



## Tackling disparities in access to education and employment



**ECOSOC**

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## Introduction

Education and business are two subjects that can be considered the pillars of the economy. Not only that, but education is a subject so grand that some would say there would be no society without education. One should keep in mind that concepts as big as the topics at hand cannot function properly in non-democratic environments, unjust treatment of individuals and hierarchy based on sex, race or sexual orientation.

A subject that is crucial in tackling disparities in both education and employment is understanding that equity and equality are two different concepts. The comprehension of said difference would allow one to understand that not everybody has the same opportunities, wants and needs. This is why if we take the subject of education, public education that is available for everyone shouldn't be a "can" but a "must". This is why states must standardize not only public education, but equality and equity in all academic environments. The standardization of such topics will help a country to develop even further, as many of the individuals who face inequality in the academic and business world have great potential that may push a state to a greater level of development.

The concept of equality and equity is also pretty important in employment as even in today's world we see rightful strikes and protests. These strikes and protests have all had different subjects, but the same cause and that is equity and equality in the workplace. As said, the subject of these have been different, such subjects spanned over not having equal pay between genders all the way up to racial discrimination in the workplace. It is also clear that unjust treatment in employment causes a great decrease in one's level of civil engagement. Having such disparities has shown to

decrease philanthropic actions such as volunteering, donating and one's engagement in non-profit organizations.

One should see that this reason-result cycle can be broken by solely tackling such disparities in a manner that doesn't hurt the individual which is pivotal for societal growth.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Civil Engagement

Striving to improve the civic life of one's community and acquiring the information, abilities, ideals, and drive necessary to do so.

### Equality

State of being equal. In the sense of the topic at hand, this term is especially important as having equality is one of the most important ways to abolish disparities.

### Equity

The difference between equality and equity is in the subject of equity, there is no equality in the sense of given resources. Equity means the distribution of resources according to the levels of needs of each individual.

### Gender Gap

The difference in given resources between men and women such as the wage gap and the educational gender gap between men and women.

### Standardization

Standardization is bringing into conformity with a standard especially in order to assure consistency and regularity.

### Segregation

Segregation is the agenda of keeping a group of people apart from one another. It can be religiously, racially, ethnically and sexually motivated.

## General Overview

Disparities in the academic and business world are clear and constantly protested all around the globe. These disparities are present even in first-world countries, which causes great catastrophe in the overall “equality” scene.

The first half of such disparities, which are the academic disparities, may be considered as the most important type of disparities to tackle, as education is the building block of society. Keeping this fact in mind, one must not face disparities in the process of learning as it might cause an individual to have biases, which leads to more disparities. There are two ways to split these disparities in the academic world. Racial disparities and disparities based on sex/sexual orientation.

Racial disparity is a major issue that constitutes lots of states, however, two of the states that stand out the most in this problem are the United States and South Africa, both having issues with segregation. One must keep in mind that having the subjects of equality and equity is impossible with the concept of segregation. This is why it is important to abolish it.

### Academic Racial Disparities in the United States

The United States has had lots of changes for the better over the past century in the sense of segregation. However, this does not mean that the question of “segregation” is abolished as there are clear signs of racism in American schools.

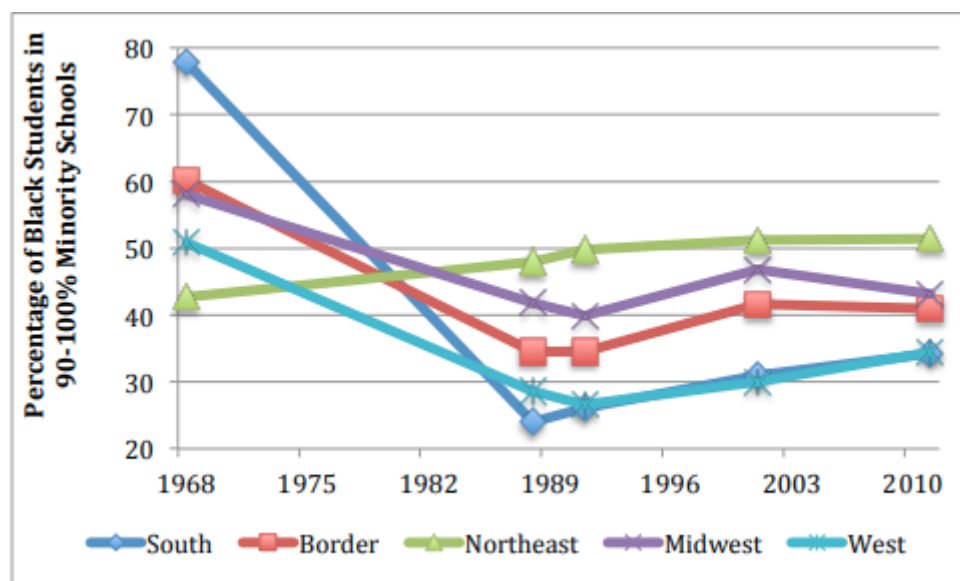


Figure 1: Percentage of Black Students in 90-100% Minority Schools provided by Brown at 60: Great Progress, a Long Retreat and an Uncertain Future.

