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**YOUTH AT-RISK IN HIGH SCHOOLS.
TRACKING, EXCLUSION, AND INEQUALITY:
‘HEARING THEIR VOICE’**

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Abstract

This research study addresses the way in which the education system operates with children who are at-risk and experience exclusion during their studies in the school. Children at-risk are separated and classified because of their academic difficulties from the start of their path in the school. The concept of “tracking” describes these processes of separation and classification that in actuality constitute a part of a structured mechanism that acts already from the first classes, and this although the schools do not address the separations, groupings, and classifications as tracking. The school system tends to search for solutions for the students’ learning difficulties, without going in depth into the influence of the tracking on the continuation of their studies in the school and their lives as adults in society.

Students at-risk do not succeed in fulfilling their academic abilities because of different factors. They are not accustomed to conversation about themselves and about the circumstances of their lives and their difficulties. On this background, the solutions that the system offers and the manners of tracking exacerbate the distancing and inequality towards them. From the data on the students at-risk it is possible to learn that the gaps between the declared policy of inclusion and equality and the reality of isolation are steadily increasing.

My close acquaintance with the topic led me to research the phenomenon of tracking in the schools and mainly its influences on the students. Although this field has been frequently researched, it appears that the voice of the students has never been heard, apparently from the thinking that it is necessary to “act on” the students instead of learning from them. The researcher’s belief is that listening to the students’ words is a humane and ethical step that will enable their development as appropriate partners, autonomous and responsible in all that pertains to the planning of their learning and the response to their difficulties.

The research attempts to deal with the social structures (of which tracking is one) that receive economic and social justifications and to illustrate how they are reproduced

into the education system and contribute to the preservation of segregation and inequality. The main theories upon which it is based address the tracking and classifying and separating practices and of course their influences on the education system. It should be noted that there are theories that support the necessity of the tracking as a systemic method suited to all the students, but the research in this field is limited and focuses mainly on the its necessity from the viewpoint of the educational organization and the derived achievements.

On the background of the voices that see tracking to be a structure that strengthens and preserves the inequality and even duplicates social structures, like segregation and meritocracy, which harm the weak groups in the population, this research study focuses on the voice of students and their viewpoint on these topics. The research attempts to understand how neo-liberalism influences the economy and social structures and how these influences are expressed on the education system. The research also discusses theories that address segregation and the relationship between it and classes and inequality.

In recent years, a number of researchers (Schultz, 2008; Yaron, 2013) have called to see the students as partners in the planning of the learning, and indeed the objective of this research study is to emphasize the importance of listening to the students who are tracked and who are generally silent and not heard. The research brings direct evidence of youths at-risk about their ways of thinking, emotions, and experiences and uses this evidence as an authentic basis for understanding the way in which the tracking influences their studies, sense of efficacy and self-worth, and experience of belonging. Another research question is what is the meaning of the tracking as the single way. The research of students is an area that is lacking in the educational field, and over time its importance and contribution to the research field are steadily becoming clear. This research study will contribute knowledge about the world of students at-risk who have experienced tracking from the beginning of their studies and about the issue of exclusion and inequality in the school.

The research is qualitative ethnographic. The researched population consists of 25 students in the tracking classes who are eighteen-nineteen years old from a number of

schools spread over a relatively large geographic region. The choice of the research was to focus on the students who are found in the school and sometimes even in the classroom but do not function in terms of their learning. These are students who were tracked from their first year in the school, and most of the years they felt disconnected and alienated in their class and in their school. The focus in the interviews was on the way in which the students see their studies in the school and on their reference to the phenomena accompanying tracking, exclusion, and inequality. The research seeks to examine the relationship between the tracking and exclusion and the measures of self-worth, efficacy, belonging, and perception of the future. The research instrument is a lengthy personal interview with every student, a tool that enabled the researcher to create intimacy and closeness with the respondents and thus to hear from them about their deep attitudes and emotions regarding the research topics. This research made use of bricolage, a concept that describes the researcher's ability to build his research using tools accessible in the specific field. Indeed, the researcher used her emotional world and her cognitive perception as another meaningful instrument in the interpretation of the occurrences and the understanding of the research participants' world.

The memories and experiences that the respondents bring up reveal a drama of exclusion and inequality in the schools at all ages, and they describe experiences of failure, pain, vulnerability, and abandonment as a result of classification and tracking. As students, they are not partners in the processes of school decision making related to their integration or to the answers of the educational constellation to their academic difficulties. The findings address three periods in the students' lives in the school and the perception of their future.

From the period of the elementary school, they remember the removal from the classroom, classification into levels of study, and additional practices that made their academic status permanent. These are accompanied by feelings of lack of belonging, vulnerability, and alienation. With reference to the studies in the middle school, the respondents indicate practices that accompany their tracking or facilitate their learning and emphasize the exclusion, inequality, and preservation of the social gaps. They report the social classes and structures in the period of the high school and link them to the feeling of

inequality and harm to the self-worth, efficacy, and belonging. All these are related to the way in which they perceive and plan their future. Students who were tracked for most of the years of their lives accumulate frustration and experiences of failure and feel loneliness and distress that do not allow them to learn.

The findings emphasize the existence of social classes, gaps, and segregation in the schools, as they exist in society. The relationship between the stratification in society and what is done in the school is clear to the research participants, and they believe that there is no other way and this is how it has to be. The research study shows that students at-risk have a limited picture of the future, which is focused on the choice of subjects associated with earning a livelihood and not with acquiring an education. They do not believe in their ability to change their socioeconomic status, and yet they are interested in having the capacity to earn their livelihood.

Practices, phenomena, and expressions related to tracking, exclusion, and inequality are well known to the research respondents, who hold attitudes and opinions of great value. The research participants shed light on the implicit and explicit arrangements of the expressions of exclusion and social inequality in the school and in the education system, and it is possible to define them as experts in the field. The research participants describe how the tracking promotes the strong and constitutes a glass ceiling for them as students at-risk.

The research addresses the tracking in the education system as a tool for the assimilation of economic and social ideologies among children and adolescents that influence their future. The findings reveal that teachers prefer to teach good students, support the tracking, and are aware of the way in which social classes are created. Tracking in the education system is an arranged and explained structure with instances and practices that establish and justify its existence in all schools and at all ages. Teachers and educators ignore the emotional and social aspects entailed by the lives of students at-risk.

The findings show that at all ages the system of relations between the school and the parents of the students at-risk is complicated. The students indicate an education system that uses the parents against them, detrimentally influences the relations between the parents

and their children, and discriminates against parents from different classes. The system excludes the parents as it excludes the students. The schools transfer the responsibility for the students' learning difficulties to the students and even blame them for these difficulties.

The actions and references of the teachers establish the students' thinking and identity components. The teacher who has a continuous and significant relationship with a student has a critical role in the student's learning, and this teacher has tremendous influence on the student's integration in the learning constellation and on the emotions accompanying the learning.

Listening to the students' voice is a central pedagogical tool in the learning processes. It may have tremendous value for them and help build a school educational perspective in the work with them; this is a work instrument whose use by teachers can result in the reduction of exclusion and inequality and establish a new pedagogy.

It appears that teachers and educators are not aware of the influences of the tracking on students at-risk, and hence the importance of the new knowledge that the research presents about them and its contribution to the field of education and to the shapers of the policy. Knowledge about the at-risk students' thinking and ways of action may facilitate the development of practices that take their world into consideration. Giving weight to their current position as learners may help them and their teachers, and it appears that a meaningful relationship with their teachers may make the tracking unnecessary and influence dramatically the glass ceiling they encounter. Such a relationship may even influence the student's perception of the future and the student's social mobility.

While teachers and educators justify the existence of tracking as a mechanism that benefits the children at-risk, the students address it as an excluding and discriminating structure. The present and future "price" of the tracking should be revealed, versus the advantages and chances innate in listening to students and in teaching that takes the students' needs into account.

Introduction

This research study is in the field of education, and at its center is work with children who are at-risk and excluded in the education system. The topic of students in situations of dropping out and risk has been researched in the field of education in the world and in Israel. Despite the allocation of the resources for the development of programs and projects in this field, the findings of the national and international tests indicate that in Israel the gaps are steadily growing on the background of the social structures. The research is based on the data of the international tests of the OECD and the reports of the Central Bureau of Statistics, which indicate the situation of students at-risk in the education system.

The number of students who are found at-risk and in continuation are excluded and drop out of the education system, the percentage of the students who are tested in the high school matriculation examinations, and the achievements in the tests indicate the existence of gaps between all the students and the students who are at-risk and excluded. The basis for most of the gaps is social-economic inequality. The research focuses on the structures, policy, and mechanisms of tracking enrooted in the education system, which do not “meet” the learners or ignore them. Social phenomena and structures (the space in which the phenomena occur) constitute together a basis for the clarification of the questions of who is served by the tracking and how, which structures ensure and preserve its existence, and how it influences in the educational field.

