

**HIGH SCHOOL TRACKING AND COLLEGE  
DESTINATION IN ISRAEL**

**Abraham Yogev, Hanna Ayalon, Anna Gluzman, Idit Livneh**

Tel Aviv University, Israel

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Address correspondence to Professor Abraham Yogev, School of Education, Tel Aviv  
University, Tel Aviv 69978, Israel. E-mail: [yogev@post.tau.ac.il](mailto:yogev@post.tau.ac.il)

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### Abstract

The independent effects of high school tracking on college enrollment, constantly found in the United States and in Israel since the 1970s, are usually interpreted vis-à-vis the signaling influence of tracking. Recently, however, with the expansion of American higher education and the changing nature of students' high school sorting from de jure to de facto tracks, the importance of tracking as an independent signal of the selectivity of enrolled college has declined. In this paper we examine whether high school tracking serves as an enrollment signal in the expanded higher education system of Israel. We assess the odds of students' enrollment in the new colleges versus the established universities exerted by combinations of seven de jure (academic versus vocational) and de facto (major specializations) high school tracks, independently of the students' social origins and academic ability. The data used are taken from a large 1999 national survey of a stratified sample of 4054 freshmen in 22 public and private colleges and in similar fields of study at all six universities. The findings show that high school tracks constitute a significant signal of college destination independently of the students' social origins, but their significant influence disappears once academic ability is controlled for. This may be interpreted by the facts that de jure and de facto high school tracks serve as a proxy for academic achievement, while the centralized public control of higher education expansion in Israel further produces a clear-cut stratification of tertiary level institutions. The futility of high school tracking and the need to reduce the magnitude of high school specializations are discussed in conclusion.

## **HIGH SCHOOL TRACKING AND COLLEGE DESTINATION IN ISRAEL**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of high school tracking on entrance into the new academic colleges versus enrollment in the established universities in Israel. We explore the issue whether high school tracking serves as a signal for students, independent of their social background and academic achievements, with respect to college versus university enrollment in the expanding system of higher education in Israel.

Independent effects of high school tracking on enrollment in four-year colleges have been recorded in the United States since the mid-1970s (Hauser, Sewell and Alwin, 1976) throughout the late 1990s (Lucas, 1999). These effects were assessed either on college attendance in general, or on the selectivity of the college students enroll in. The rich literature on high school tracking during the last two decades provides several plausible explanations for such effects. First, it is clear that high schools use tracking as an organizational device to ratio access to limited course resources on the basis of previous academic achievements, thus creating within-school student stratification related to social class and ethnic origins (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). In the United States, where high schools differ in the extent of tracking rigidity versus flexibility, the effects of tracking on further academic achievement vary by school emphasis on track structuring (Gamoran, 1992). Furthermore, high school tracking strongly influences the academic motivations and

educational aspirations of students (Vanfossen, Jones, and Spade, 1987), partly through the process of track allocation by school counselors (Delany, 1991; Rosenbaum, Miller and Krei, 1996). Finally, the tracking of students by itself influences their later school achievements (Gamoran and Mare, 1989), probably through the structuring of different learning opportunities and instruction methods in various school tracks (Gamoran, 1987; Lee and Bryk, 1988).

Whatever the exact educational, sociological and social-psychological processes induced by tracking, it is clear that the influence of high school tracking on enrollment in higher education may be interpreted vis-à-vis a signaling effect: students in college-preparatory tracks get the signal of an expected continuation of their educational career independently of their high school grades and social background. This signaling effect has indirectly been recognized by studies referring to the less coherent tracking system of American high schools, which frequently use de facto course tracking instead of a formal stratification system of students (Lucas and Berends, 2002). Rosenbaum (1980) found that individual misperceptions of the exact track location cause frustrated college plans among high school students. Lucas (1999) found that consistent de facto tracking in college preparatory courses in mathematics and English best predicts later enrollment in a four-year college. Borrowing on Wright's (1985) conceptualization of contradictory class locations in relation to social class consciousness, he contended that consistent course locations in high school raise the 'consciousness' of students to their further educational career, while 'contradictory course locations' result in no effect on students' socialization (Lucas, 1999: 135-137).

