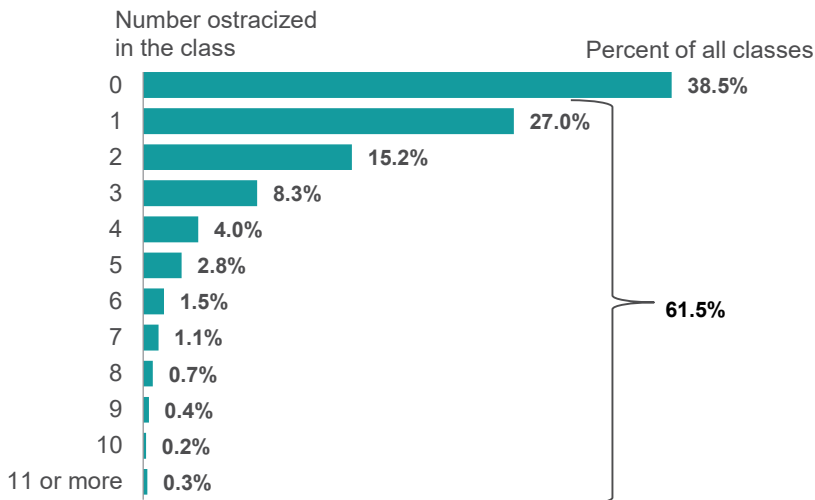
<sup>6</sup> The term "ostracism" in this chapter is defined as violence that requires continuity and asymmetry, but this definition is not above criticism. It can also be argued that ostracism does not require asymmetrical power relations between the leader of the ostracism, inasmuch as the ostracism is actually led by a particular pupil, and the object of the ostracism. This position is problematic because ostracism is imposed on the ostracized pupil and therefore necessarily relies on power differentials between them and the group of ostracizers. The demand for continuity and repetition of the act of ostracism can also be questioned. It is possible that some of the pupils who report being victims of ostracism are referring to a single and not repetitive event — for example, the fact that they were not invited to a birthday party — as ostracism. In order to test this possibility, a study must be done comparing pupils' reports in surveys with additional empirical information, through interviews or observations.

It is important to note that class ostracism affects not only the ostracized child, but also the other children. A study of 891 primary school pupils in Israel found that violence towards one pupil has a very strong effect on the rest of the pupils, similar to the effect of violence aimed at them personally: 48 percent of the pupils noted that violence aimed at them caused them to be in a bad mood, and 38 percent reported that violence towards others caused them to be in a bad mood. Of the pupils surveyed, 31 percent of the pupils reported that violence aimed at them made it hard for them to concentrate and 32 percent reported that violence towards others made it hard for them to concentrate. Furthermore, 33 percent of the pupils reported that physical violence that was aimed at them affected them in the long term, and 34 percent reported that physical violence aimed at others had a long-term effect on them (the data about the effect of verbal abuse in the long term was 23 percent and 24 percent, respectively) (Reuveni, 2011).

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of classes by the number of pupils who reported experiencing ostracism. The findings presented in this figure are extremely important: although a minority of the pupils experienced ostracism (5.6 percent), in over 60 percent of classes there is at least one child who suffers from ostracism.

### Figure 2. Distribution of classes by the number of pupils ostracized in the class, 2015

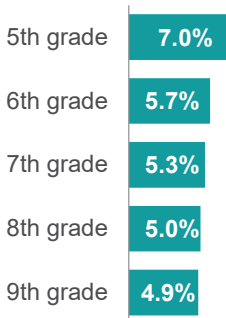
As a percent of all classes, 8,657 classes



Source: Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit, Taub Center | Data: RAMA, School Climate and Pedagogical Environment files, 2015



**Figure 3. Share of pupils who report being ostracized by grade, 2015**



Source: Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit, Taub Center | Data: RAMA, School Climate and Pedagogical Environment files, 2015

Figure 3 presents the percent of children who experience ostracism by grade level. Similar to international findings concerning bullying (DeVoe and Bauer, 2011), and findings from Israel concerning violence in schools (Benbenishty and Astor, 2005), the phenomenon of ostracism is more common in the primary school years, in grades 5 and 6, and the share of children experiencing ostracism or bullying drops as the pupils' age rises (the gaps are significant).

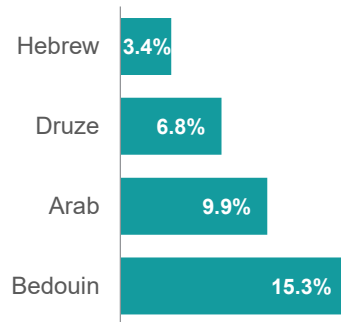
## 2. Characteristics of pupils who experience ostracism

### Sector

The most salient finding concerning ostracism is that pupils enrolled in the Arab education system (Arab, Bedouin and Druze) suffer from ostracism at much higher rates than pupils in Hebrew education. Ostracism affects about only 4 percent of the pupils in Hebrew education compared to 7 percent of the pupils in the Druze education stream, 10 percent of the pupils in Arab education and 15 percent of the pupils in Bedouin education (Figure 4). A look at the differences by classes where at least one pupil reported ostracism finds that in 79 percent of the classes in Arab education there is at least one pupil who suffers from ostracism, compared to 50 percent of classes in Hebrew education.

**Figure 4. Share of pupils who report being ostracized, 2015**

By educational stream

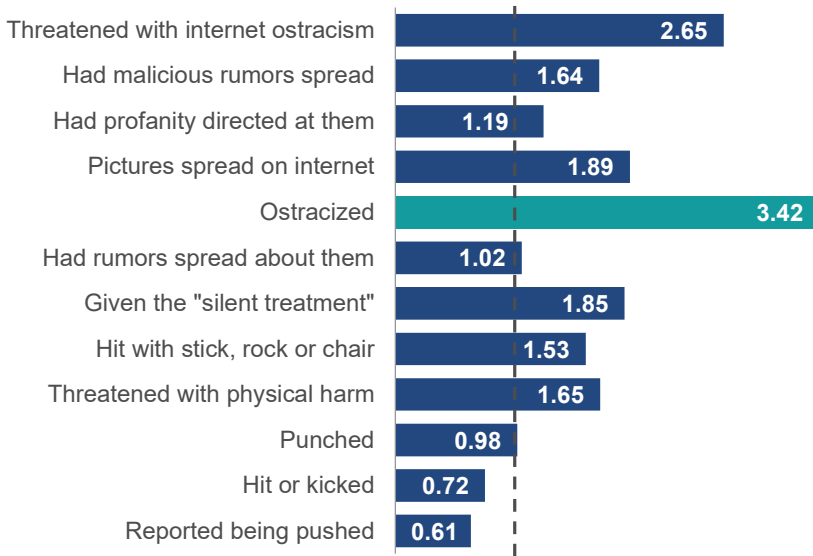


Source: Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit, Taub Center | Data: RAMA, School Climate and Pedagogical Environment files, 2015