The research focuses on outlooks that support equality and social justice and that aspire to promote mechanisms that enable inclusion and acceptance of every person as he is. These outlooks are the conceptual basis of any theoretical or practical educational context – in the classroom, in the school, in the community, and among the shapers of policy. In Israel, a proven relationship was found between the students’ socioeconomic background and the academic achievements, while the sectorial structure in the education system ignores the composition of Israeli society. Researchers maintain that the education system replicates mechanisms of social inequality in the education institutions.

In recent years, the neo-capitalist economy has exacerbated the gaps and intensified the social inequality because of the reference to capital, achievements and competition as leading values, and the pushing of the social reality to the margins.

Theories and researches present different perceptions and attitudes regarding the tracking of students in the schools. The research on the topic is limited and examines primarily the effectiveness and necessity of the tracking in terms of the organization. To go in-depth into tracking as a field that exposes the gaps and contradictions regarding the policy and structures in Israeli society, it is necessary to understand social and educational theories. Observation of the micro, of the single student as a subject, is necessary, and alongside it observation of the macro, of the policy and actions of the education system in which there is tracking as a main mechanism for many years.

The objective of the present research study is make the voice of students at-risk heard and to influence the picture of the exclusion and inequality towards them. In recent years, there are researches that call upon teachers to listen to the voice of the students as partners for the formation of the learning processes. This research study seeks to learn from the students' statements the extent to which the tracking influences the inclusion, exclusion, learning, motivation, belonging, and perception of the future. Research studies show that inclusion is not a privilege but a true solution for these students and that the integration of these students in the regular class is critical to their learning in the present and to their future in society (Moore, 2018; Motola, Mittleberg, & Razer, 2014).

As a researcher, I found that students who are at-risk and excluded have not been researched sufficiently, and I sought to contribute from my professional experience to the advancement of the research and educational activity in this field. This research study will enable the acquaintance with the world of students who have been classified and separated from the beginning of their path in the school. Thomas and Znaniecki (1958) address society as a product of continuous interaction between the individual awareness and the objective social reality. Individual attitudes towards social structures and values serve to explain the appearance of new social values, and social values that act on personal attitudes can explain the appearance of personal attitudes. These researchers emphasize that we can

learn from the meaning of mass phenomena only after we research the history of people who are a part of them. The research and theory reveal a high correlation between structures that are “responsible” for social inequality and exclusion and excluding structures in education that include separations and distancing of weak students and ignoring their distresses and needs. One of the main conditions for the handling of the gap is exposure and learning of the phenomenon and putting it on the agenda. The state declares equality as a social and educational value and poses this demand of the education system, but economic aspects drive exclusionary work patterns (Dahan & Yonah, 2005; Nir, 2012).

This is a topic that should be researched since it reflects tension between the individual and society and reveals contradictions and gaps. Relevant knowledge may help to “see” the students behind the phenomena and the data. The research may awaken the need for the change of the processes of learning of the students who are at-risk and excluded.

The first chapter will review theories and researches addressing social structures that have reflected gaps and social inequality since the establishment of the State of Israel – and some have continued to strengthen until today. This is an era characterized by globalization and neo-capitalism, which are expressed in economic structures that contribute to the preservation of the gaps and the social inequality (Harvey, 2005; Kalinov, 2012; Lampert, 2008, 2013; Marcuse, 1988; Sabirsky, 2004). Some of the theories indicate the education system as a means for the replication of the social-cultural inequality between dominant and subordinated social groups, this through the classification of students on the basis of class, the prevention of social mobility, and the linkage of privileges as depending on class status (Blass, 2015, 2016; Bourdieu, 1986; Bowles & Gintis, 2003, 2008; Sabirsky, 2004). Tracking serves both the social stratification and the neo-liberal economic structures (Dahan, 2018; Dahan & Yonah, 2013; Sabag & Biberman-Shalev, 2014). The long-standing practices and mechanisms are preserved in the education system at all ages and are described in research studies on the chances of students at-risk in the education system (Kalinov, 2014; Ben-Peretz, 2009). As the class is more homogeneous, social structures that are comfortable and familiar that perpetuate the existing situation are created (Gamoran, 2009, 2011; Motola, Mittleberg, & Razer, 2014).

The research study will want to hear and know the voices of the students who are silent or who tell their pain through their behavior and to understand from them how tracking influences their studies, their efficacy, and their sense of belonging. The objective of the research study is to indicate the importance of listening to students at-risk, and through the interviews with the students it illustrates how much it is possible to learn from them about their way of thinking, feelings, and experiences. Tracked students are frequently defined as found at-risk or as fated to drop out. The researcher's perception is that the listening to their voice is a humane and ethical step that will ease their development as suitable and equal partners, who are autonomous and responsible.

Youths at-risk suffer from a variety of problems and difficulties that make their adjustment in the present and future difficult (Schonet-Reichl, 2000), and since they are not accustomed to conceptualizing or reporting their feelings and difficulties, it is important to research them. It is important to adopt a pluralistic approach that includes differences in sex, color, culture, social and economic situation, and abilities (Nevo, 2010). Familiarity with these aspects in the students' lives will encourage them to make themselves heard. Korczak (1976) spoke about the students' first and inalienable right to express in public his thoughts and to have an active part in the considerations and decisions about him. Moore (2018) presents the perception according to which the school may increase situations of risk but concurrently has the power to extract students from them. This perception contradicts the opinion of researchers (Lampert, Avidan, & Amit, 2005), who holds that the school does not create distress, and therefore it does not see itself as responsible for treating it. Their assumption is that the teachers adopt this perception on the basis of implicit rationalization, the roots of which are in neo-capitalist thinking that sees the individual – the student and his parents – as responsible for the reality of their lives. The students' voice reflects the way in which the school system acts with them.

The research question is how does tracking influence the academic lives, motivation, efficacy, and belonging of students at-risk and what for them is the meaning of being tracked and excluded. This question attempts to examine and provide an answer to the gap in the knowledge and the research between the requirement for social equality and the reality that includes exclusion and inequality towards students in the education

system. The question is researched from a broad global perspective of social structures and sociological aspects to the students' personal perspective. Thus, the research participants are asked about equality towards students in the school, their experience of the studies, the way in which they perceive the tracking, from their first year in the school and its reasons, and how the system helps and justifies the behavior. They also are asked about their emotions and future. The optimal behavior of the entire education system necessitates research and learning according to its culture and unique characteristics and internalization of the perception that it does not act as an independent organization disconnected from the environment (Karnieli, 2008).

The research will aspire to answer main questions in the field and to examine how the school system addresses tracking. The research will ask the tracked students to describe the teachers' attitude towards them and the extent to which they are informed and involved in the decisions about their classification, their removal from the class, or their tracking. The research study will seek to follow up after the feelings, thinking, and perception of these students throughout the years of the study in the different schools – elementary school, middle school, and high school – and how they influence their perception of the future. Another issue that will be covered in-depth is how the tracking is related to dropping out and whether it constitutes a glass ceiling for these students. In addition, the system of relations of the school with these students' parents will be examined.

The criteria for the choice of the interviewees are age, accessibility, dispersion in different schools and communities, and status as high school students in tracked classes. The choice in the research study was to focus on students aged seventeen to nineteen at the end of their studies or near the end, from the assumption that at this age it is possible to obtain a view of all the years of the studies simultaneously from a close and distant perspective. In the research study, considerable importance is attributed to the exposure of the students' attitudes about the teachers, the tracking, and themselves, as students or a little after the end of their studies. The choice of the subjects' age is related also to the education system and its limitations, and an age was chosen at which the students are already adults and independent.

The research participants are students who learn in separate classes in the regular high schools. These classes belong to a separate department in the Ministry of Education. The department is committed to building a track of success suited for students in situations of risk of implicit and explicit dropping out who are learning in the regular normative system. The agenda of this department is to increase the percentages of those receiving a high school matriculation certificate among the weak populations through the increase of resources, cultivation, wellbeing, rehabilitation, and regular attendance. The activity that is aimed at the reduction of the dropping out in the education institutions is based on the perception that to help these students it is necessary to separate them and to create for them frameworks that will allow them to realize their potential and finish the educational-academic track (Ministry of Education Website, 2018).

It was determined that the population of research participants will include 25 interviewees as a part of the considerations related to the research objective. In addition, an interview was planned, as long and in-depth as possible, to enable the research participants' interaction and open and comfortable sharing. The planning was to obtain a broad picture that does not focus on one school or community, but includes a variety of communities and as broad a geographic range as possible. The research participants are Hebrew speakers, from a low-intermediate socioeconomic background. This profile was determined with the intention to enable reference to the students' socioeconomic background as a part of the typology. It is important to note that the sample size does not allow the generalization of the findings to the entire population of students in these classes, but rather the learning about them and about the phenomena that the research seeks to examine.

The researcher aspired to hold the interviews in a familiar place where the interviewees would feel comfortable, and therefore she chose to hold them in their homes after coordinating with them. The research method chosen is the semi-structured in-depth interview. This method enables the researcher to stay in the researched field, to learn about the occurrences therein, and to go in-depth in them, while collecting relevant material. According to the in-depth interview method, the questions are phrased ahead of time, but the interaction and the personal relationship created during the interview contribute greatly

to the research participants' understanding of the events, experiences, perceptions, and emotions.