Recently, however, Karen (2002) has shown that between 1980 and 1992 the independent effect of high school tracking on the selectivity of the attended institution

of higher education in the United States has diminished. Focusing on the persistent effects of social origins on enrollment in higher education, Karen dismisses this finding as a product of the correlation between tracking and high school grades. However, this surprising finding may well be the result of two unrelated factors: the growing tendency of American high schools to replace formal full-scale tracking with de facto course allocations (Lucas and Berends, 2002), and the somewhat deregulated growth of American institutions of higher education, as noted by Karen. It is possible that an expansion of a decentralized system of higher education, such as in the United States, eliminates the signaling effect of high school tracking with respect to the types of tertiary education institutions students enroll in. This may be due to diversification of the new institutions of higher learning, many of which open their doors to new types of clientele, and subsequently may reduce the importance of high school tracking as an independent signal of institutional choice on the tertiary level. This possibility obviously requires further exploration. Yet, it illuminates the importance of studying this issue with respect to Israel, where the expansion of higher education is centrally and publicly controlled (Ayalon and Yogev, 2000; Yogev, 2000). In Israel one may expect high school tracking to influence the students' institutional destinations on the tertiary level, independently of their social origins and academic ability. This is expected of both de jure tracking (into the academic versus the vocational tracks) and the simultaneous de facto tracking of students into majors of different prestige levels within their formal track. In particular, students of the upper academic tracks in high school may be expected to attend the established universities, while those of lower academic tracks and of the vocational track may be signaled, if they choose to pursue higher education, to opt for the newly established undergraduate academic colleges.

### **High School Tracking and the Expansion of Higher Education in Israel**

In contrast to the United States, *de jure* and *de facto* tracking systems are used side by side in Israeli high schools. We borrow both these terms from Lucas and Berends (2002), who differentiate between American high schools which use a formal comprehensive tracking system and those abandoning formal tracking, due to political pressures of the detracking movement (Loveless, 1999), in favor of the *de facto* tracking of students into specific courses which may or may not be considered college preparatory ones.

However, the distinction between the two tracking systems in Israeli high schools is quite different, especially since both simultaneously serve the sorting of students within the same school. The *de jure* tracking consists of the sorting of students into the academic versus the vocational tracks at the entrance to high school at the tenth grade. While academic and vocational high schools used to be separate institutions, nowadays most vocational tracks are part of comprehensive high schools, which include both tracks. The sorting of students into these tracks may be on a voluntary basis – many students of good academic standing choose the vocational track due to the development of sophisticated technological courses of study – but usually it is decided by previous academic achievements on the junior high school level. Frequently, students of good academic standing are sent to the academic track, while those of lower academic achievements are sorted into the vocational track. Previous studies on academic versus vocational tracking in Israel reveal that students of lower socioeconomic origins, of Mizrahi origin (of Asian-African ancestry, versus the dominant Ashkenazi group of European ancestry), and males, tend to study in the vocational track. Also, most high school graduates who pursue university studies have studied in the academic track (Yogev, 1981; Shavit, 1984). Thus, the academic track

is virtually a college preparatory one, while the vocational track tends to aim at students of lower social origins and of lower academic achievements.

The sorting of students into academic versus vocational tracks may become an independent signal of tertiary educational careers – both in terms of general enrollment in higher education and with respect to institutional choice on that level – because it does not depend solely on academic ability. High schools largely differ in their tracking policies according to their educational sector (Jewish secular versus religious schools, Arab schools), size, student composition, and the characteristics of the communities they are located in (Ayalon, 1994). Therefore, students of similar academic abilities may be tracked differently by various schools, and subsequently may be exposed to different educational experiences influencing their educational expectations. In addition, the process of tracking is mediated by school counselors, who serve as gatekeepers of this school stratification. School counselors tend to apply different criteria for the tracking of students in poor versus affluent neighborhoods (Yogev and Roditi, 1987), and in general tend to lower or raise the educational expectations of students through tracking decisions (Resh and Erhard, 2002).