The gap between education streams in the rate of pupils who report experiences of ostracism raises the question of whether this gap is unique to the phenomenon of ostracism or perhaps is a general gap in the level of reporting such experiences in the classroom. Figure 5 presents the gaps between pupils in the Arab and Hebrew education streams in reporting various kinds of violence. The measurement unit is the odds ratio, which is to say the probability of being ostracized divided by the probability of not being ostracized. The gap shown in the figure is the odds ratio of Jews for each type of violence divided by the odds ratio of Arab Israelis for the same type of violence. An index equaling 1 denotes an equal level of reporting among Jews and Arab Israelis. An index of more than 1 denotes a situation in which Arabs are more likely to report than Jews, and the higher the index, the larger the gap between Arab Israelis and Jews. An index of less than 1 denotes a situation in which Jews are more exposed to ostracism than Arab Israelis, and the smaller the index the larger the gap between Jews and Arab Israelis. In reporting ostracism, the ratio between the educational streams is 3.5, and is the highest of all types of violence in school. The second largest gap between Arab Israelis and Jews concerns reporting cyberostracism (2.5). Thus it appears that the gap in ostracism between Jews and Arab Israelis is particularly high.

Previous studies found that Arabs report being victims of severe physical violence or threats more than Jews, but report being victims of social-verbal violence less than them (Benbenishty and Astor, 2005; Khoury-Kassabri, 2011; Khoury-Kassabri, Benbenishty, Astor and Zeira, 2004). However, a closer look at the comprehensive study by Benbenishty and Astor, which includes a question about ostracism, shows that even though social-verbal violence is less prevalent among Arabs, ostracism is different from the other actions in that category. As opposed to all the other actions included in the category of social-verbal violence, their study found that the level of ostracism among Arab pupils is much higher than among Jewish pupils (Benbenishty and Astor, 2005). Furthermore, in the studies cited above, the definition of social-verbal violence was broad, and therefore the studies found that between 70 percent and 82 percent of the pupils experienced social-verbal violence (Benbenishty and Astor, 2005; Khoury-Kassabri, Benbenishty, Astor and Zeira, 2004), compared to a much lower level of ostracism. This is another example of the importance of distinguishing between experiences of bullying and experiences of violence that are not necessarily asymmetric and repetitive (Olweus, 2013), or alternatively distinguishing between experiences of severe and moderate violence (Benbenishty and Astor, 2005).

**Figure 5. The ratio between the odds quotient of pupils in Arab and Hebrew education reporting various types of school violence, 2015**



Source: Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit, Taub Center | Data: RAMA, School Climate and Pedagogical Environment files, 2015

The large gap in reported ostracism between Jews and Arab Israelis calls for an examination of possible differences in the wording of the question in Hebrew and Arabic. The questionnaire in Arabic uses the word *muqata'a* (مقاطعة) for ostracism.<sup>7</sup> Two Arabic translators, one born in 1983 and the other born in 1988, were asked whether this word is understood by children to mean the same thing as *herem* in Hebrew. The translator born in 1983 said that to the best of her knowledge the word is not used by children to describe social relations, but rather is limited to the adult world. The translator born in 1988 said that as far as she knows the word is used to describe ostracism in children's social lives (alongside the word *muharaba* [محرابة], and creating *ahzab* [احزاب], alliances, in order to declare ostracism). It can therefore be said that even though the word is not used as commonly as *herem* in Hebrew, which every Hebrew-speaking child and adult know and use to describe

<sup>7</sup> We would like to thank Hedva Dvash, head of the Department of Public Inquiries and Information at RAMA, for relaying the relevant questions in Arabic.

the phenomenon, it is still a relatively good translation that at least some children use in their daily lives. Also, the full question specified actions connected to ostracism: “In the last month, a group of children imposed a *muqata’a* on me, and refused to talk to me or play with me.”

In response to a survey question “one of the pupils tried to convince other pupils not to talk to me or be my friend” (worded exactly the same way in Hebrew and in Arabic) there was a 1.85-fold gap between pupils in Hebrew education and pupils in the various streams of Arab education – the fourth largest gap. To ascertain beyond doubt that the term *muqata’a* is the most suitable to describe ostracism among Arabs, observational studies must be conducted to examine the way pupils talk about bullying and ostracism and to compare it to the Meitzav answers. However, on the basis of information available today, it does not seem that the differences in understanding the question is a central explanatory factor for the gaps.

The large gaps between groups in Israel vis a vis ostracism rates are exceptional also in comparison to gaps in bullying rates in international studies. In the US, for example, in a sample of 25 million pupils examined by the National Center for Educational Statistics in the years 2011/12, 34 percent of white pupils reported being victims of bullying, compared to about 29 percent of African American pupils, 36 percent of Hispanic pupils, and 42 percent of Asian pupils (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017). This means that the largest gap – between Asian pupils and African American pupils – is 1.77. Furthermore, even when a correlation was found between ethnicity or race and victimhood, it was not as sharply correlated with the group’s power position in society, as it was in Israel.

The correlation between education stream and the share of pupils reporting ostracism in the classroom remained significant and extremely powerful even when controlling for average parental education in the class (Appendix Table 1 presents a linear regression examining this correlation). Past studies seeking to explain differences in exposure to school violence between Jews and Arabs and between Bedouin and other Arabs emphasize economic differences as an explanatory factor (Khoury-Kassabri and Attar-Schwartz, 2008). When it comes to ostracism, though, it appears that economic differences are not a significant mediating factor in the gaps and the extent of the phenomenon. Benbenishty and Astor (2005) also discuss the gaps between Jews and Arabs in patterns of school violence. Along with economic gaps, they mention other possible explanatory factors: crime and political oppression. It is possible that community violence and political oppression are factors that also contribute to the link between educational stream and ostracism in the school.