Aspects, for example the interview process, the researcher's involvement, the place of the interviews, the age of the research respondents, the way of analysis of the findings, and the manner of presentation of the findings, are related to the research limitations. The researcher's recognition of these limitations helps to cope and take into account the influence of these aspects on the research process and in certain cases to find relevant solutions.

The research method found most appropriate for this research study is the qualitative method, since the desire is to examine the reality as it is reflected in the research participants' eyes as a result of their subjective outlook. The need for transparency and to make the voice of this population heard may be satisfied through this research study, which makes their world accessible to the public at large. This qualitative research is based on an approach that enables the research respondent to be referred to as a subject and to be understood relative to the concepts of equality, exclusion, and tracking in society. Through the students' viewpoint it is possible to learn about the perceptions prevailing in education in Israel in these fields.

The research method chosen for the research study is ethnographic. Ethnography learns from people from the attempt to document and understand society. Ethnographic research helps to understand complex social phenomena in different fields. The conceptual approach in ethnography is the desire to understand the other person from unmediated closeness, attention, and slow observation, and therefore it includes entrance into the field, creation of a relationship with people, choice of categories, in-depth conversations, and characterization of the relationships. Ethnography strives to expose what influences social structures in aspects of policy, ideology, economy and economic needs, and laws that create social inequality. This is a research approach that enables the interpretation and decoding of social and cultural situations, with consideration of the context. The researcher knows the researched field and is exposed to what is done in it (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2000).

Contemporary ethnographic research uses bricolage, a concept that describes the researcher's ability to build the research through tools available in the specific field. One of the tools is the world of the researcher's thoughts and emotions as another significant instrument for the understanding of his viewpoint when interpreting the research participants' narratives (Bar Shalom, 2011). Bricolage encourages the researcher not to be bound by rigid approaches but to use what is found and is effective and to preserve the seriousness and depth of the research (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004).

The research participants' viewpoint will enable the learning about excluding mechanisms that do not encounter the students' suffering or ignore it. The research does not purport to present conclusions for all students and even not for all students at-risk, but it can shed light on their world and the researched phenomena.

Chapter 1. Exclusionary Social Structures

This review seeks to reveal the conversation the research and practices relevant to the field of the economic and social policy in the era of globalization as a basis of the discussion and thought on the way in which globalization and economic policy, in their different aspects, influence the social policy in Israel in general and education in particular. It is important to have a broad and critical understanding about the sociological perspective that examines the influences of the social structures: social stratification, social exclusion, and cultural, social, and political ideologies.

The main question is as follows. How does the education system replicate the economic and social structures that produce and preserve social inequality and in what ways?

In the research literature there appear many descriptions and analyses on the situation of the Western person towards the end of the second millennium, as a person found in a new historical period that differs in all the parameters of human existence. This is the 'postmodern' era, in which there are economic changes following constant global commerce and the free market has led to the development of new markets, new modes of communication, and new directions of migration (Ben Porat, 2011). From an economic perspective, the period is discussed in the aspect of the transition from a state-based economy to a global economy of information and technology (Lampert, 2008). It is possible to note the abandonment of modern ideological methods (socialism, communism, and so on), and their replacement with pragmatic and utilitarian methods: the reduction of the status of social ideologies in favor of individualistic approaches (Ben-Peretz, 2009).

On the social level, postmodern society is characterized by the erosion of the social definitions and the loss of meaning of social frameworks. The erosion is expressed in the disappearance of the traditional social division of roles (men versus women, younger people versus older people), the lack of ability to characterize social frameworks (such as the nuclear family), and the loss of meaning of these frameworks as a framework that gives meaning to the individual's life. In the past, social frameworks served as a basis for the

creation of meaning: a person crystallized his identity through his identification with an outside idea granted in a social way: a member in a movement, affiliation with a youth movement (Berger, 2011).

The French philosopher Lyotard (1984) maintains that the dominant spirit in the postmodern era is the spirit of the lack of belief towards meta-narratives. In other words, there is no trust in the great belief systems of the past, in history, in progress, or in truth. Our ability to hold these beliefs was undermined by the constant barrage of pictures and information through new technology and means of mass communication. Again we cannot attribute meaning to the world since there does not exist a coherent world possessed of meaning. Instead, we live in a world of dreams and fantasy – a world of television, of malls, of video games, of Disneyland. People are done with politics, people have become consumers lacking in judgment, and the dominant language is the language of packaging and advertisement.

Lampert (2008) explains that in the economic realm the postmodern era is characterized by the acceleration and intensification of economic competition. In this field, the modern capitalist economy has broadened to a situation of global control over the means of production, information, and capital. This is an economy of forced labor that transforms everything into a consumer product, the person to a compulsive consumer, and in parallel shortens the shelf life of its products. In the employment market, the post-modern society is characterized by excessive education and career fluctuation of its workers. On the personal level, every person is unique and in many senses different from another person. The emphasis is placed on recognition and consideration of the personal differences. There is also recognition of the existence of group differences – primarily racial, religious, and ethnic.

The basic idea is the liberation from the hegemony of white Western culture, which has characterized Western society in the past centuries. The intention is the right of every group of people, without exception, to be what it is and not to be altered – willingly or through coercion – to the white Western standard (Lavi, 2000).

In the technological field, the nature of post-modern society is reflected in the developments with far-reaching influences on many areas in the person's life. These developments range from the media revolution to genetic engineering, the power to create and to change life itself.

In the psychological field, postmodernism is characterized by a rise in the tension and mental stress exerted on the individual as a result of life inside a reality of an infinite and unending collection of stimuli and cognitive, consumer, occupational, and other possibilities. In addition, all the parameters according to which the person's choices are performed, which were based on a system of social, value-based, and conceptual coordinates, were undermined as a result of the epistemological revolution (Ben-Peretz, 2009).

Researchers (Sabag & Biberman-Shalev, 2014) raise the need to increase the depth in the field of economics, welfare, culture and their impact on education, their nature, composition, and mandate, the ideology, and the interests that guide them, their manner of action, the criticism of them, and the differences among them and in them. They assert that it is necessary to go in-depth and examine the ways of influence of the global and local organizations on the social policy in Israel that is controlled by capitalism and neo-capitalism.

The argument of Ben-Peretz (2009) is that there are inseparable reciprocal relationships and dependence between the dimensions of globalization. The researcher illustrates how these forces create the context and the influence on the decisions of the social and educational policy in the present and in the future.

A social outcome apparent in the postmodern era is the gaps between groups in the population and social exclusion. Strier (2001) and Doron (2006) explain the gap of social inequality and the exclusion as an expression of the failure of social, political, cultural, and economic systems to include in society different groups. Exclusion addresses social isolation, lack of integration, reduction of the cooperation, and absence of influence and power of different social groups, continuous multidimensional deprivation, which causes

loss of feeling of belonging, and identification with the exclusionary society and its institutions.

Social exclusion is not created by chance; it is the product of social and economic inequality in the inclusion in society of different groups. It is the outcome of an ongoing struggle that occurs in society between different social groups over the division of human resources and other resources and is even directed by political and economic mechanisms (Horesh, 2004). The roots of social exclusion lie in the failure of the systems of beliefs about the social integration (social services, law systems, economic systems, political systems). In the extensive literature that developed on a topic it is accepted to assume that social exclusion is the process for which certain groups in the population are pushed to the margins and are denied the full participation in the life of society in which they live. Poverty and economic distress are found at the head of these reasons (Lister, 2004), as are inadequate education, deficient health, and lack of appropriate occupational abilities and other social abilities (Estivill, 2003; Hills, 2004). The exclusion addresses social isolation, lack of integration, reduction of cooperation, lack of influence and power of different social groups, and continuous multidimensional deprivation, which causes the loss of feelings of belonging and identification with the exclusionary society and its institutions (Berghman, 1995).

Doron (2006) adds that social exclusion can transfer from generation to generation and harm the chances of the following generation for a better life. The transfer may occur in communities and geographic regions, which suffer from a combination of problems or lacks, such as unemployment, poor occupational abilities, low income, poor residential conditions, deficient health, belonging to an ethnic minority group, and shaky family life.

The frequency of the reference to the topic of exclusion indicates about far-reaching changes in lack of equality. The main argument is that as long as the social exclusion does not harm the balance of powers of free economy and does not abandon the concentration of capital in the hands of the dominant group then it is not a problem (Strier, 2001). When we examine what are the unique themes that characterize the children's social exclusion, it

was found that here too the definitions focus on the inability to participate in society and to obtain recognition from it (Stephan, 2007).

To summarize, the postmodern era is characterized by economic and social changes: family structures, gender, and migration in parallel to a capitalist economy and technologies that change the market forces and the world of employment and education. These change and influence society, culture, and education in general and in Israel in particular. In the examination of these influences, social gaps were found that create social inequality and social exclusion. It is necessary to go in-depth in the fields of economy and social wellbeing so as to examine the influences the gaps and inequality and how these are expressed in the education system.

1.1 Neo-Capitalism

The discussion of neo-capitalism appears in recent years under different names, when the prominent of them is 'neoliberalism' or 'later capitalism'. Frederick (2002) maintains in his book *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of the Later Capitalism* that the later capitalism is similar in many respects to neo-capitalism.