The graph above shows that after the civil rights act, there has been a steady decrease in segregation, however in recent years, African-Americans have become the subjects of segregation again. This is a clear indicator that solving segregation is still an issue.

### Academic Racial Disparities in South Africa

Even after the Apartheid regime, South African students have been subjects of racism and segregation. Although South Africa has come a long way ever since the Apartheid regime, just like America, the problem isn't solved.

Student background	Exposure to White	Exposure to Indian	Exposure to Coloured	Exposure to Black	Population share
White	<b>68.5</b>	3.3	8.5	19.6	3.8%
Indian	8.6	<b>41.6</b>	5.8	44.0	1.5%
Coloured	4.3	1.1	<b>71.5</b>	23.0	7.5%
Black	0.9	0.7	2.0	<b>96.4</b>	87.2%

Note: based on the 2021 Annual School Survey data. Isolation indices printed in bold.

Figure 2: Interracial exposure rates in South African Schools

In this chart, we can see that South Africa has a much bigger problem in the context of segregation than the United States. As this graph clearly shows a bigger gap between racial groups. This means that large race groups are isolated from other race groups. This is not just a problem of education, but also politics, as isolating one race from others can cause racist behavior.

### Academic disparities in the context of gender

For a great period of time, women were not allowed to step foot on school grounds. However, humanity has made its amends and bettered itself. Nowadays, it becomes rarer and rarer to see a woman who hasn't had their bachelor's degree. Today, the education of women is at an all-time high. However, in the subject of equity, women aren't as educated as men are.