On the basis of Benbenishty and Astor's research another explanation can be offered. As they note, it is very possible that the social meaning of violence differs from one group to another. In one group, ostracism may be common, but the social significance of this sort of violence may not be that different from cursing or gossip. In another group, ostracism might occur in exceptional cases and manifest only as a general and complete censure of a pupil by the entire group (*ibid.*). Support for the idea that this difference in social meaning of the violence explains differences between Jews and Arabs can be drawn from an analysis of the causes presented by Benbenishty and Astor, according to which a common differentiation of kinds of violence does not depend on the kind of violence but on its severity (*ibid.*). Among Jews, ostracism is sorted into the group of severe violence along with armed assault or extortion. Among Arabs, the trend is mixed: in middle school it is sorted into a milder category of violence such as reporting a pupil who made threats, hit or pushed on purpose, whereas in high school, it is sorted into the groups of both severe and moderate violence. Therefore, it is possible that the difference in the reported rate of ostracism arises from the difference in the social significance of ostracism, which is less severe among Arabs. This interpretation requires further substantiation, particularly in light of findings that will be presented later in this chapter indicating the possibility that, even among Arabs, ostracism is in fact severe violence. In order to refute or corroborate these hypotheses, and additional possible mediating factors, it is necessary to take a deeper look at the causes of differences between Jews and Arabs in exposure to ostracism in the classroom.

## Gender

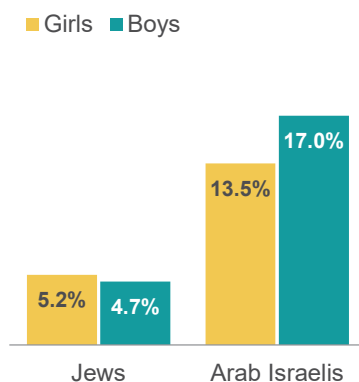
Dozens of studies have found that boys report more physical violence including hitting, pushing, kicking, and destruction of property, while girls report more relational violence that includes ostracism, stigmatization, gossip, and so on (Faris and Felmlee, 2011; Peguero, 2012; Seals and Young, 2003; Varjas, Henrich and Meyers, 2009; Wang, Lannotti and Nansel, 2009). A comparative study by Smith et al. (1999) even determines that this finding was consistent across 21 countries tested. However, many studies have criticized that division and argued that the findings about differences between the genders are not unequivocal (Duncan, 1999; Goldstein, Young

and Boyd, 2008; Goodwin, 2006; Swearer, 2008).<sup>8</sup> Some noted that relational violence was defined from the outset as “girl violence,” and that is why it continues to be viewed as girl violence even though gaps were not always found between the genders concerning relational violence (Espelage, Mebane and Swearer, 2004).

A comparative international study across 40 countries, including Israel, found that, in the vast majority of countries, girls report being victims of bullying more than boys, but in Israel, boys report more than girls being involved in bullying in all possible ways, including indirect bullying (Craig et al., 2009). Benbenishty and Astor (2005) reach a different conclusion, and find that boys report verbal-social abuse more than girls in general, including ostracism. They checked the correlation between gender and experiencing ostracism in the entire sample and did not distinguish between Arab and Jewish pupils. The current data, presented in Figure 6, show that when it comes to the correlation between ostracism and gender, the trend in Israel changes depending on sector.

Among Jews, girls report experiencing ostracism at slightly higher rates than boys. In 2009, 5.2 percent of girls reported ostracism, compared to 4.7 percent of boys. The gap may not be large but it is substantial. On the other hand, among Arabs,

**Figure 6. Share of pupils who report being ostracized in the previous month, 2009**  
By sector and gender, grades 5-8



Source: Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit, Taub Center  
Data: RAMA, Meitzav files, 2009

<sup>8</sup> A great deal of research is devoted to addressing claims that physical violence is “boy violence.” Ethnographic studies find that girls curse and employ verbal bullying even though they do not report it in questionnaires, and that in children’s society there is no distinction between boy violence and girl violence. Statistical research based on pupils’ reports about others (as opposed to self-reporting) show that with this reporting technique the gaps in the level of verbal violence between boys and girls disappear. Duncan (1999) argues that the link between gender and bullying is mediated by class: in the US, middle to upper-middle class girls almost never hit each other, whereas among lower classes, physical violence between girls is much more common. He also indicates that schools’ response to physical violence by girls is much less serious than their response to boys’ violence, which might reduce reporting of it and create a false appearance of a gap between the genders (Duncan, 1999).

boys report experiences of ostracism at higher rates than girls, and the gap is considerable: 17.0 percent of boys report they were ostracized in the previous month, compared to 13.5 percent of girls.

A study that focused on the differences in patterns of school violence between boys and girls in the Arab educational streams found that boys report experiencing more school violence of all types than girls (Khoury-Kassabri and Attar-Schwartz, 2008). The gaps were particularly high in regard to physical abuse, and even higher for severe physical abuse. As for verbal abuse, the gaps were much smaller and even negligible. Thus, in this context, the ostracism in Arab education actually behaves similarly to severe physical violence (the two items that Khoury-Kassabri and Attar-Schwartz included in the category of verbal abuse were ones that Benbenishty and Astor define as mild abuse).

These findings raise another question about the phenomenon of ostracism in the Arab education streams: why do boys tend to experience ostracism more than girls, as opposed to the situation found in other parts of the world and among Jews in Israel? Understanding the significance of these differences requires thorough research into the perceptions and behaviors of boys, girls, teachers, and parents in the context of ostracism in schools.

### **Economic status (parental education)**

Studies in other countries did not find an unequivocal link between socioeconomic background and experiencing bullying. In a study of 35 countries, including Israel, Due et al. (2009) found that pupils from low socioeconomic backgrounds tend to be victims of bullying. Chaux, Molano and Podlesky (2009), on the other hand, found higher levels of bullying in schools whose pupils came from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. While these findings do not necessarily contradict each other, it is hard to see how they are consistent with each other as Due et al. surveys pupils from different economic clusters and looks for correlations between the chances of suffering from bullying and socioeconomic status.