Lampert (2008) holds that neoliberalism is the overall name for the economic social perception prevailing in the Anglo-Saxon world for more than thirty years now. According to him, this is not solely an economic philosophy but a value-based and social ideology that includes political, economic, and social components and has many contradictions. According to neoliberalism, the existence and activity of the market are the formative value that can and should guide all human activity and take the place of all previous ethics. Thus, for example, the increase of efficiency precedes the rights of workers or the quality of the environment. The neoliberal doctrine defines all human activity in economic terms and standards and believes that it is possible to broaden the principles and rationale of the market also to the family life, work, health, education, and culture. Researchers (Gal Nor, Paz-Fuchs, & Zion, 2015) clarify that the idea at the basis of neoliberalism is that liberty and personal freedom are the goal and apex of human culture. On the economic side, neoliberalism relies on the neo-classic theory, which proves that it is enough that every individual will aspire to maximize the personal benefit, so that the market will achieve the

maximal economic benefit. On the social-political side, the neoliberals hold that liberty and freedom will be achieved and preserved best in a system built on strong property rights, a free market, and free trade, a world in which private initiative can flourish. The conclusion from this argument is that it is necessary to have a minimum of involvement of the state in economy, and conversely the State needs to use its power to preserve the private property rights and the promoting institutions of the market (Ben Porat, 2011).

In essence, the market is the message, and neoliberalism broadens the perception of the concept beyond the production and sale of products and services for every human life path. This trend is prominent in the approach and attitude to the individual, society, and employment. Professor Razin from Tel Aviv University (2003) explains how Milton Friedman, a father of neoliberalism, in his book *The Freedom to Choose* holds that economic efficiency is a supreme value and the free market is the most tested means of absolute efficiency. “The main principle of the market economy is cooperation through free exchange” Friedman wrote, “People cooperate with one another since they can provide in this way their lack more efficiently. A society that places freedom before equality will receive largely both of them.” (Chapter 1, Power of the Market)

Lampert (2008) argues that we are found in a constant era of global capitalism according to the elementary definition: “A method is defined as capitalist when the initial dynamic of social activity is the unending accumulation of capital.” (Wallerstein, 1999)

In the research of Harvey (2005) published in his book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, it is possible to find the historical legality behind what Harvey calls ‘global capitalism’. Harvey defines the neoliberal state as “a governmental mechanism with the basic task of creating conditions that will enable the capital owners, both local and foreign, to profitably accumulate capital”. In essence, the consistent characteristic in Harvey’s thesis is the rise in the inequality. In other words, as the inequality increases in a certain state, it is more ‘neoliberal’, regardless of the economic policy of the government in actuality. He asserts that neoliberalism is a political project, a device of a reverse class war: a powerful device for the war of the strong against the weak groups. Harvey shows in a methodical and convincing manner how the neoliberal project is originally a project for the

restoration of the political and economic power to the hands of the financial capital class and the economic elites whose power had eroded after the Second World War. One of the significant results of the neoliberal project is the significant change in the division of the incomes and the increase of the inequality in the division of incomes in the United States, Britain, and Russia after 1989, and in Israel as well. According to him, the neoliberal class struggle pretends that it is a project for society and for the benefit of society at large. This perception holds that the economy is autonomous and society is placed in it and not the opposite. The individual is perceived as the main unit of reference and not the society (what is called in sociological language ‘methodological individualism’). Poverty is perceived as an outcome of the individual’s weakness and not a result of political and structural decisions. This perception is embodied in a key sentence coined by one of the prominent capitalist leaders, the Prime Minister of England in the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher, according to which “There is no such thing as society. There are individuals.” The individual neoliberalism found allies in the neoliberal project and the capitalism of capital, which are at the basis of what we called ‘globalization’ (Kalinov, 2012).

Another argument of Harvey (2005) is that the capital of global capitalism has a different geography and perception of time. It is disconnected (partially) from the logic of the state and is based on a troubling separation between capital and work. This is one of the reasons for which capital does not have interest in investments in education, infrastructures, health, residence, or welfare.

Globalization is primarily a concept that expresses the capital that wanders around the world and not that of work. The main reason is that the capital conveys the production to places where it is possible to purchase the work inexpensively. This lack of symmetry not only influences the exploitation of the workforce in the third world but also leads to the increase of unemployment in industrialized countries. The high rates of unemployment are not incidental and are not temporary. They indicate an unequivocal trend of the escape of capital from work in its classic terms (Harvey, 2005).

The sociologist Ulrich Beck (2011) proposes to become accustomed to the fact that most participants in the workforce will not be fully employed throughout their entire lives

and moreover many will need to get used to long periods without work at all. The disconnection from capital and global money evaporates the work and makes it an entity lacking in content. Neoliberalism promotes the status of the corporations of large capital and justifies their transformation into mini-states that control and abuse their subjects' lives. Harvey (2005) explains that if for hundreds of years' theories of rights developed in political thought (for instance, human rights, social rights, or even collective rights), now the corporate sovereign, under the cover of neoliberalism, make the liberal system of rights superfluous. The capital produces for itself independent flow networks that lead to the de-territorialization of the global arena and the re-organization of the world space according to themes that do not suit the entire system of responsibility and political commitment of transparency or human solidarity. This does not say that capital is necessarily brutal. People are a rather abstract concept for it.

George Soros, a Hungarian economist (and investor), maintains that neoliberalism constitutes a danger to open society. Financial globalization creates an artificial world state that has no social basis. In the epilogue that Mandelkeren (2007) wrote for Harvey's book, which addresses the economy of Israel, he wrote that the litmus test for the success of economic policy is the rise in inequality. He argues that liberalism in Israel has failed since it has caused a dramatic increase in the inequality, poverty, and lack of social economic security. His conclusion is that liberalization has led to the desired prosperity only for a thin economic stratum.

Dahan (2006) criticizes the argument of Harvey according to which the individual's freedom means that a person bears the responsibility for his fate not only in the economic field but also in the social, educational, health, and other fields. Only the individual bears his failure; poverty and inequality are not the outcome of social and economic structures or circumstances, everything is in the individual's hands. The personality at the basis of neoliberalism is the individual as the relentless entrepreneur who is found in the unending pursuit of the accumulation of wealth, in 'possessive individualism'. According to Dahan (2006), one of the paradoxes of neoliberalism derives from the fact that on the one hand it is interested in the reduction of the role of the state and the granting of as much freedom as possible to the individual. However, on the other hand, neoliberalism, which fears the

outcomes of the democratic processes or the actions of groups in civil society and is interested in assuring the capitalist economic regime, needs a strong interventionist state that will ensure that the democratic majority does not undermine the neoliberal order. An example is the field of work. The neoliberal order goes against the collective organization of workers and does not allow them to realize their freedom of associate. Neoliberalism supports a 'flexible' job market that means for most of the workers a low salary, reduced system of rights, and lack of occupational security. The low salary joins the cut in the social services. Concern for health and education become matters for which each one needs to bear personal responsibility. Dahan (2006) and Sabirsky (2006), describe how the flexible job market produces processes of commodification, everything becomes merchandise – education, health, welfare services, the workforce, everything has a market price. One of the genius aspects of neoliberalism, according to Harvey (2005), is that it creates a language that includes concepts such as freedom, liberty, choice, and rights, a rhetoric that conceals the reality of nearly absolute control of a small class group on the state level and on the global level.

Another aspect in the neo-capitalist policy in Israel is the emphasis on the reduction of the role of the State and the granting of freedom as much as possible to the individual. This emphasis obligates the transition to aggressive marketing and the development of obsessive consumerism, and elimination of collective organization of workers. There is preservation of an open or flexible job market, which means for most workers a low salary, a lack of social rights, and lack of job security, which are exchanged for the demand for high creativity for personal expression. There is the cut in the social services, with the attempt to create a reality in which the welfare, health, and education are a matter of personal responsibility. There is the reduction of the security net for the poor and in parallel the investment in social functions that serve the individual. There is the control of language and ideology in which everything is perceived as merchandise, everything has a price, including the social services, education, and people. There is the marketing of the self and even emotions and thoughts. There is the empowerment of the idea of the freedom of choice and liberty as an essential condition for a more just society and for the reduction of social gaps. There is privatization, which means the elimination of citizen rights and their transformation into merchandise. There is the sale of resources and assets, ranging from

industries, transportation, and financial institutions, through energy and natural resources, to schools and hospitals (Dahan, 2006).

Lampert (2008) describes how in the new reality, following technology and communication, primarily mass communication, a change occurs in the person's awareness and privacy. This is the medium that makes the person passive and poor in language and distances him from human contact. Conversely, it creates a world encompassing extension of mass culture and standardization of the consumption product. English is the leading language in the world of commerce and culture. The nature is transparent in neo-capitalism, and it is based on manipulation using symbols, advertisement, and marketing. The capital is what determines clearly and directly the goals and applications of the political power and the public discourse.