De facto tracking takes place within each of the two formal tracks in the form of particular school subjects in which the students major as their “specialization” field during the eleventh and twelfth grades, in preparation for the final matriculation examinations. Attainment of the high school matriculation certificate depends on passing a series of governmental examinations in various school subjects. An examination in each subject is given on various study levels, ranging between 1 to 5 units of study (each unit equals one weekly hour of study). Fifteen of the 20 units required for passing the matriculation examinations are in compulsory school subjects: 3 units each in mathematics and English, 2 units each in Hebrew language,

history, literature, and Bible studies, and one unit in civics. In addition, the students are required to pass a 5 unit examination in a “specialization” subject which constitutes their major. These subjects may be of the compulsory list or any additional school subject in the academic or vocational tracks. Mathematics and English, which may also be studied on the levels of 4 or 5 units, are not considered specialization subjects. Many students have a double major, and may reach – if they also study 5 units of mathematics and English – up to 30 units of examination. This increases their chances of being admitted to prestigious fields of study at the universities, since the latter calculate the matriculation mean score after adding bonus points to subjects tested on the level of 4 or 5 units. This final matriculation score, plus the results of an entrance psychometric test, equally determine university and college admission to specific fields of study.

Obviously, the subjects of specialization in high school are neither equally chosen nor do they carry the same prestige. Subsequently, despite the intention that students should voluntarily choose their majors, the majors become an additional mechanism of student sorting by the school staff and thus a major means of de facto tracking. Within the academic track, the distinction is between majors in sciences versus the humanities – the latter used as a general term to denote school subjects in the humanities, social sciences, religious studies, and foreign languages. A double or a single major in the sciences is more prestigious due to the common notion, that the universities prefer high school graduates with a science major. While this is untrue, it is obvious that schools assign students of higher scholastic ability to advanced science courses (Ayalon and Yogev, 1997). Excellent matriculation grades in the sciences are potentially more probable than in the humanities. This probably stems from pre-selection and the testability of the sciences versus the subjective evaluations used for



test grading in the humanities. Subsequently, graduates in the sciences tend to populate prestigious university departments even if they are unrelated to their high school major – such as law schools (Ayalon and Yogeve, 1995).

The tracking of the more able students to science majors is usually done by combining these majors with other school subjects. As shown by Ayalon and Yogeve (1996), this is usually done by limiting access to the sciences within the secular high school sector to students who also specialize in mathematics. In the state religious high schools, who have developed prestigious “scientific-religious” programs, such access is limited to students who also specialize in Jewish oral law (male students) or in Bible studies (female students). This meritocratic sorting into majors creates social inequalities in the academic de facto tracking. Students specializing in the humanities are more often Mizrachim, females, and of lower status of origin than students majoring in the sciences (Ayalon and Yogeve, 1995, 1997).

Majors in the vocational track are stratified by level of technological sophistication. In the past, students majoring in sophisticated technological subjects were encouraged to obtain the matriculation certificate, while those specializing in other vocational subjects took only part of the exams and completed their high school studies without a matriculation certificate. As in the academic track, students in the more sophisticated technological majors are not only the more able ones, but also tend to be Ashkenazim of a higher status of origin than students in the other vocational majors (Yogeve and Ayalon, 1991). However, since the 1990s reform of the vocational track, by now renamed the technological track, all students are encouraged to take all of the matriculation exams (Ayalon and Shavit, 2001), and students specializing in sophisticated technological subjects are even encouraged to take a double major in technology and the sciences.

The majors in both tracks could constitute an independent signal for further educational career since they are determined by school policy in addition to academic ability. Majors in the humanities, and to some extent also in the sciences, are influenced by school sector, school size, and by the students' composition regarding ability and gender (Ayalon and Yogev, 1997). Furthermore, the majors are determined later than the formal tracking, during the final stage of the secondary educational career, and therefore may be even more crucial for the formation of educational plans on the tertiary level. While de jure tracking was decided upon high school admission, the later de facto tracking further separates the students into prestigious and less prestigious specializations, which may symbolize different expectations regarding higher education destinations.

**The Expansion of Higher Education.** Graduates of the academic track who obtain a matriculation certificate acceptable by the universities have traditionally enrolled in the six established universities. Among them, those who majored in the sciences, frequently of higher social origins, have had a better chance of enrollment in the elitist universities (Yogev, 2000), and in the more prestigious fields of study within the universities (Ayalon and Yogev, 1995). Students of the vocational track, particularly those in the less prestigious vocational majors, did not tend to pursue higher education until the early 1990s.