Wang, Iannotti, and Nansel (2009) demonstrate a correlation between bullying type and socioeconomic status and argue that the correlation between family socioeconomic status and physical violence is lower than the correlation between status and cyberbullying. Studies of the link between classroom violence and socioeconomic status in Israel find a similar trend: serious physical violence and violence against property is more common in the lower socioeconomic status schools, and verbal violence is more common in higher status schools (Reuveni, 2011; Benbenishty and Astor, 2005).<sup>9</sup>

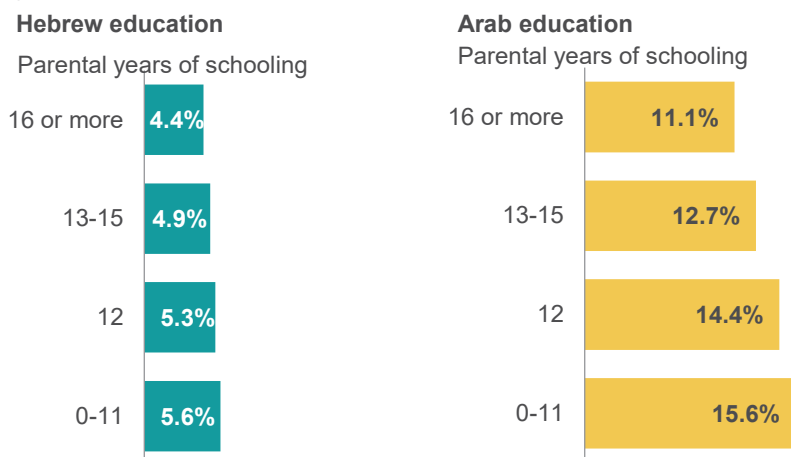
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<sup>9</sup> To the best of our knowledge, bullying studies have not looked at this correlation in Israel separately or as part of a cluster of countries.

In light of the powerful and consistent correlation between education and socioeconomic class, many studies use parents' level of education as a variable that represents socioeconomic class, and this will be done in this study as well. Figure 7 presents the rate of reporting ostracism by parents' education (the more educated of the two parents). Among Arabs, who suffer from a particularly high level of ostracism, the picture is unequivocal: pupils from lower socioeconomic classes suffer from ostracism at higher rates than pupils from higher classes: 16 percent of the pupils in Arab education whose parents' education is no more than 11 years of schooling reported experiencing ostracism, compared to only 11 percent of those whose parents had 16 years of school or more. Among Jews, too, the gaps are significant: 6 percent of the pupils whose parents' education is no more than 11 years of school have experienced ostracism, compared to 4 percent of pupils whose parents completed 16 years of school or more.

**Figure 7. Share of pupils who report being ostracized in the previous month, 2009**

By sector and parental education level



Notes: The analysis was conducted on data for 2009 due to deficiencies in later data.

Source: Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit, Taub Center | Data: RAMA, Meitzav files, 2009

In Israel, as in many other countries, there is a certain class distinction between schools, which is to say, there is a correlation between an individual pupil's parental education level and the average parental education level of



all pupils in the class. Therefore it must be examined whether the reason for the differences in the rate of pupils suffering from ostracism is the low level of the individual pupil's parental education level or a low average parental education level that characterizes the entire class. Table 1 presents the results of a multilevel binomial logistic regression analysis, in which the dependent variable is the pupil's probability ratio of being ostracized.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 1. Likelihood of a pupil being ostracized, by parents' education level, 2009**

**Binomial multi-level regression analysis**

	Jews N>128,000	Arab Israelis N>44,000
Constant	0.044**	0.121**
<b>Average parental education level in class</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> quintile - very low	1.294**	1.247**
2 <sup>nd</sup> quintile	1.274**	1.084
3 <sup>rd</sup> quintile	1.249**	1.106
4 <sup>th</sup> quintile	1.024	0.998
5 <sup>th</sup> quintile	Reference category	
<b>Parents' education</b>		
0-11 years of schooling	1.196**	1.438**
12 years of schooling	1.127**	1.239**
13-15 years of schooling	1.091*	1.119
16+ years of schooling	Reference category	
<b>Constant</b>	0.044**	0.121**

Significance levels: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Source: Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit, Taub Center | Source: RAMA, Meitzav files 2009

<sup>10</sup> The selected model is a binomial multilevel model because it is the most suitable for describing the situation in the classroom, where pupils are influenced by each other and by the class atmosphere. A binomial model is the most suitable model for predicting probability (DeMaris, 1995). A multilevel analysis, sometimes called in the literature hierarchical analysis (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002), includes two kinds of variables: fixed and random (Albright and Marinova, 2010). The model includes random variables at the classroom level because the chances of pupils in a particular classroom being victims of ostracism are affected by the class characteristics, including the rate of other pupils in the class suffering from ostracism. Which is to say, the model cancels out the independence assumption between different pupils in the same classroom. In this case, the use of binomial logistic models also cancels the dependence assumption (DeMaris, 1995).

The pupils' parental education level is measured by four dummy variables, each one of which notes the range of years of schooling completed by the pupil's more educated parent. The average education of the parents in the class is also based on the education of each pupil's more educated parent. For each class the average parental education level was computed and on its basis five variables were calculated representing the five quintiles of the distribution of average education in all of the classes. The four lower ones were included in the model, and their coefficients assessed the difference in the probability ratio of reporting ostracism in the previous month compared to a pupil who was in a class where the average parent's education was in the top quintile. Since in the streams of Arab education there are hardly any classes characterized by very highly educated parents, and in Hebrew education there are hardly any classes characterized by very poorly educated parents, the variable was calculated separately for Hebrew and Arab education, by the distribution of parental education within each group. A significant and negative correlation was found between parental education and the probability of suffering from ostracism – on both the class and individual levels.

Classes in which the average parental education is low are characterized by a higher frequency of ostracism. In Hebrew education, classes in which the average parental education level is in the bottom three quintiles of the education distribution are characterized by a higher frequency of ostracism compared to classes in which the average parental education level is in the top two quintiles. In Arab education, only classes belonging to the bottom quintile of the education distribution are characterized by a higher frequency of ostracism (again, the education quintiles were calculated separately for each sector). On the individual level, pupils with less educated parents are more likely to suffer from ostracism, even when controlling for the average education of the parents in the class.