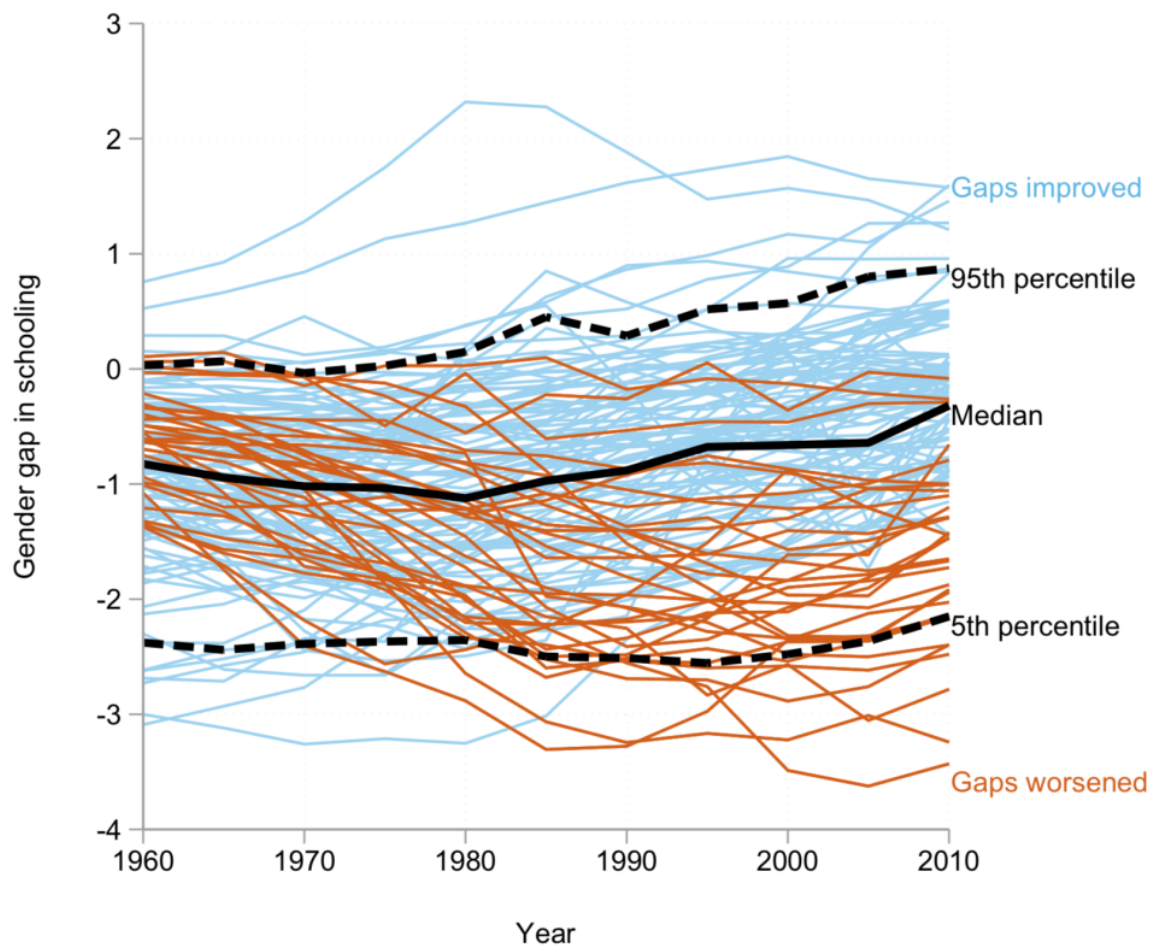


Figure 3: Gender gap in education over the years

So, by looking at this table, one can conclude that there is a clear bias for men in education even if women today are becoming more and more educated. This also means that resources aren't divided in equity which causes disparities. Not only that but the subject of the educational gender gap affects the employment of women and the wage gap between men and women.

#### Academic disparities in the context of sexual orientation

Homophobia has been a big problem in academic environments, especially in both secondary schools and high schools. This subject has led to individuals getting bullied, harassed and even physically assaulted.

**Frequency of School Victimization Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression Over Time**  
(Percentage of LGBTQ Students Reporting Event Often or Frequently, Based on Estimated Marginal Means)

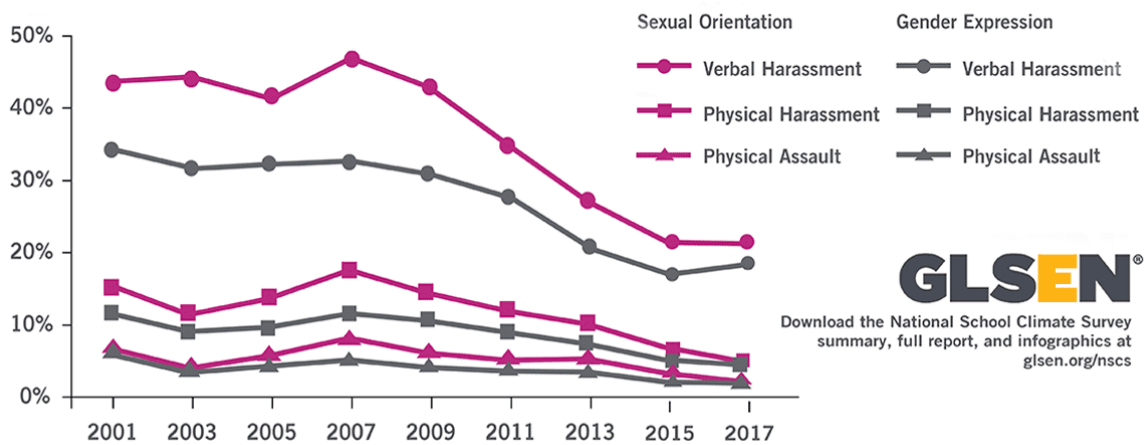


Figure 4: Harassment and assault based on sexual orientation.

As seen in the graph above, schools are not safe havens for the LGBTQ+ community. Although this behavior has decreased over the years, it is still not solved. This means that someone who doesn't follow the gender norms is pretty likely to get bullied in school because of who they are. This means that the LGBTQ community is not treated equally, which causes disparities.

#### Academic disparities: A conclusion

There are lots of disparities in the academic world, disparities which are avoidable. People can't change who they are, however, a society can change itself and transform into a more accepting and loving community. Segregation, gender gap and homophobia are disparities that cause society to lose its academic potential and worst of all, its sense of being a community.

#### Disparities in access to employment

Much like tackling disparities in access to education, tackling disparities in access to employment address the issue of accessing employment at ages 18 and up. While disparities in access to education for the previously listed reasons. This means that an individual may be given a weaker opportunity, disparities in access to employment means that a person is potentially given a weaker reality. However, it has become far less commonplace and through various pieces of legislation, there has been a great leap forward in reducing the barrier to employment and providing equitable opportunity for everybody.