The expansion of higher education during the last decade may have changed these patterns. Since the mid-1990s the Council for Higher Education, which publicly controls the development of higher education in Israel, has limited the growth of undergraduate students at the six universities in favor of accrediting and partly budgeting several dozens undergraduate colleges. These colleges are expected to absorb the growing demand for higher education, and currently enroll more than half

of the Israeli undergraduate students. The colleges, some of which have already been academically accredited since the 1970s, are of various types: colleges specializing in technology or the arts; general public academic colleges which grew out of regional university branches; private Israeli colleges specializing in prestigious fields such as business, law and computer studies; academic teacher colleges, and branches of foreign universities (Ayalon and Yogev, 2000). These colleges have opened new opportunities for higher education to population sectors which were served to a lesser extent by the traditional universities – such as residents of the geographic periphery (the Northern and Southern regions of Israel), older students, and students of lower social origins than the average university students, but they mainly tend to serve students of lower academic abilities relative to university students (Ayalon and Yogev, 2000).

This being the case, we may expect high school tracking to significantly influence the decision of students to enroll in a college versus a university. Since high school tracking, both de jure and de facto, constitutes such an important life experience during high school years, we may expect it to become a significant determinant of college versus university enrollment. Students in the lower academic tracks (i.e., those majoring in the humanities) and in the vocational track, if they choose to pursue higher education, are expected to opt for college education, while students in the upper academic tracks (i.e., those majoring in the sciences) are expected to enroll in the universities. If high school tracking indeed serves as a significant signal for college versus university destination, then its effect should be independent of the influences of social origins and of academic ability on the choice of institution of higher education.

## **Data and Methods**

**The data.** The data used in this study are taken from a national survey of 4054 freshmen in Israeli colleges and universities conducted by Ayalon and Yogev (2000) during the academic year of 1999. The sample of students was a purposive stratified one. After stratifying the students by eight major fields of study offered by the colleges (business, law, arts, architecture, technology, computer studies, social sciences, and education), by type of college (specializing college, general academic college, private college, teacher college, and branches of foreign universities), and by college locality (the four central regions versus the two peripheral ones), specific first year compulsory courses were sampled in 22 colleges, and their students were asked to fill in a questionnaire on their educational history, social background, and their perceptions of higher education. The same questionnaire was delivered in first year compulsory courses to freshmen in similar fields of study in the six universities. After excluding from the original sample respondents who completed their high school studies outside Israel or did not take the psychometric admission test, 58 percents of the sample used in the present study were college students, while 42 percents were university freshmen.

**Methods and Variables.** To explore the hypotheses regarding the effects of high school tracking on college destination we conducted three logistic regression models, in which the dummy variable of college destination (coded 1 for college enrollment and 0 for university attendance) was the dependent variable. In the first model it was regressed on the students' high school tracks. In the second model the socio-demographic characteristics of the students were added to the equation, and in the last model academic ability was added. The first model examines the gross effects of tracking on college destination. The second and third models examine whether the

effects of high school tracks sustain beyond social origins and academic ability. The descriptive statistics and inter-correlations of the variables are presented in Table 1.

*(Insert Table 1 about here)*

The independent variables were measured as follows:

***High School Tracks.*** Seven dummy variables were used to denote the combinations of de jure and de facto tracking in high school, based on the students' report regarding high school track and majors: (1) academic track, double science major; (2) academic, single science major; (3) academic, double major – one in the sciences and the other in the humanities; (4) academic, double humanities major; (5) academic, single humanities major; (6) academic, no major at all; (7) vocational track. Since only 17 percents of the sample graduated from the vocational track, we did not use de facto vocational tracking (i.e., majors within this track) to further differentiate among them.

As Table 1 shows, the sample is about evenly distributed among the seven tracks, with 11 to 17 percents of the students in each track. The correlations between the tracks and the socio-demographic variables correspond, in part, to the earlier depiction of high school tracking in Israel. Students who graduated from the academic track with a science major – particularly two majors but also a single one – tend to be of higher social origins than those who graduated with a humanities major. They tend to be of non-Mizrachi origin, and their parents' education and income are relatively high. Graduates who combined one science major with a major in the humanities tend to be religious. As noted, this major combination is typical of students with high academic ability in the state religious high schools. Academic track graduates with no major are mainly older students, who completed secondary education prior to the 1976 reform, which introduced the major requirement. Finally, graduates of the

vocational track tend to be males and of significantly lower parental education and income.