Studies done to date in Israel have found that physical violence characterizes pupils from low classes, and verbal abuse is more common among pupils from high classes (Benbenishty, 2003; Benbenishty and Astor, 2005). Benbenishty and Astor do not specify to which kind of violence they assign social ostracism. Based on their data, it is likely that they attribute ostracism to the category of severe violence, but they may have chosen to assign it to a different category – verbal abuse or moderate violence. The current findings focusing on ostracism show that the correlation between ostracism and education resembles the correlation between severe violence and education. This finding supports the claim by Benbenishty and Astor that common differentiation of modes of violence does not depend on the manifestation of the violence – verbal, social or physical – but on its severity (*ibid.*).

### 3. Ostracism and school performance

Pupils who experience bullying tend to suffer from a large number of phenomena: poor physical health, sadness, social avoidance, a sense of insecurity, poor school performance, and dropping out of school (McDougall and Vaillancourt, 2015; Swearer and Hymel, 2015). Table 2 presents a multilevel linear regression examining the correlation between being ostracized and school performance among eighth-grade pupils in Israel. The dependent variables are grades on the Meitzav exams in math and English (as a second language), and the independent variables are the education of the pupil's parents, the average parental education level in the class, and having experienced ostracism. A significant negative correlation was found between reporting ostracism and grades, both in math and in English.

**Table 2. Influence of ostracism on educational achievement, by pupil characteristics, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 2009**

Multi-level linear regression of educational achievement

	Coefficients Dependent variable: Math score		Coefficients Dependent variable: English score	
	Arab education	Hebrew education	Arab education	Hebrew education
Report of social ostracism	-3.65**	-4.07**	-7.92**	-4.07**
Parental education	5.34**	6.77**	7.95**	7.65**
Average parental education of pupils in the class	1.58**	3.28**	4.49**	4.65**
<b>Constant</b>	25.58**	13.85**	18.77**	19.31**

Notes: Parental education variable in four levels: 11 years of schooling or less; 12 years of schooling; 13-15 years of schooling; 16 or more years of schooling. Average parental education of pupils in the class in seven levels: deciles 1, 2, 9, 10 and quintiles 2, 3 and 4.

Source: Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit, Taub Center | Data: RAMA, Metizav files 2009

This analysis, too, was run separately for Hebrew and Arab education. The correlation between ostracism and grades in math is of similar intensity in Hebrew and Arab education: the average grade of pupils who report being ostracized is an average of four points lower than the grade of pupils who do not report being ostracized. Regarding grades in English, a significant difference was found by sector: in Arab education, the average grade of pupils suffering from ostracism was eight points lower than the grade of

those who did not suffer from ostracism. In Hebrew education, the average grade of pupils suffering from ostracism was four points lower than the grade of pupils who did not suffer from ostracism.

It is important to note that this is a correlation rather than a causal relationship and it is not possible to know for sure which direction the correlation goes: it is possible that ostracism leads to a drop in performance and it is also possible that children who perform poorly in school are an easier target for ostracism, or that they are ostracized because of their poor performance. However, studies on this subject in other countries found that ostracism is a cause of a drop in grades and not the other way around, and this may be true for Israel as well.<sup>11</sup>

### **Spotlight: The reasons for ostracism and its consequences**

Ostracism can be divided into two kinds: the kind that is part of a struggle for position in the class status hierarchy, and the kind that is imposed on children who are considered weird, and which marks the social boundaries within the class.

<sup>11</sup> Studies in the US measuring the performance of the same pupils in two different time periods found a correlation between experiencing bullying at the primary school level (grades three and four), and especially in the first period of middle school level, and a drop in grades, in the desire to go to school, in obedience of school rules, and in active attendance in the following period (McDougall and Vaillancourt, 2015; Schwartz, Gorman, Nakamoto, and Toblin, 2005). Nonetheless, in order to ascertain whether in Israel ostracism affects grades or the other way around, a longitudinal study needs to be conducted. As for the school level rather than the individual level, a comprehensive longitudinal study in California found that it was school achievements that affected violence levels in schools as well as school climate, whereas the opposite correlations were not significant (Benbenishty, Astor, Roziner and Wrabel, 2016).

### **Ostracism as part of a struggle over position in status hierarchy**

In a series of studies, Faris and Felmlee (2011; 2014) found that the connection between class popularity and acts of bullying takes the form of a negative parabola: the higher the popularity the more violence the pupils exercise, up to a high level of popularity where the level of violence they exercise drops. An in-depth analysis of violence patterns in children's society led the researchers to the conclusion that violence management is a central part of managing class status position. In order to maintain position in the status hierarchy, pupils who are not popular must occasionally push over other pupils who are on a similar level to theirs in order to establish their superiority over them and prevent a future situation in which the latter might attack them.

School pupils attribute great importance to their position in status hierarchy and to attempts at mobility (Avraham, 2011; Merten, 1996). They invest a great deal of effort and exercise diverse tactics to that end. One of them is bullying. On the one hand, ostracism and bullying serve as a means towards upward social mobility. On the other hand, bullying is a deterrent factor against such attempts because failed attempts to move up in the social structure might lead to ostracism.

### **Ostracism of children who are considered “weird”**

Along with bullying as a punishment for a high position in the hierarchy or for “snobbishness,” and along with bullying as a response to the “excessive” social aspirations of others, a common reason for ostracism is simply being “unpopular.” Children in focus groups who discussed the identity of victims of bullying noted that some children are victims because they are popular, others are victims because they want to be popular (“wannabes”), and others because they are not popular (Guerra, Williams and Sadek, 2011). What is it that makes the latter

unpopular in the first place? In the concluding chapter of a comprehensive book by Asher and Coie (1990) about social rejection in childhood, Coie develops a model for the process by which a pupil becomes rejected, according to which the main reason for rejection is children's reaction to harassment or provocation (Coie, 1990). And of course, harassment is distributed unequally: in settings in which they are a minority – overweight, black and disabled children suffer from more harassment than white, thin and able-bodied children. However, minority status is not the main factor that determines whether they will continue to be harassed and provoked, but rather their reaction to the initial harassment: children who cry or respond with angry outbursts will likely be victims of further harassment.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Collins argues that the main feature of victims of school bullying is that they are “socially inept; that is, not fun, playful, skilled at the techniques for being in the sociable action around which the status system is constructed.” Training in such techniques includes social knowledge of the “correct” way to respond to harassment. Collins adds “those who most conspicuously lack this skill are boundary markers, representing just what the ground cuts itself off from. In Durkheimian terms, they are negative sacred objects” (Collins, 2008, p. 163).