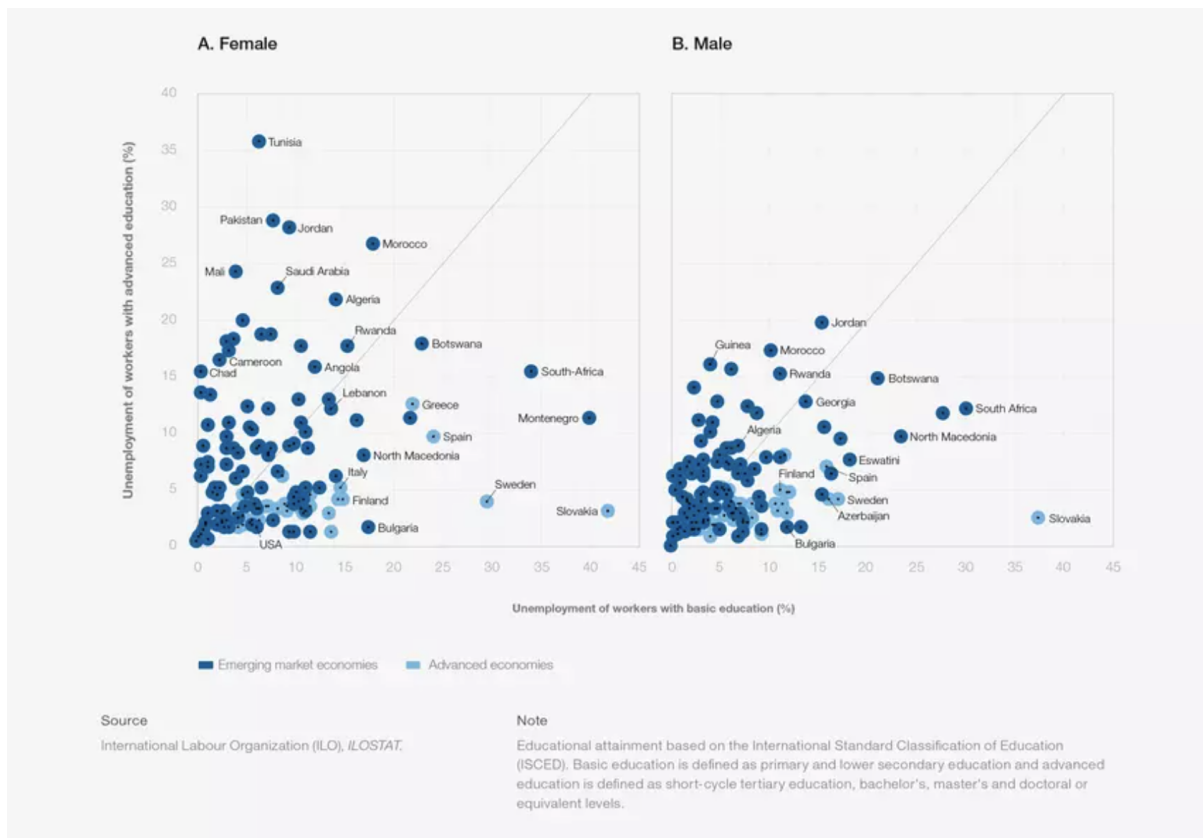
Overall, the disparity in access to employment exists for a number of reasons. Given the issue of global development inequality, there is a great range of nations that are in various stages of development. This poses a challenge for solving disparities in access to employment. It was legal to pay men and women different salaries on account of their gender until JFK published the Equal Pay Act on the 10th of June 1963, this marked a major step forward in achieving civil liberties for women. This had a cumulative causation effect and what followed over time was a change in attitude towards the employment of women. There was a similar change in the disparity in access to employment on account of race. As the civil rights movement waged war on centuries old racist norms, there was a major change in the United States in the access to employment that black people had. Again, this marked a positive shift in which people finally had access to basic civil liberties and were somewhat free of racial and gender bias respectfully. However, the biggest challenge that is faced in regards to solving the disparity in employment is the geographical and technical disparity.

In more developed nations people have greater access to employment and ultimately for the most part a higher quality of living. However, due to the effects of uneven development, there is still a tremendous gap in the opportunity someone has if they are born in a highly developed nation. This gap is also the most difficult to solve, as it can be simply fixed with legislation and poses the issue of dealing with international politics.