***Socio-Demographic Variables.*** Eight variables representing the students' social origins were included in the analysis: *Gender: Female*, coded 1 for females and 0 for males; *Age*; *Mizrachi origin*, determined by place of birth of the students' parents or, if parents were born in Israel – by place of birth of their grandfathers on both father's and mother's side. This dummy variable was coded 1 for Jewish students whose parents or grandfathers (one or both in each case) were born in the Middle East or Africa, and 0 for Jewish Ashkenazi or Israel Arab students (the number of the latter in the sample was too low to justify a separate variable); *Father's and Mother's academic education* are two dummy variables, coded 1 for parents with at least some tertiary education, 0 for parents with lower educational attainment; *Family income* was based on the students' evaluation of their parents' income relative to the national average monthly income at the time of the survey. These evaluations ranged on a 5-point scale, from (1) much below average to (5) much above average; *Religiosity* is also a dummy variable, coded 1 for students who identified themselves as 'religious' or 'traditionalists', and 0 for those identifying themselves as 'non-religious'. Finally, *Central location* is a dummy variable referring to the students' region of permanent residence. It was coded 1 for students from the four central geographic regions and 0 for those from the two peripheral regions of the north and the south.

***Academic Ability.*** This variable was computed according to the formula Israeli universities and most colleges use to measure the academic ability of applicants. It consists of a weighted combination of the students' mean matriculation grade (after adding the bonuses for matriculation subjects examined on the levels of 4 or 5 units)

and the grade they have received on the psychometric test. The grades were self-reported by the students. The variable ranges on a scale from 200 to 800 points.

## **Results**

The results of the three models of logistic regression for college destination are presented in Table 2.

*(Insert Table 2 about here)*

The first model estimates the effects of high school tracks on the odds of college versus university enrollment. The academic track with a double science major is used as the reference category. Compared to this prestigious track, all other high school tracks significantly increase the odds of college versus university destination. The coefficients are particularly high for graduates of the lower academic tracks who majored in the humanities (either a double or a single major), for graduates of the academic track with no major at all, and for graduates of the vocational track. These three groups tend most often to pursue higher education in the new colleges rather than in the established universities. While the odds for all high school tracks are statistically significant, it should be noted that the pseudo  $R^2$  indicates that they explain only seven percent of the variance in college versus university destination.

In Model 2 the odds for college destination were estimated simultaneously by the high school tracks and the socio-demographic origins of the students. Since many socio-demographic variables are significantly related to both high school tracking and college destination (see correlations in Table 1 above), it makes sense to ask whether the high school tracks have independent effects institutional choice after controlling for social origins. Table 2 shows that this is indeed the case. Some socio-demographic variables exert significant effects on college destination. Students opting for the new

colleges, relative to those enrolled in the universities, tend to be older (especially those studying in branches of foreign universities, which mainly attract employees of the public sector aiming at a salary increase subsequent to the attainment of an academic degree), more religious (due to the spread of technological colleges on the West Bank, a region which attracts a religious population, and to the existence of teacher colleges for the state religious school sector), and also tend to originate of lower status with respect to parents' education and income. After controlling for these effects, however, the effects of the various high school tracks remain significant, though their magnitudes are somewhat reduced. As indicated by the pseudo  $R^2$ , the impact of high school tracking and of social origins on college destination is almost equal. De jure and de facto high school tracking remains a significant signal of institutional choice on the tertiary level independently of the students' socio-demographic characteristics.

The third model includes academic ability in addition to the students' tracks and social origins. Here the picture completely changes. Controlling for the strong negative influence of academic ability on the odds of college versus university attendance (the pseudo  $R^2$  dramatically increases from .13 to .40), the effects of high school tracks become insignificant. In contrast, some of the social origin effects remain significant. Religiosity retains its significant influence and, after controlling for academic ability, younger age increases the likelihood of college enrollment. Yet, the status of origin variables (parents' education and income) lose their statistical significance. Some socio-demographic effects gain statistical significance: female students opt more often for the universities, while residence in the central regions increases the likelihood of college enrollment (due to the concentration of the new



colleges in these regions). In sum, high school tracking cannot be considered as producing a signal for higher education destination independently of academic ability.

### **Discussion**

Our results clearly indicate, that while de jure and de facto high school tracking in Israel exerts a significant effect on college versus university destination on the tertiary level of the education system, it cannot be considered an independent signal of institutional destination in higher education. The effects of high school tracks on the likelihood of college versus university destination sustain beyond the students' socio-demographic characteristics, but they totally lose their statistical significance once academic ability is entered into the equation.