Observational studies that monitored rejected pupils found that they are often considered “weird” or even “disgusting” and contaminating in the eyes of others (Evans and Eder, 1993; Goodwin, 2006; Guerra, Williams and Sadek, 2011; Hamarus and Kaikkonen, 2008; Lahelma, 2004; Merten, 1996; Milner, 2004; Thornberg, 2011, 2015; Thorne, 1993). One of the main characteristics of that attitude is fear of proximity to them and contact

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12 Dodge (1991) identifies reactive anger as one of the main features that characterize rejected children. This is an almost uncontrolled anger, that is not accompanied by force and whose purpose is not to “gain” anything. Rejected children often react that way to harassment and their reaction draws further harassment, which might lead to ongoing abuse.

with them (Ahmed, 2014; Kelly, 2011; Miller, 1998). The attitude is also characterized by distancing actions: for example, pupils refuse to sit at recess next to the rejected children and move away from them if they sit down near them (Merten, 1996); in one case the pupils in the class refused to touch a doll that was used for practice in a CPR class because the rejected child had touched it, and they were not ashamed to say in front of everyone “I sure don’t wanna touch that doll, if the spastic drools on it!” (Hamarus and Kaikkonen, 2008); they claim they have cooties – imaginary and contagious lice (Thorne, 1993); and they also invent stories to justify the disgust they feel towards them: for example, children claimed that the rejected girl had taken a sandwich out of the garbage and eaten it, even though that wasn’t true (Goodwin, 2006). When pupils are labeled as “gross” their rejection peaks.<sup>13</sup> All of the interactions they partake in consist of rejection, because other pupils refuse to be near them, and respond negatively to their very presence even before they do anything. In this situation their life becomes a nightmare.

Although the absence of social skills, the lack of a feeling of belonging, sadness and a feeling of insecurity are associated with the likelihood of being a victim of bullying, they are also the result of it. This means that being a victim of school violence reinforces itself (Juvonen and Graham, 2014), and victims are caught in a dynamic that is harder and harder to escape (Pepler, Craig and O’Connell, 1999). It is likely that, in addition to suffering from stigmatization (Coie, 1990) and the institutional structure that forces them to continue interacting with

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13 Another central stage in Coie’s model (1990) is the labeling stage. Generally, children’s response towards other children, both those they do not know and members of disempowered groups, is based on their behavior and not on prejudice, and is not arbitrary. However, as soon as a critical mass of harassment and rejection is reached, a child is defined as rejected. At this stage it will be very hard for the child to have an impact on the interpretation of their actions. That interpretation will tend to be humiliating and hostile even if the child’s behavior is in keeping with the social expectations and requirements. That is one of the reasons it is so difficult to break free of that status.

the aggressors (Collins, 2008), this dynamic is another reason that 43 percent of victims continue to be victims for three years, 15 percent remain in that status for six years, and the longest longitudinal study found that 12 percent of boys and 6 percent of girls who were victims at the age of eight maintained that status for eight years straight, until the age of 16. This means they spent most of their lives as victims of bullying (Hymel and Swearer, 2015).

Therefore, there are different kinds of pupils who are victims: those who mismanaged a high status, those who failed in an attempt to move up the status hierarchy, and those who were pushed out of the status hierarchy and swallowed up by the quicksand at its bottom.

#### **4. A ray of hope: A drop in the level of reports of ostracism among fifth and sixth grade pupils**

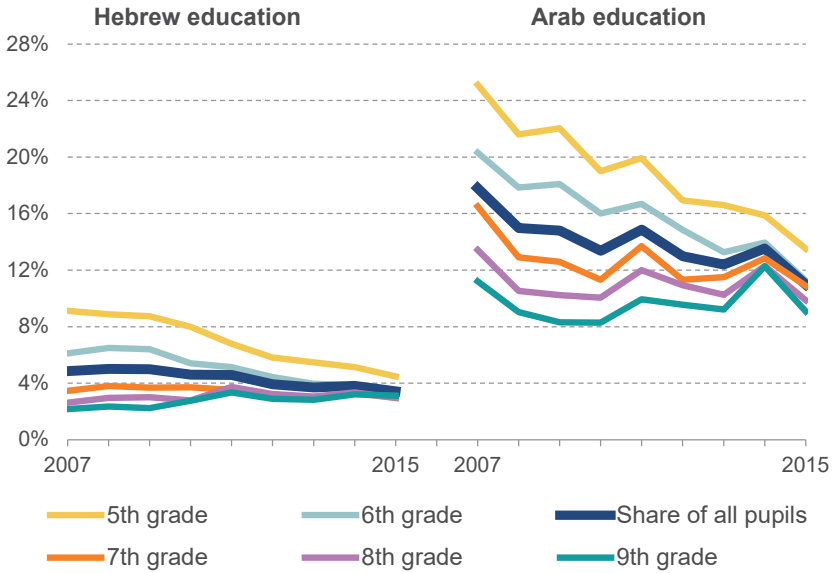
Figure 8 presents a segmentation of the rate of reports of ostracism over time by sector and grade. The data shows that between 2007 and 2015 there was an impressive drop in the level of ostracism. The rate of pupils suffering from ostracism in schools belonging to the Arab education stream dropped during that period by 38 percent – from 18 percent to 11 percent. In the Hebrew education stream, there was also a notable drop although a smaller one, of 30 percent – from 5 percent in 2007 to 3.5 percent in 2015. That drop is even more impressive when taking into account that in the study by Benbenishty and Astor (2005), which was mostly based on data from 1999, 23 percent of all pupils reported that they had been ostracized by a group of pupils: 38 percent of primary school pupils, 15 percent of middle school pupils, and 10 percent of high school pupils. Segmented by sector, 20 percent of the Jewish pupils and 35 percent of the Arab pupils reported ostracism.