When we examine the changes in the nature of the social frameworks and in the way in which people address these frameworks, we can see the direct relationship between neo-capitalism and the processes of change. From a commercial perspective, there are no differences between races, cultures, and gender – as long as they buy, consume, and justify the continuation of the production. The old social frameworks, which preserved social structures such as the school, family, and the nation state, are no longer necessary (Ram, 2006). Neo-capitalism is based on the middle class. They are the great consumer power, which is educated for addictive consumption of merchandise lacking benefit and value, including the exploitation of the resources of the planet and the exploitation of the raw materials and work of poor countries. This means that steadily increasing strata in the population are found in a situation of unemployment and dependence on the mechanisms of welfare and poverty, the poor and repressed social class. Hence, a new situation is created, a broad social swath of the middle class, some of whose members barely earn a livelihood in and are poor, and alongside them a social group of unemployed who work in whatever comes to hand, migrants, and foreign workers. This class division blurs the historical class war (Ram, 2006).

Sitbon (2011) in his article “Criticism on the Book of the Sociologist Ulrich Beck ‘Cosmopolitanism: Theory and Criticism for the 21st Century’” explains how neo-

capitalism does not need ideology or institutionalized mechanisms. It is democratic, open, and tolerant. It has at its disposal all the technological means for the creation of duplication, the leadership of global consumption, mass education through the media, and the creation of a sense of satisfaction, authenticity, and self-fulfillment in the context of consumption. The poor and middle classes exist one beside the other without meeting and friction and without exploitation as had existed in the past, while their children meet in the public education system and constitute a significant part of it.

Dahan (2006) adds that in this reality it is not possible to establish a self-identity. In this reality, all the social parameters that in the past served for the creation of a personal identity (gender, age, profession, ethnic origin, family, and nationality) steadily are vanishing. The feeling leads people to search for stability, to hold onto the past, to return to religion, and to long for leadership, the values of the family, and every framework that gives an illusion of permanence. However, the conservative tendencies leverage the establishment of economic bodies that market an 'alternative' in the aggressiveness of money changers.

In the neo-capitalist era there is no room for social logic that inhibits the growth of capital. There is no need for moral justifications in a transparent world, in which people are accustomed to address others as objects and themselves as merchandise. Capital has no interest in education or the welfare of the citizens. Certainly it has no interest in the political level at which corruption, ignoring social distress, going to wars unnecessarily, and open connection between capital and government are no longer a problem. This is a world in which there is no interest in social justice, since such justice costs money. A world that gives up social organizations, while privatizing them and removing their viability. The lack of economic viability of the social institutions in areas such as health, education, welfare, and education and the increasing erosion of the idea of social justice grease the wheels of neo-capitalism (Lampert, 2008)

Marcuse (1988), a researcher and founder of the Frankfurt School¹, describes how the consumption and the media make the person one-dimensional and make unnecessary the old tools for the shaping of the individual, such as the school for instance. He describes a process of the subordination of culture to industry from the logic that enables existence only to what can be marketed and sold. Neo-capitalism proves that marketing in large quantities and at low prices is preferable to the reverse and thus creates mechanisms for mass consumption and constant competition over the effectiveness of the reduction of the price of merchandise and the increase of their quantity. Thus it enables many people to have consumption products. However, it eliminates the existence of personal and unique creation. According to Marcuse (1988) and Lampert (2008), the “reduction of the awareness” is a part of the neo-capitalist life and does not apply to manufacturers, industrialists, and businesses that engage in making the public accustomed to consume what it does not need.

The (French) researcher Piketty (2014) in a long-term study presents a picture of the situation according to which the dynamics of the division of wealth and income in cities in the world since the 18th century are important. One of his conclusions is that the market economy is always based on private property and on strong forces. Wealth is global. They constitute a threat to democratic societies and the values of social justice upon which society is based. In his opinion, the inequality should be examined according to the concentration of wealth accumulated and its division. History shows that single countries cannot manage economic policy in which there is growth for the long-term and that capital will always be great and will manage the economy. As a solution, Piketty (2014) suggests a social policy and new forms of government shared between public and private ownership as one of the challenges of the coming century. According to him Regional political interaction can lead to effective regulation of the capitalism of the 21st century.

Piketty (2014) defines that the economy has a normative and moral political goal. A political economy has an ideal role in the social and economic organization of the state,

¹ The Frankfurt School is the name of the group of people who engaged in the thinking and interdisciplinary research in the fields of sociology, psychology, philosophy, theory of literature, on the basis of the critical Marxist outlook.

according to which it is necessary to aspire that every citizen will be an expert and involved in public policy. Thus it is necessary to make decisions and to adopt positions regarding the institutions and their policy. Historical aspects are most important regarding the understanding of economic and social structures and the understanding where and why capital is concentrated and who it serves. Capitalism automatically creates arbitrary and sustainable inequality. Only a democracy can restore the control that the general interest will surmount the private interests, while maintaining economic openness and avoidance of national responses.

One of the important traits of neo-capitalism is the strengthening of the nation state, the device through which neo-capitalism fights the socially and personally destructive results that include the broadening of the social and economic gaps, alienation, the increase in the crime rate, the loss of personal safety, and the failure of education for values. Neo-capitalism does not need political stability. It does not have a problem with the changing reality. Rather, the reverse is true: neo-capitalism is nurtured by and nurtures the rapidly changing reality and chaos is its convenient home, like nihilism² (Maron, 2012).

Ben Porat (2011) maintains that the State of Israel began as a socialist project carried by a coalition of left-wing parties under the leadership of David Ben Gurion. However, in essence from its very first day the State of Israel was a national Zionist project that this coalition more than anything built and cultivated through cultural, social, and economic inequality, adopting class division and ethnic work, with the pushing of socialism to the margins until it disappeared. The dominant elite chose a capitalist model that already had strong roots in the West but presented itself in a social democratic orientation. According to Ben Porat (2011), it would seem that the last model was chosen. In essence, already in the first days of the State of Israel the socialist Zionists began to cultivate the existence of the capitalist model when they excused this with the claim that the circumstances required the process of the building of the nation and the State. Later, when the leadership shifted from the left to the right, there was no need for excuses since neoliberalism always had a place there. There was no need to put forth much effort since

² Nihilism is a philosophical and literary school of thought that negates the accepted theory of morality, the world order, and authority and sees the liberty of a person as an individual to be the supreme value.

the predecessors from the 'left' had already laid the ground for the transformation of Israel into a capitalist state. The State of Israel today is capitalist, with all the implications of this, in the class division of the work, the economic inequality, the accelerated commercialization of culture, and so on (Ram, 2006).

Sabirsky (2006) opines that the situation that makes capitalist societies is the internal tension that reigns in them, which is not solvable as long as they exist as capitalist societies. One of the primary tensions is the class tension, which is entirely built on inequality in the assets and in political control. Social inequality on a class basis is the first nature of every capitalist society. This inequality is embodied in the practical definition of every individual as a type of merchandise. Every individual, and more precisely, the merchandise that he represents, has a value of exchange that is the work force or funding. Other factors, such as knowledge, can improve the value of the merchandise – the work force – in the market, but cannot make an essential change of the merchandise in the exchange equation in the market.

Sabirsky (2006) emphasizes that the political disconnect between capital and society is a worrisome disconnect. In the gap between the power of money and the weakness of civil society appear new and old phenomena of evil and violence, disconnected from political responsibility. Forms of management develop that are disconnected from responsibility towards democracy, morality, or justice.

The neoliberal revolution in Israel gained considerable momentum in the 1970s when Milton Friedman was invited to give advice to the government of Israel and in the 1980s with the economic plan for the stabilization of the economy (Maman & Rosenhek, 2009). The public services were privatized and the relationship between capital and political government was reinforced.

The neoliberal ideology is based on the transfer of capital to the strong as an engine of economic growth, and as such will not encourage its transfer to the weak even if this is found in its domain. A research study conducted by Professor Rubinstein (2012) (בתוך הררזוי (2005) showed the extent to which the economists in Israel hold fast to the neoliberal ideology. The research study examined the students' attitudes on the issue of the

termination of the workers. While the students of philosophy chose the option of balance between profit and termination (little profit, little termination), the students of economics chose methodically profit as a supreme value (maximum profit, maximum worker termination). Sabirsky (2016) describes, “Many Israel see this day (1985, the transition to a capitalist economy) as a turn for the worse in the social-economic history of Israel. A date that symbolizes the transition from an ethos of solidarity and mutual responsibility to an individualist ethos of the strong prevail, from a universal policy of development to a policy of growth that glorifies enrichment for its own sake, from state responsibility for all to a policy of privatization and removal of responsibility, from a situation in which citizens enjoy collective protections of the State, the Workers Union, the parties, the local governments to a situation in which the individual is exposed to arbitrary action of the market mechanisms.

