

## Press Release

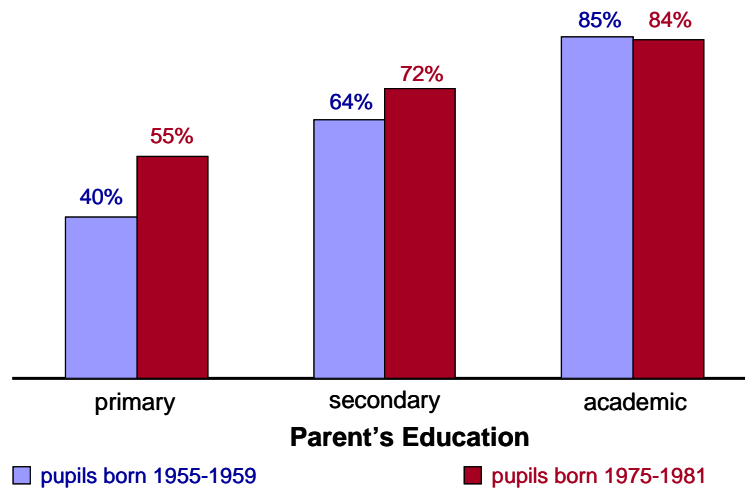
### Taub Center on gaps in matriculation (*bagrut*) certification in Israel:

- Over the years, women have had larger gains than men in *bagrut* qualification.
- There has been a significant narrowing of the qualification gap between children with parents of low education and those with high education.
- The rate of certification among Arab Israeli children has grown, although the overall gap between Jews and Arabs has not narrowed.

In their recent study, which will be published in the upcoming State of the Nation Report of the Taub Center, Professor Yossi Shavit, Chair of the Education Policy Program at the Taub Center and a faculty member in the Department of Sociology of Tel-Aviv University, and Vicki Bronstein found that there has been a considerable improvement in the rate of *bagrut* certification in Israel in the past decade. Of Israelis born between 1955 and 1959 fewer than half were entitled to a *bagrut* certificate while for those born between 1975 and 1981, the rate had risen to some 70 percent.

In order to test the change in educational gaps, Shavit and Bronstein examined the achievements in different groups of pupils. The first figure presents the achievements of pupils by level of parent's education. In Israel, as in other countries, there is a high correlation between parent's education and the educational attainment of their children. In Israel, though, the gap between these groups has narrowed considerably over time. Children born to parents with only a primary school level education experienced the greatest gain. The middle group of children born to parents with a post-primary education saw less of a change although it was still significant. The group of pupils whose parents had an academic degree did not improve in their *bagrut* certification rate.

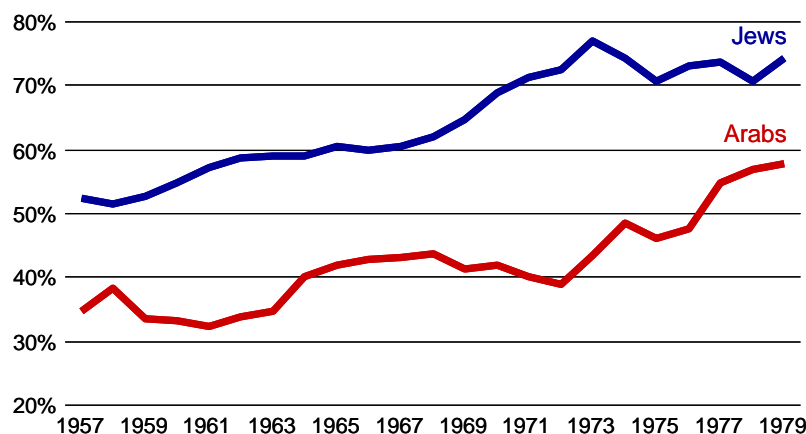
**Bagrut completion rates  
by parent's education for selected five year periods**



**Source:** Yossi Shavit and Vicki Bronstein (2011). "Educational reform and narrowing educational gaps." In Dan Ben-David (Ed.), *State of the Nation Report: Society, Economy and Policy 2010*, Jerusalem: Taub Center (forthcoming).