Both in the Hebrew and Arab education systems, there was a 50 percent drop in reports of ostracism among fifth-grade pupils. Among Jews, the drop in reports of ostracism only occurred among fifth and sixth-grade pupils. Among Arabs, the sharpest drop in reports of ostracism occurred in these same grades. The main victims of ostracism are pupils enrolled in Arab education, and primary school pupils. Fortunately, the drop in the level of pupils reporting ostracism has been concentrated in both that sector and in those grade levels.



**Figure 8. Share of pupils who report being ostracized**

By sector, grade and year



Source: Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit, Taub Center | Data: RAMA, Meitzav files, 2007-2015

This trend – a drop in the level of ostracism in primary schools – is encouraging, and the causes thereof merit study so that it might be expanded to middle school pupils as well. It can be assumed that the improvement in the level of ostracism in the primary schools is connected to the extensive intervention efforts by Shefi – the Ministry of Education Counseling and Psychological Services. Shefi created a program offering diverse tools for the treatment of the phenomenon of ostracism and bullying (Luk and Zecharia, 2016). It is interesting to note that Shefi’s main program – Central Educational Climate – applies to middle school, yet precisely at that level there was a more moderate drop in the rate of reports of ostracism. An interview with Inbal Lock and Hila Segal, in charge of implementing the program at Shefi, revealed that at the primary school level the program focused on preventing ostracism because in those grade levels it is an acute problem. On the other hand, in middle school the emphasis was on improving other aspects of educational climate, rather than prevention.

In fact, it is possible that measuring the extent of the phenomenon has itself affected the level of ostracism. In 2007, measurement of this variable began on the school-wide level and schools were ranked by the rate of violence in them. It is possible that this provided the schools with significant incentive to reduce the rate of ostracized children. It should be noted that even the very measurement of the phenomenon was the result of pressure exerted by Shefi, which undertook the project of confronting the phenomenon of school violence (Fast, 2016). To determine with certainty whether the intervention plan was the cause of the drop in reporting ostracism, a thorough assessment of the impact of Shefi programs on ostracism rates at different age groups must be conducted. Such an assessment requires a quasi-experimental comparison between schools where the plans are implemented and a control group of schools where the plans are not implemented (Bradshaw, 2015; Ttofi and Farrington, 2011). It is possible that by now, after an extensive implementation of the plans, it would be hard to find such a control group.

## Conclusion

This chapter examined the connections between sector, gender and class, and pupils' experiences of social ostracism in schools. The most salient finding concerning the connection between sociological variables and experiences of ostracism is that pupils in the Arab education system suffer from especially high levels of ostracism, and pupils from the Bedouin stream of education in particular. A previous study of school violence emphasized that Arab pupils are more likely to experience physical violence compared to Jewish pupils (Benbenishty, Khoury-Kassabri and Astor, 2006; Benbenishty and Astor, 2005). The current study finds that ostracism, which is severe relational bullying, is also much more common among pupils in Arab education.

Pupils from low socioeconomic classes suffer from higher levels of ostracism. There is a correlation between parents' education level and the probability of suffering from ostracism – on both the class and individual levels. Which is to say, classes in which parents' education is relatively low have higher rates of pupils reporting ostracism. Furthermore, low parental education level increases the chance of the pupil suffering from ostracism even when controlling for the additive effect of the average education of the parents in the class.

Therefore, there is an unequivocal correlation between belonging to a disempowered group and exposure to ostracism. Members of an ethnic/national minority or of a lower social or economic class suffer from higher levels of ostracism, and anyone belonging to both categories at the same time suffers from particularly high levels.

Finally, the study findings indicate that there is also a correlation between ostracism and low academic achievements. It appears that this is the first study in Israel that indicates the link between experiencing ostracism and academic achievements. The international study that found a correlation between experiencing bullying in general and academic achievements identified a causal relationship between the two (McDougall and Vaillancourt, 2015; Schwartz, Gorman, Nakamoto and Toblin, 2005), as well as even more concerning connections. The most salient of those is the connection between experiences of bullying and depression, loneliness and anxiety (Card, Isaacs and Hodges, 2007; McDougall and Vaillancourt, 2015; Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt and Hymel, 2010; Ttofi and Farrington, 2011), which in some cases even leads to suicidal tendencies (Hinduja and Patchin, 2010; Williams, 2009). In Israel as well, every few months a case of an attempted suicide finds its way into the headlines against the backdrop of harassment and rejection, and in the most serious cases the harassment leads to actual suicide. The correlation between experiences of ostracism and low grades raises the suspicion that ostracism as well is characterized by the aforementioned destructive influences. That is another reason why it is necessary to invest efforts and resources in promoting intervention programs to prevent abuse and violence of all types in school.

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## Appendix

### The definition of ostracism in light of two measurements: Ostracism in the classroom and cyberostracism

The use of smart phones and social networks, such as WhatsApp and Instagram, by children is rising rapidly (Radesky, Schumacher and Zuckerman, 2015; Rideout, Foehr and Roberts, 2010). As noted by Mesch, “For adolescents to be part of a peer group today, they must engage in perpetual communication Online after school hours.” (Mesch, 2012, p. 100). This change has many consequences, among other things, for the way bullying and ostracism are carried out. The literature on bullying contains a lively debate on the question of whether cyberbullying is a distinct phenomenon or another manifestation of traditional bullying (see elaboration below). Whether cyberbullying is a new aspect of an existing phenomenon or a new phenomenon, there is no doubt that its importance is increasing, especially in light of the rise in the place that the Internet occupies in managing social relationships. This appendix examines the phenomenon of cyberostracism compared to the general phenomenon of ostracism.