There are two possible explanations for this finding – one concerns the nature of high school tracking and the second relates to the expansion of higher education. First, recalling that half of the academic ability measure we used consists of the mean matriculation grade, it is clear that high school tracks, both de jure and de facto, simply are a proxy of academic achievement. As shown by previous studies on these two types of tracking in Israeli high schools (Yogev, 1981; Shavit, 1984; Ayalon and Yogev, 1997), the schools track their students into an academic versus a vocational course of study, and further into majors within the formal tracks, primarily on the basis of prior academic achievements. The tracking itself further accentuates differences in academic achievements throughout the high school years. Indeed, on the basis of school variations in tracking policies we expected the de jure and de facto tracks to become independent signals of college versus university destinations, but this proved to be wrong due to the effects of academic ability on tracking and on institutional destination on the tertiary level. Therefore, while tracking produces social

inequalities in students' stratification within school, and therefore undoubtedly becomes a crucial determinant of the students' self esteem and educational aspirations, it does not influence institutional destination on the tertiary level independently of academic ability. It is still possible that the tracks independently influence the decision to enroll in higher education regardless of institutional choice. However, this issue was not examined in the present study, since it requires longitudinal data on the further educational careers of high school graduates, rather than the present data on university and college students who already enroll in higher education.

Yet, the fact that academic ability eliminates the independent influence of high school tracking on college destination may well stem from the nature of the expansion of higher education in Israel. In the introduction we said that Karen's (2002) finding regarding the diminishing effect of high school tracking on the selectivity of the enrolled college may have resulted from the decentralized nature of higher education expansion in the United States. The less-regulated growth of higher education institutions may have interfered with the signaling of tracking regarding institutional enrollment on the tertiary level. In Israel, we claimed, the centralized control of higher education expansion by the Council for Higher Education should enable high school tracking to remain an independent signal of institutional enrollment. Our findings contradict this expectation. In Israel too, despite the highly regulated growth of higher education institutions, high school tracking turns to be an insignificant signal of college versus university enrollment once academic ability is controlled for. Paradoxically, this may well be the result of the centralized control of higher education expansion. The Council for Higher Education formally views the new colleges as the 'second tier' of Israeli higher education, and expects them to absorb the demand for higher education of less capable students. Subsequently, academic

ability is the major determinant of college versus university enrollment, and it even blurs the original differences in socioeconomic status between college and university students (Ayalon and Yogevev, 2000). Not surprisingly, academic ability also eliminates the independent signaling of high school tracking with respect to college versus university enrollment. It is thus possible, that the decreasing effect of high school tracking on institutional choice in higher education is common to countries with either centralized or decentralized controls of higher education expansion, though perhaps for different reasons. In a decentralized expanded system of higher education this process may be due to institutional diversification, while in a centralized one it may be the result of institutional stratification. Obviously, this possibility should be further explored by comparative studies both in Israel and across various societies. We should recall that our study in Israel did not compare the effects of high school tracks across time. Though previous Israeli studies have pointed to the independent effects of de jure tracking on enrollment in higher education, they did not address the issue of institutional destination, nor did they directly address the issue of the effects of de facto tracking

It is therefore possible, in conclusion, that either one of the two explanations, or both of them together, stand behind our findings. Further studies should, therefore, attempt to separate the two types of explanations by appropriate research designs. However, both explanations seem to point, from a practical point of view, to the futility of high school tracking with respect to the further educational career of students, at least regarding institutional choice. The combination of de jure and de facto tracking in the Israeli case is supposed to channel students into future educational careers, but general academic ability surpasses the impact of tracking on particular higher education destinations. The gross effects of the various tracks on

college versus university destination point to the hierarchical nature of both types of tracking. They indicate that students are first formally stratified into the academic versus the vocational tracks, and then further stratified into majors within these tracks. De facto tracking, in particular, limits the opportunities of students, many of them of lower social origins, to acquire knowledge in the sciences or in sophisticated technology, while it limits the entrance of students of higher social origins into advanced courses in the humanities, which are rich in cultural capital (Ayalon and Yogevev, 1995). It may be argued that the non-significant effects of the de facto tracks after controlling for academic ability justify the continuation of the present practice, which allows students to choose their specialization subjects. Yet, the fact is that this choice is rather limited by scholastic ability, and it denies students' access to important portions of the knowledge available in their formal tracks. Therefore, it remains unclear why the Israeli Ministry of Education and the high schools themselves insist on students' 'specialization' through their tracking into majors. Such high school specializations are especially futile in view of the growing tendency of the universities and the new colleges to provide undergraduate studies, which are either inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary. Given the expected shortage of high school teachers in most school subjects in the near future (Yogevev, in press), Israeli high schools will have to reconsider the issue of disciplinary emphasis on majors. Recently, the technological track has introduced a new reform, which reduces the number and magnitude of specializations in lieu of a multi-disciplinary course in technological sciences given to all students (Yogevev, 2002). It may be sensible for the academic track as well to reduce the present magnitude of students' specializations by focusing on multi-disciplinary teaching in various academic subject areas.