Another aspect of inequality in *bagrut* certification is between Jews and Arabs. The second figure presents *bagrut* qualification rates for Jews and Arabs over the past two decades (because changes between individual years may be sharp, five-year moving averages are used.) During the time that the *bagrut* qualification rate for Arabs nearly doubled, Shavit and Bronstein found that the achievement gap between Arabs and Jews changed little. Amongst children born in the late 1950s, the qualification rate gap was about 15 percentage points; almost the same gap was found among children born at the end of the 1970s.

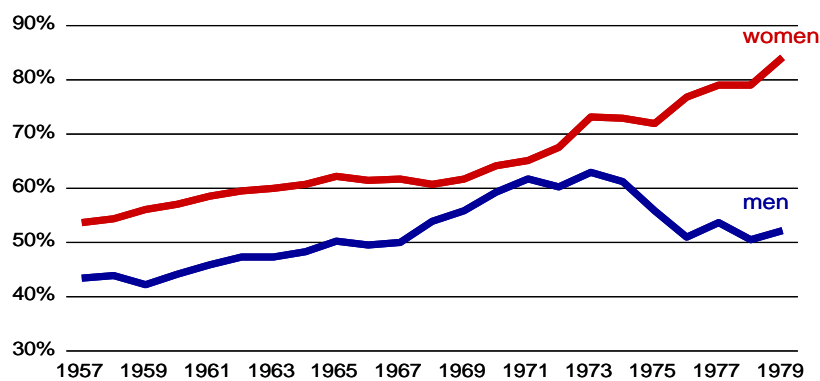
**Bagrut completion rates, Jews and Arabs  
by year of birth  
moving average**



**Source:** Yossi Shavit and Vicki Bronstein (2011). "Educational reform and narrowing educational gaps." In Dan Ben-David (Ed.), *State of the Nation Report: Society, Economy and Policy 2010*, Jerusalem: Taub Center (forthcoming).

The most surprising changes were found in qualification gaps between men and women (in the third figure). The gains for women were already greater for those born at the end of the 1950s when almost 55 percent of them received *bagrut* certification as opposed to 45 percent of the men. Over time, these gaps did not narrow (like the gaps between children with parents of differing education levels) nor did the gap stay the same (as between Jews and Arabs in attainment levels). Instead, there was a considerable drop in *bagrut* qualification rates for men with the gap rising from some 10 percentage points to nearly 30 percentage points.

### **Bagrut completion rates, men and women, by year of birth** moving average



**Source:** Yossi Shavit and Vicki Bronstein (2011). "Educational reform and narrowing educational gaps." In Dan Ben-David (Ed.), *State of the Nation Report: Society, Economy and Policy 2010*, Jerusalem: Taub Center (forthcoming).

In the upcoming State of the Nation Report of the Taub Center, Shavit and Bronstein found that the gender gap is especially pronounced amongst Arab Israelis. Over the time period examined, Arab boys went from a 15 percentage point advantage over girls to a lag of 15 percentage points. This is a total upending of achievement and an overall change of some 30 percentage points in *bagrut* certification of women versus men in the Arab Israeli sector.

Shavit and Bronstein consider various explanations for this phenomenon, which they conclude needs more attention than it has merited so far. While pupils with less educated parents did narrow the *bagrut* attainment gap with peers born to more educated parents, Shavit and Bronstein did not find evidence of a parallel narrowing of educational gaps with regard to attainment of university or college degrees. These pupils did see an increase in the percentage obtaining degrees, but the improvement was similar to that found among the pupils from more educated households.

The Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, headed by Professor Dan Ben-David, is an independent, non-partisan institution for socioeconomic research based in Jerusalem. The Center provides decision makers, as well as the public in general, with a big picture perspective on economic and social areas. The Center's interdisciplinary Policy Programs – comprising leading academic and policy making experts – as well as the Center's professional staff conduct research and provide policy recommendations in the key socioeconomic issues confronting the State.

**[For details or to arrange an interview please contact publicist Yitzhak Rabihiya, “Ray Tikshoret,” cellular phone 054-799-9209.](#)**