### **Gender disparities in access to employment**

There are large disparities globally in regards to disparity in access to education for women. While in the world's developed nations, the problem has been mostly resolved, through years of positive feminist voices demanding for changes and securing the future for equitable access to employment. However, in nations that are less developed or who have more controlling governments or different social beliefs or a variety of other reasons. There simply hasn't been the push or even the discussion surrounding global access to employment. While the rest of the world maintains a global employment participation rate of 56.6% and climbing, the Middle East and North Africa haven't experienced such growth. The labour participation rate on average for the region being a stubborn 32%, which is the lowest in the world. Women within the region of the Middle East and North Africa are distinct minorities in high ranking senior management and administrative positions, making up only 11% of the workforce, although this number has risen over the last decade or so.





## Racial and Ethnic disparities in access to employment

Globally there are still large amounts of racial and ethnic discrimination. Especially in regards to access to employment. While we praise developed nations for their progress in reducing that disparity and introducing legislation surrounding diversity such as in California. In which there are minimum proportional quotas that have to be met to maintain diversity, especially in senior and high-ranking roles.

Despite such diversity measures being put in place, when looking at the United States for example, the effects of institutional racism are very evident. Especially when looking into why there are disparities in employment. Despite the progress of society, there are deep rooted ties to institutional racism within American society, this harks back to an era before the civil rights movement. In the 1930s federal legislature was drawn up and a process called redlining began. Redlining was essentially an explicitly racist policy that segregated black and white neighbourhoods. Redlining came about when the government was looking to give out mortgages for people to buy houses. To decide who they would give the mortgages to, they drew up a map and zoned two areas, red and green zones. If you lived in a green zone then you would have easy access to FHA loans, which have minimal interest and are much cheaper than traditional mortgages.

However, the zoning which occurred, just so happened to completely segregate white and black neighbourhoods, this means that majority black communities didn't have access to the same opportunity that white people did. This meant that white people were able to build wealth through property and pass down that wealth to their children and send them to college. Whereas those in red neighbourhoods didn't have that ability, this led to a cycle of poverty that was difficult to escape from. Especially due to the fact that up until the late 1960s there were federally encouraged programs to prevent black people from migrating. This racist legislation were extremely harmful, while not in action anymore their effects are still in place. Many of the traditional American suburbs have a mostly white population. Moreover, these green neighbourhoods also have the best schools, as schools are funded by property tax and the value of homes in green neighbourhoods is much greater than in red neighbourhoods. Thus, more often than not schools are pretty much segregated and white kids have access to a better education than black kids.

### **Employment Disparities: Conclusion**

Overall, this led to people in red neighbourhoods having a significantly worse outcome in regard to education and unemployment. These are the effects of systemic racism and while policies are put in place now to prevent this and even actively reverse it, in this example the effects are still just as clear. The effects of gender discrimination are not as prevalent as they once were, and there have been significant changes both socially and physically, with lots of action being taken in order to close the gap for both women and minorities, when it comes to employment disparities.

## **Major Parties Involved**

### **The United States of America**

The United States of America was once the epicentre for racial tension. With the civil rights movement in the 1960s brave souls fought for change and won. Many of the vastly racist legislation and cultural attitudes were reversed and their significant societal changes. However, racism is still engrained within American society. The effects of institutional racism are significant and ultimately pose a major challenge in closing the gap and providing equitable opportunity for everybody. The United States history regarding disparity in access to education and employment particularly pertains to the issue of race or ethnicity.

### **Turkey**

Turkey is the bridge between Europe and Asia. It exists as the centre for trade between two nations and is a cultural melting pot of both Europe and Asia. However, despite that Turkey is one of the worst when it comes to women's access to employment and education. Women constitute half of the population yet their employment participation percentage stands at just 34% in comparison to men's 71%. While there is evidence to suggest there is a high percentage of participation in the informal economy, this suggests that women don't make up a high percentage of positions of administrative or political importance, which in the modern day and age should be a key priority within a government. Moreover, women's high participation in the informal economy may also lead to conditions being endured that don't align with humanitarian standards that should be upheld by UN member nations. This also goes against the sustainable development goal which calls for global 'decent work'. This implies a safe working environment which the informal economy may not provide.

## Possible Solutions

The issues regarding all matters are very important. It is key that delegates manage the interweaving concepts and problems by making sure that clauses and resolutions are nuanced and all encompassing. Delegates may want to consider tackling issues that can be applied globally through the means of the UN. It is also key that delegates consider the full scale of the impact by thinking critically, for instance, how would resolving elements of education help alleviate the symptoms of redlining.

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