The 2015 Meitzav exam asked pupils two questions concerning ostracism. In the first they were asked to note whether “in the last month I was ostracized, a group of pupils did not want to talk to me or play with me,” a question that does not specify in what context the ostracism was imposed. In the second question they were asked to note whether “in the last month anyone issued a call to ostracize me or not be my friend on social networks, on the Internet or on cell phone/smart phone.”<sup>14</sup>

Appendix Figure 1 presents the distribution of ostracism experienced Online and at school by sector. The pattern of the association between ostracism and sector is identical concerning both types of ostracism: the highest rate was found in the schools of the Bedouin education stream, followed in a descending order by the schools in Arab education, the schools in the Druze education stream and finally schools in Hebrew education. However, the difference in the rates of cyberostracism between Hebrew education and Druze education is much larger than the corresponding difference concerning ostracism in general (both differences are statistically

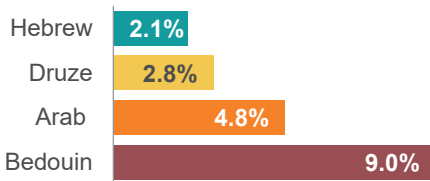
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14 It should be noted that the question about cyberostracism refers to ostracism attempts and the wording of the question includes attempts that did not succeed. However, in light of the low rate of respondents it is likely to assume that most of the pupils referred to attempts that did ultimately lead to ostracism. In 2009, only the first question was asked, and there was no separate question concerning cyberostracism.

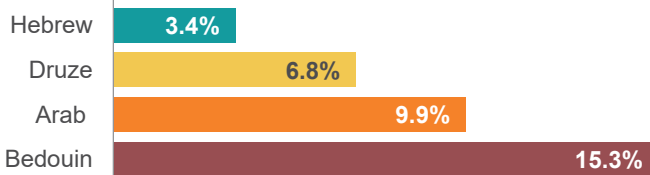
significant). On the other hand, an examination of the level of ostracism by grade (and by age) reveals two opposite patterns: one seen Online and the other seen with ostracism in general. While the general level of ostracism drops with age, levels of cyberostracism rises with age (Appendix Figure 2).

### Appendix Figure 1. Ostracism and cyberostracism by education stream, 2015

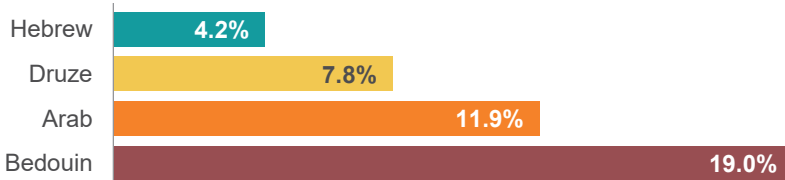
#### Cyberostracism rate



#### School ostracism rate



#### School or cyberostracism rate



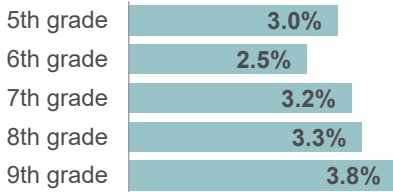
Source: Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit, Taub Center | Data: RAMA, Meitzav files 2015

It is possible that the reason for the rise in the rate of cyberostracism with age also has to do with the fact that ownership of smart phones rises with age, and with that the use of Online tools to manage social relationships (Rideout, Foehr and Roberts, 2010). Therefore, it is possible that the level of ostracism does not increase, but rather that a larger share of the ostracism occurs Online. Partial support for this hypothesis is found in the finding that the cumulative level of ostracism — the rate of pupils who reported they had been ostracized either at school or Online — drops with age.

It was not possible to conduct a similar comparative analysis of individual data — gender, sector, and parents' education — because there was no question about cyberostracism on the 2009 Meitzav exam, the year for which the Meitzav data are available.

## Appendix Figure 2. Ostracism and cyberostracism by grade, 2015

### Cyberostracism rate



### School ostracism rate



### School or cyberostracism rate



Notes: A similar comparative analysis could not be done with the individual variables of gender, sector and parental years of schooling because the cyberostracism question was not asked in 2009.

Source: Eran Hakim and Yossi Shavit, Taub Center | Data: RAMA, Meitzav files, 2015

Olweus (2013), the leading researcher on bullying for the past four decades, studied a sample of 440,000 children in the US and finds that the general level of experiencing bullying ranges between 15 percent and 18 percent, while the level of cyberbullying ranges between 4 and 5 percent. He also shows that there is a very large overlap between cyberbullying and “traditional” bullying: about 90 percent of the victims of cyberbullying are also victims of “traditional” bullying, and 90 percent of the bullies operate

on both channels, so that it is not clear whether the analytical distinction between them is significant. In Israel, too, there is considerable overlap between cyberbullying and traditional bullying (Tarablus, Heiman and Olenik-Shemesh, 2015). Olweus argues that his data indicate an erroneous focus, mainly by the media, on the phenomenon of cyberbullying, which might create unjustified social panic.

Despite the data presented by Olweus, conversations with teachers find that cyberbullying does in fact present a new challenge, which might be one of the reasons for the focus on it. Such extensive focus is not a “mistake,” but it is possible that the point is not that this bullying is more common or more oppressive, but that the Internet shapes and influences bullying in ways that we are not yet equipped to confront. For example, the Internet is characterized by anonymity, which “helps to release individuals from the restrictive pressures of society, morals and ethics for normative behavior” (Hinduja and Patchin, 2008), it addresses a wide audience, and is characterized by rapid distribution, which can increase motivation for harassment and the severity of its harm (Mesch, 2012), and by high and constant availability (Tarablus, Heiman and Olenik-Shemesh, 2015).

Studies of the characteristics of cyberbullying compared to traditional bullying found high similarity between the characteristics of both kinds of bullying (Hong et al., 2016), but also many differences between them, for example in the correlation between key variables such as school climate or race (Varjas, Henrich and Meyers, 2009). Other studies have found that the consequences of cyberbullying are particularly severe and have an independent dimension (Bonanno and Hymel, 2013). For example, a pioneering Israeli study found a correlation between experiencing cyberbullying and suicidal thoughts, but did not find a correlation between traditional bullying and suicidal thoughts (Olenik-Shemesh, Heiman and Eden, 2012). The limited extent of the studies that found effects of this sort limits the possibility to generalize from them (Bonanno and Hymel, 2013). One phenomenon that appears repeatedly in comparative studies is that victims of cyberbullying tend to also be cyberbullies themselves. The correlation between the behaviors is 0.74, compared to the correlations between other kinds of victimhood and bullying (physical, verbal, relational), which is between 0 and 0.18 (Varjas, Henrich and Meyers, 2009). In Israel a powerful correlation was found between cyber victimhood and cyberbullying (Gofin and Avitzour, 2012). This might arise from the fact that exercising cyberbullying requires a different skill set than traditional bullying.