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**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<b>High School Tracks</b>																	
1. Academic, 2 sciences																	
2. Academic, 1 science	-.17*																
3. Academic, sci & hum	-.17*	-.20*															
4. Academic 2 hum	-.17*	-.20*	-.20*														
5. Academic, 1 hum	-.15*	-.17*	-.17*	-.17*													
6. Academic, no major	-.13*	-.15*	-.16*	-.15*	-.13*												
7. Vocational	-.18*	-.18*	-.18*	-.18*	-.15*	-.14*											
<b>Socio-Demographic Variables</b>																	
8. Gender: Female	-.06*	-.04*	.00	.21*	.08*	-.02	-.19*										
9. Age	-.10*	-.03*	-.12*	-.10*	-.01	.30*	.12*	-.12*									
10. Mizrahi origin	-.09*	-.04*	-.02	.03	.04*	-.03*	.11*	.00	-.08*								
11. F's academic educ.	.10*	.06*	.05*	-.04*	-.03*	.00	-.13*	-.01	-.13*	-.33*							
12. M's academic educ.	.10*	.05*	.05*	-.04*	-.04*	-.02	-.11*	-.02	-.15*	-.30*	.51*						
13. Family income	.09*	.09*	.04*	.00	-.01	-.08*	-.14*	-.02	-.07*	-.17*	.28*	.24*					
14. Religiosity	-.08*	-.02*	.10*	-.01	-.06*	.02	.04*	-.05*	-.07*	.29*	-.11*	-.11*	-.16*				
15. Central location	-.03*	.04*	.00	.00	.03	-.01	-.04*	-.02	.04*	.01	.06*	.02	.09*	.00*			
16. Academic ability	.25*	.08*	.15*	-.11*	-.18*	-.09*	-.16*	-.11*	-.17*	-.14*	.28*	.26*	.23*	-.04*	.13*		
17. College destination	-.16*	-.06*	-.08*	.02	.10*	.05*	.13*	.00	.15*	.11*	-.20*	-.17*	-.13*	.07*	.01	-.54*	
Mean	.13	.17	.17	.16	.13	.11	.14	.57	23.49	.29	.40	.37	3.37	.29	.61	584.21	.58
Standard Deviation	.33	.37	.38	.37	.34	.31	.35	.50	4.18	.46	.49	.48	1.05	.45	.49	77.80	.49

\* p < .05



**Table 2:** Logistic Regression Models for College Destination

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>High School Tracks</b>			
Academic, 1 science	.56** (.12)	.47** (.13)	.02 (.15)
Academic, sci & hum	.48** (.12)	.37** (.13)	.10 (.15)
Academic, 2 hum	.93** (.12)	.76** (.13)	-.17 (.16)
Academic, 1 hum	1.38** (.13)	1.24** (.14)	.06 (.18)
Academic, no major	1.16** (.14)	.87** (.16)	.06 (.25)
Vocational	1.58** (.13)	1.27** (.15)	.25 (.19)
<b>Socio-Demographic Variables</b>			
Gender: Female		.03 (.72)	-.21* (.10)
Age		.07* (.01)	-.05* (.02)
Mizrachi origin		-.04 (.09)	-.08 (.11)
F's academic education		-.47** (.09)	-.20 (.11)
M's academic education		-.22* (.08)	.02 (.11)
Family income		-.10* (.04)	.02 (.05)
Religiosity		.31* (.09)	.41* (.11)
Central location		.09 (.07)	.43* (.10)
<b>Academic Ability</b>			-.02** (.00)
Constant	-.52** (.09)	-1.51** (.35)	13.26** (.79)
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.07	.13	.40
-2 Log Likelihood	5362.90	4525.22	3012.37

\* p &lt; .05

\*\* p &lt; .001