Kalinov (2012) explains that the important lesson that can be learned from the Israeli case that addresses the deep origins of the influence of neoliberalism is the weaknesses of the governmental intervention in the economy. The researcher explained that these are policy steps that did not necessarily derive from the change in the global economy that were expressed on the one hand in the transfer of assets to the same thin social stratum and on the other hand in the weakening of the organized work and the protection of workers. In parallel to the increase of the economic gaps caused by these processes, the State reduced its role in the re-division of wealth: the level of progressiveness of taxation in Israel steadily declined and in parallel there was an erosion of the welfare state, the appropriate place in which to begin processes of privatization. The fruits of privatization were enjoyed by a few, but the price was paid by many, especially the workers. The ability of many workers to protect their salary and their rights was also harmed. The second aspect pertained to the reduction and the attempts to reduce the protections provided by the Welfare State, especially those stipends and support funds that may harm the incentive to participate in the job market. The results explain the broadening of inequality and poverty by blaming the poor for their situation (Kalinov, 2012).

The data of the Association for Citizen Rights in Israel (Report, 2017) explain that the main device for the realization of the policy of governments of Israel, which is intended

to reduce their part in the supply of social services, is the gradual but extensive reduction in the budgets of the government ministries and the public institutions in charge of the supply of these services in the areas of health, education, work, and welfare. In addition, the privatization was explained with the argument that the State does not know how to provide these services (Ben Porat, 2011; Sabirsky & Conon-Atias, 2017).

Experts and researchers in Israel formed a document that explains the methods of governments in Israel for the reduction of the social services (Nir, 2012). One of the characteristics of the neoliberal method is to exploit crises as an opportunity to conduct changes and reforms that will increase the flexibility of the economy and enable the maximization of the action of the free market. The other characteristic of the approach – the presentation of the changes as such forced from the outside and not as assimilated from the inside – explains the display of consensus between right and left, which is expressed in the past decades in the implementation of all the governments of Israel of the recipe for a neoliberal economy. In the public and legal discourse the institutional changes and the adoption of the policy themes were not perceived as political decisions but as unavoidable processes. Thus, the economic-social perception in Israel was changed, with the expropriation of the discussion on the topic from the public with the explanation that these are purely professional questions (Crystal, Cohen, & Mondlack, 2006). Privatizations, taxes, the erosion of the social services profoundly changed the distribution of resources in Israeli society and radicalized the class polarization in it (Stiglitz, 2012).

The outlook of economic policy, as described by Maman and Rosenhek (2009), raises questions about the system of relations between the individual and society. One of the questions is whether the individual can achieve everything he wants only if he works hard or whether his situation depends only on the status with which he is born and the possibilities with which the State presents him. Education, health, residence, occupation, and wellbeing are not consumption products but fundamental rights that each and every person deserves. Social and economic rights are a moral standard for the examination of the government's decisions regarding the public expenses and its involvement in the market. The realization of the social rights does not ensure the reduction of inequality in society but is a threshold condition of this (Maman & Rosenhek, 2009).

The main device for the realization of the policy of the governments of Israel, intended to reduce their part in the supply of the social services, is the gradual but extensive reductions in the budgets of the government offices and the public institutions in charge of the supply of these services (Nir, 2012). When the high security expenses of Israel are taken into account, it becomes clear that there remains only a very limited budget for the social expenses: the government citizen expense (which is the government expense from which the security expenditure is subtracted) in Israel is lower than the mean in the OECD countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) and constitutes 31.8% of the gross national product, as opposed to 40%, on the average, in the OECD (Nir, 2012).

Gal Nor, Paz-Fuch, and Tzion (2015) reveal two mechanisms that are used by the states for the reduction of the government expenses. The first mechanism is budget cuts, when the cuts are to the budgets of the government offices that are in charge of the supply of social services, direct cuts to the budget of a certain office, generally through announcement of treasury people on the increase of efficiency. The second mechanism is budget erosion: to eliminate a budget it is possible to simply not update it according to the demographic changes, namely, the pace of increase of the population, the increase in the rate of the elderly or the children in it, the change in the percentage of people who have special needs in it, etc. (Dahan, 2012). To fill in what was removed from the public systems, the government transfers in some of the cases the supply of the social services to the private market. These actions were undertaken without examining the authorities implemented by the service providers so as to decide whether it can be privatized. As the service is given to a vulnerable population that cannot stand up for its rights, the consideration whether it is correct to privatize it did not exist. In any event, the responsibility of the State for the social services does not lessen after the privatization and it is committed to ensure quality, accessibility, and equality in the detailed service (Gal Nor, Paz-Fuch, & Tzion, 2015).

Criticism levelled against these privatizations holds that they lead to the transformation of fundamental rights, such as health and education, from a right that the government must work to realize to a service purchased for money by those people who can allow themselves. This is from the adoption of models of a market economy for the

purpose of the management of public systems, such as education and higher education, in a way that undermines the perception of these as basic rights and that deepens the inequality (Dagan-Bozaglo, 2010). Another significant aspect in the privatizations performed in Israel is the lack of supervision and control over the private bodies that accept into their hands the implementation of service or the supply of a social product. For the most part, after the government privatizes a social service, the government supervision over the licensee that operates the service is weak and inadequate in scope (Wodlinger & Nir, 2011). The deficient supervision indicates the loss of the connection between the authority and the citizen and the State's disengagement from its citizens' fate. In addition, it becomes a part of the method, since it enables the State to continue in the process of privatization and to argue that it is necessary to broaden it, while ignoring the deficiencies exposed on the way (Mark, 2008). Beyond the problems with this approach, which transforms fundamental rights into consumption products, the processes of privatization are also undemocratic. Although these are processes with critical implications for the public, they are not transparent and they are undertaken sporadically and without a serious process of decision making in which the options for the true improvement of the aforementioned social service are weighed. In parallel, to uphold the policy, they act against those who object to the social-economic policy. They are labeled as 'irrational' and the weak groups – the poor, the Arabs, the Ultra-Orthodox – are presented as 'parasites' and 'idle' and it is argued against them that they "do not put forth sufficient effort" and "they have too many children who are born into poverty". The de-legitimization and the encouragement of racism towards these groups led to 'achievements': instead of the public discourse addressing the failures of social-economic policy, the discussion and the fire were redirected towards the protesters and the governments were not required to change their behavior (Crystal, Cohen, & Mondlack, 2006).

Tajer (2006) explains that a target from another direction for crushing was the workers' unions, which had the power to serve as a defense against the erosion of the workers' rights and wages. To change the balance of powers between the employers and the employees, many steps were undertaken so as to break organized labor and new rules were applied to the work relations in the economy. These changes, including the privatization of companies and government services, and indirect employment through

manpower companies, weakened the power of the workers, eroded their rights, and increased the economic gaps in society. Another mechanism for the crushing of the resistance was the extensive use of what is called the welfare mechanisms, ‘categorical stipends’, which were given to certain populations on the basis of ethnic origin, national origin, and military service. The high percentage of this type of stipend in Israel not only established the inequality in society but also increased it and created a separation between different weak groups, one that enables the governments to continue with their social-economic policy for many more years.

A report of the social picture of situation for the year 2016 in Israel (Adva Center for Equality and Social Justice) clarifies and cautions that there is a partnership between capital and government. In an economic system that is neoliberal, the growth belongs to the top decile, while the rest of the population become poor, an increasing number of workers earn less, one-third of the workers earn less than the minimum wage, and the significant salary gaps between different groups in Israeli society are maintained. Ashkenazi³ workers are in the top part, while Ethiopian and Arab workers earn the lowest wages. Inequality in Israel is presented in the highest gap in the OECD countries. The aspects of inequality are in the dimensions of poverty, stratification, and social segregation.

The main points are as follows. Neo-capitalism, which is prevalent in most of the developed countries and in Israel too, has created new conceptualizations and economic conduct, with increased efficiency, maximization of profit, and economic qualities that call for the most human activity to maximize the personal benefit. These emphases seek to empower the individual’s freedom and liberty as an entrepreneur and consumer. Neo-capitalism focuses on the production and distribution of capital. One of the ideas is that the individual, and not society and its institutions, has responsibility for all aspects of his life. Capital has no interest in social investments. The individual has the responsibility to adjust himself to the constantly changing reality. These create gaps and inequality, which create stratification, poverty, and even migration, which are perceived as the individual’s weakness and his responsibility. The prevalent perception is that the division of capital is

³ Ashkenazi Jews are Jews whose origin is the countries of Europe.

economic and less social. There is a disconnection between capital and work and livelihood. Capital also has geography and a perception of time. These influence the workers and leave whole populations in poverty or geographic distance, without helpful social mechanisms. Humanist variables such as solidarity and human rights become distant and no longer constitute an aid. Social bases that were known and helpful change, and the result is a dramatic increase in social inequality, poverty, and social and economic insecurity. Social logic and justice and morality are no longer prevalent, and instead there is a policy of privatization. Cuts in social services also change the nature of the social frameworks and the way in which the citizens address these frameworks.

In Israel it is possible to see the cultural, social, and economic inequality from the first days of statehood: the stratification of the class division and the economic control of the elite that chose capitalist models and presented itself as social democrat. These continue until today. Conflicts and inequality between social categories and ongoing discrimination create contradictions and tension in society.

The lack of the governmental intervention in the economy, along with the privatizations of the public services, harm to the ethos of solidarity and mutual responsibility, taxes, and drying up of social services changed the distribution of the resources in society and increased further the class polarization in it. Expressions include social inequality, class gaps, poverty, and stratification and social segregation.

1.2 Poverty, Segregation, and Social Inequality

This chapter seeks to review in-depth the learning of the gaps and expressions of inequality and division of the resources in Israeli society and to know their expressions from the establishment of the State until today, the period of the flourishing of globalization, with the emphasis on the neoliberal ideology.

In all the democratic countries today, there is a market economy (with some degree of government intervention) and there is competition in the social-economic realm. However, the countries obligate to give their residents an elementary standard of life. Welfare is the assurance of a reasonable and appropriate level. A welfare state gives social-

economic services to all its residents: through the supply of an income floor, nutrition, medical care, education, housing, employment, and personal welfare services for all the residents. The aspiration is to reduce to a certain degree the social gaps (Meor, 2008). The scope and level of these services are determined according to the starting point of the country: a social-democratic outlook or a liberal outlook, or in other words, according to what appears to the state and the serving government to be ‘reasonable and appropriate living conditions’ and according to the economic situation in the given period of time (Gal, 2006).

The State of Israel is a democratic state, and when it was established it espoused the principles of democracy as social and value-oriented principles that guide the state. The important principles are the principles of human freedom and equality for all (Declaration of Independence, 1948).

In the past two decades, the economic social regime in Israel has changed. The social-democrat welfare state gave way to an extreme neoliberal regime that places the market economy at the center of the economic activity and seeks to rid itself from the responsibility of the country to provide essential services to the population (Ram, 2006). These are ideological structural changes that support global processes. One of the changes is the principle of distributional justice (Meor, 2008). This concept describes a situation in which the private property and realization of personal abilities for profit are also the issue of the state. The state allows itself to take a part of it, since its assets were accumulated through the exploitation of the market opportunities that society created. Society seeks its part in the business’s profit and therefore the citizen must pay taxes. The difference between societies and countries is the sum of the tax. These factors illustrate the building of inequality between groups acting in society. Society is built of layers, when the broad base layer represents the lower class and the upper layer represents a high social status (Sabag & Biberan-Shalev, 2014).

The topic of social stratification has research and social meaning since the individual’s degree of access to the resources of society has far-reaching implications on his welfare in different aspects of life. In a capitalist democratic society, the social class is

expressed primarily according to the individual's level of income (Bowles & Gintis, 2003). According to a report that addresses social policy in Israel (Ben David, 2009), it was found that society in Israel is characterized by a steep stratified structure (large economic gaps between different social groups), relative to other Western societies.

In Israel there are about 8.5 million residents. From the day of its establishment the State has absorbed the largest number of immigrants in the world, a datum that influenced the rapid pace of increase of the population. Most of the residents are Jewish, and their cultural and ethnic composition indicates great difference and social segmentation. 20% of the population is Arab, 4% different groups. In addition, the population is characterized by spatial differentiation, a situation in which different groups live separately from other groups, conducting their lives in separate geographic regions (Vargan, 2009). Spatial differentiation exists in the Jewish population. The Arab population also lives in spatial differentiation. The characteristics of inequality in the standard of living and in education are lower than in the Jewish population. Despite the desire and proclamation of equality and integration, in actuality there is a circle of social inequality towards different populations. Dahan, (2013) argues that Spatial differentiation is a characteristic for which the government institutions are responsible. The dispersion of immigrants and different populations occurred from the founding of the state in an intentional policy. These separations created a hierarchy between groups in the population from different backgrounds and maintain class differences and gaps (Friedman, 2002).

In the year 2003, as a result of the economic crisis and security problems, a plan for the reduction of the state's expenses for social services was deployed, from the adoption of a neoliberal perception that maintains that the individual's aspiration is to maximize his personal benefit and this will lead to the maximization of social wellbeing. To achieve high benefits, responsibility was shifted to the mechanisms of a free and competitive market. These economic and social perceptions clashed with social perceptions based on social humanism that supports human rights and reference to the concepts of personal responsibility and collective responsibility (Association of Citizen Rights, 2012). The supporters of the social democrat welfare state also maintained that the person's ability to promote his interest individually is a product of a system of rules and social forces (Strier,

2001). These economic changes were accompanied by the considerable increase in the inequality in the division of the income, the broadening of the dimensions of poverty, the erosion of the middle class, and the negation of many of the social rights that in the past were the province of all (Mark, 2008).

Gaps of inequality and social differentiation have existed in Israel since the establishment of the State. Until the middle of the 1980s the period is of Zionist hegemony, when the Labor Movement led the Zionist ethos to the building of the nation (Eisenstadt, 1967). This movement was composed of Ashkenazi Jews who had immigrated to Israel from the countries of Europe. This group became the elite and ruled for thirty years. The ethos of this movement was expressed in the shaping of the social fabric in Israel in these years (Horowitz & Lissak, 1978). The goal of the establishment of home and homeland for the Jewish people was undertaken through the equality of opportunities for all those who adopted the figure of the 'pioneer' (Lissak, 1985). This was a figure whose role is self sacrifice and contribution to the collective tasks. Since in this period there were also wars with the neighboring countries, this was an important burden. The degree of contribution to society was a distinguishing tool. This ethos of pioneering created distinctions between groups on an affiliative basis, thus for example a group of Israeli Arabs because of nationality cannot participate in the building of the nation. In the group of Jews the spirit of solidarity and the ingathering of the exiles created stratified distinctions in such a way that the Israeli melting pot required from the groups whose origin were the Mizrachi⁴ communities to adopt the identity of the Ashkenazi elite. In the political aspect the Zionist ideology that required of the state's citizens to constitute a part of the collective that requires belonging to the Jewish nation was dominant. This perception contradicts the liberal perception, according to which citizenship is granted to the individual equally in society and without preliminary conditions. Critics (Giddens, 1997; Rosenhek, 1999) maintained that this serves the Ashkenazi elite, which gave priority to individuals who belong and act in its way.

⁴ Mizrachi Jews are Jews whose origin is the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. In Hebrew the word means East (and these are the Jews of the East, as opposed to the West).

Sabirsky (2004) emphasizes that the national ideology that directed to national unity, social solidarity, and preservation of cohesion and stability of society at the same time preserved and assured the social place of the marginal groups and provided ideological explanation and legitimization of the situation of inequality between the groups. The neoliberal ideology that supports political equality and economic equality challenged the national ideology. Neoliberalism is a type of economic and political regime that characterizes an ideology according to which the individual is perceived first before the place of the society in which he acts, and therefore freedom to the individuals is considered a main and significant value of neoliberal society (Parekh, 1993). Globalization enables society to become global and the individual in it faces global institutions with decisive presence and influences on everyday life of individuals in a variety of areas (Ritzer, 2010). In this context, the role of the state is to ensure equality and freedom for all its citizens and not to constitute an institution that prevents freedom, coerces commitment on individuals, and intervenes in social, economic, and political activities. In addition, autonomous individuals are expected to advance in society and to succeed in the economic aspect through hard work that includes effort and talent (Hasenfeld & Rafferty, 1989). In other words, the division of the economic resources is related to the contributions to the individuals' outputs and products and encourages the preference of economic differentiation on the basis of the individual's efforts and contribution to the promotion of his personal interests. This ideology developed, in contrast to the Zionist pioneering ideology, which placed at the center the promotion of national economic interests and saw considerable importance in the individual's contribution to the realization of national social interests (Held, 1993).

In Israel, after the period of the wars and since the 1980s, the Zionist hegemony began to lose its stability, primarily in light of the economic conditions of recession. In the year 1977 the government changed, and this change, along with the establishment of peace treaties with the neighboring countries of Egypt and Jordan, created a platform for the rise of new ideologies and collective identities (Kimmerling, 2001; Ram, 2000). This trend received legal expression in the year 1992, through the legislation of main basic laws in honor of the person and his liberty and the freedom of employment. The desire was to give personal freedom and universal defense to the assurance of the rights of the individual. In

this sense, all the citizens of the State were perceived as equal regardless of affiliative traits such as religion, origin, race, and sex. The shared collective identity controlled by the State intervention gave way to the neoliberal discourse in terms of moral openness and acceptance of others through the elimination of differences of nationality, religious connections, and ethnic identities and relations (Maman, 2016).

Like capitalism in welfare states, the Zionist economy granted legitimacy to the free market as the main mechanism according to which emphasis was placed on the development and economic achievement as a means for the construction of a society that can provide its material and spiritual needs, with the goal of absorbing as many Jews in the world as possible. Therefore, precedence was given to the collective, while personal benefit was evaluated as a byproduct of the economic activity. The state created an ambiguous system that divided economic resources in a non-uniform manner and took into account affiliative considerations. An individual who belonged to the Ashkenazi group received access to work or housing and health and education services, as opposed to other social groups, such as Mizrachi Jews and Arabs (Rosenhek, 1999).

Empirical research studies performed in different Western countries found that in general in democratic liberal societies there is perception and preference of equality in prestige and political equality and not economic inequality (Torblom & Foa, 1983). With regard to education, there is preference for differentiation and inequality, which are expressed in effort, ability, and contribution (Schiit & Montada, 1982).

The discussion through theoretical terms illustrates and focuses the distinction between the perception of the social stratification as a mirror of differences of abilities and achievements and the understanding of the social stratification as a product of active public policy (Perry, 2007).

In Israel it is argued that there are factors that created spatial inequality, the goal of which is to preserve the stratification and ethnic differentiation (Gardos, 2006; Perry, 2007; Yonah, 2007). Market powers and government efficiency cause the increase of gaps between regions. The capitalist development creates regions with growth at the expense of weak regions and creates dependence of the weak regions on the strong regions. The

different divisions of work create differences of employment that create social inequality and gaps that increase over time. The center in this model is strong and connected economically and culturally to globalization. The periphery has an inferior image and is alienated from the center. It is controlled and exploited by the center. The social political periphery was joined by the development towns⁵ in the South and in the North, in which there are minority populations. A prominent unequal spatial division of population in Israel was created. Research studies and the government data of the Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel present tens of social, economic, cultural, and political variables that express the large gap between the center and the periphery (Ram, 2006). The spatial dichotomy in Israel is exacerbated when there are also ethnic and cultural differences between the population of the center and the periphery (Yonah, 2007). It is possible to note the organization of space and time towards the focus and centralization of economic, cultural, communicational, and technological activities. The centers become strong and connected to the global economy, while in the periphery the conditions of distress and neglect worsen. This polarization is accompanied by community formation and closure around religion and ethnic origin. There is a sense of deprivation and social distance from the center. Concepts identified with privatization, neoliberalism, increased efficiency, opening of market, mobility, and lack of permanence at work are not possible in the periphery and therefore inequality increased (Perry, 2007). This approach is accepted as leading in the research of stratification today (Goldthorpe, 2000), according to which the individual's engagement is the main factor in the determination of his place and in his positioning in the social class structure. According to this schema, there are three classes in society (Yaish & Talmud, 2006). They are created according the employment relations suited to human capital. The implication of these perceptions is that in every society with an economic market and privatization there will be occupational differentiation and from it social classes. The empirical research found that the frequency of unemployment, difference in the patterns of

⁵ Development towns – Following the pressure of immigration and the need to absorb this immigration, after the establishment of the State, for a period of a decade about thirty towns were founded, for a population of about one hundred thousand people, which changed the urban system in the State of Israel. The development towns are concentrated in the North and the South of the State of Israel.

life consumerism, and political identification are still associated with the individual's class position (Yaish & Talmud, 2006).

Hamisi (2009) maintains that social stratification is a method according to which society ranks categories of people on a hierarchical scale. Social stratification is not a simple reflection of differences between individuals, but rather a characteristic of society. Children who were born into rich families can enjoy good health, achieve academic degrees, succeed in a professional career and live long, as opposed to those born in conditions of poverty. The rich are not to blame for the formation of the social stratification, just like the poor are not to blame, but this method shapes the lives of both groups. In the class method, the social stratification is based on personal achievements. This method is more 'open' and gives people who acquire an education and professional skill the possibility of social mobility and achievement of a position that exceeds that of their parents, their siblings, and so on (Ben David, 2009). Mobility in itself enables the blurring of the class differences. The social borders are shattered also following the migration of people to different countries or their shift from the village to the city. The new residents are generally employed in positions paying a low wage, a fact that advances the residents higher on the social scale. These two methods have one basic common denominator: in both people are not equal. One of the main reasons for the perseverance of social hierarchies is the fact that they are based on ideology, on cultural beliefs that serve to justify the social stratification. Every belief that supports the advantages of the rich elites and that teaches that the poor are responsible for their own bitter fate is an ideology. Sociologists frequently use the term socioeconomic status to note a complex social ranking that is based on different dimensions of inequality (Yonah, 2007).

Yonah and Shenhav (2000) maintain that it is not the political stratification that grew the neoliberal ideology that supports the reduction of the State's role as a device for the re-division of the resources. This ideology grew from the elites that speak in favor of national solidarity and concentrate culture. The State cooperates with big capital, in its policy and in the privatization processes that further polarization and stratification. The narrative that calls for Jewish national unity since the establishment of the State continues to exist and to serve those with capital and the government. In many issues of identity and citizen

rights, reports and data indicate segregation between the Jewish Zionist collective and the rest (Arabs, migrants), when in the collective there continues to exist ethnic segregation. The social structure is a weave of class, gender, and ethno-national hierarchies. The term stratification is better known in its meaning as a discussion of the processes of duplication of the social hierarchies and the preservation of these hierarchies in contrast to processes of distancing from this replication. The sociological knowledge in the field of the stratification, which engages primarily in the research of the constellation of patterns and rules that define how resources and rewards – social and economic – are divided between groups and individuals, the discussion of the processes of allocation and re-allocation as an aspect of the welfare policy, and the budgeting of public and social services are what preserve the hierarchy and social stratification (Yonah & Shenhav, 2000).

According to the last poverty report of the National Insurance Institute (2016) for the year 2015, in Israel there were 560,800 poor families, in which 2,624,900 people lived, including 998,000 children. The indices of the severity and depth of the poverty rose, primarily among the excluded populations, the Arabs and the religious. In comparison to the OECD states, Israel remained at the head of the scale of poverty and inequality. In the situation of poverty among children, Israel is at the head of the scale among the OECD countries for this year, 35.2%. Professor Avi Weiss, the head of the research staff of the Center for the Research of Social Policy in Israel (the Taub Center), reports that a more troubling datum is that Israel is not closing these gaps and the productivity growth in the state is slow, in comparison to additional developed countries (Weiss, 2016).

Gal (2014) presents trends of the broadening of poverty relevant also to those who are found above the poverty line. About the social gaps, the report of the Committee for the War against Poverty notes that 40% of all the public in Israel has reduced the consumption of basic products and that they were forced to give up food and medications because of financial difficulties. The analysis indicates that the main worsening in the inequality in the income in recent years derived from the policy of taxation that benefits those with means and the continuous erosion of the social security network, which encourages social gaps instead of closing them. More than three-quarters of the parents of poor children reported that they find it difficult to finance medical treatments, medications,

and dental care for their children; 17% of the poor children have dropped out of school. 75% of the needy children did not participate in social activity in the school because of their parents' economic hardship; these children do not receive preventative medical care, enrichment and enhancement activities, challenging and social activities, and so on. In other words, more than one-third of the children in Israel are abandoned by the state authorities and live a life of deprivation and hopelessness for a meaningful future. Comparison between the developments in Israel and in the OECD from the beginning of the 21st century until the end of the previous decade indicates higher percentage of households without wage-earners in Israel (Gal, 2014).

Researchers (Gal, 2014; Weiss, 2016) focus on the part of the government policy in the creation of this situation. "The poverty among households with at least one wage-earner has greatly increased in the past decade. This development expresses, on the one hand, the addition of weak population to the employment cycle and on the other hand a satisfactory policy for the improvement of the return on work for populations whose wage earning ability is low." They maintain that the necessary conclusion is that the increase of the employment itself is not a guarantee of the extraction from poverty. This situation is harmful for the weaker workers in the economy, who suffer more from a low salary in an extreme manner and from the removal of the social safety net upon which they could have depended in part in the past.

A comprehensive research study on the relationship between poverty and education conducted at Manchester University and published in the year 2007 indicated that poverty is not only the absence of financial resources but also the inability to function effectively in society. There is a relationship between poverty and exclusion and social marginality (Raffo, Dyson, & Gunter, 2007). The poverty trap also addresses the intergenerational replication that derives from lack and economic distress, which do not enable social and class mobility and the extraction from poverty. To live in a cycle of poverty is to be trapped because of the inability to live a life of dignity and primarily because of the inability to depart from the situation as a result of the government policy that perpetuates the situation and even exacerbates it from year to year and from decade to decade (Levin-Epstein, 2006). Poverty is a product of policy. The ability to leave poverty behind depends on the change

required from the government to benefit its citizens who live in poverty in all areas necessary for the improvement of the quality of their lives and to provide an opportunity they deserve in an equal manner. Research studies confirm the role of the government policy in the perpetuation or the reduction of the poverty (Sabirsky & Conor-Atias, 2017). Professor Eldar Shafir from Princeton University, one of the leading behavioral economists in the world, who leads initiatives for the change of policy for the treatment of poverty, holds that the reason for poverty is the conditions in which people live in poverty and not the poor people themselves (Yonah, 2007).

This cycle also symbolizes the way in which the poverty encompasses people who live in it and harms all areas of their lives and their basic rights as citizens of the state to live in dignity, to obtain social services, and to develop as people. The meaning of these data is the large gaps between those who live well and who can afford to purchase health, housing, and education and those who do not. The trend is clearly reflected when the increase of the Gini Index⁶ is examined, which examines inequality in income and grew by 5.8% from 2002 to 2009. This datum reflects the re-division of the pie of income in Israel: the part of the low deciles in the overall income pie declines constantly while the part of the upper decile increases (To Give Organization, Report, 2015).

The social inequality and the disavowal of the governments from the realization of the social rights, as Sabirsky and Conor-Atias (2017) hold, lead directly to economic and social gaps between different groups of the population in many aspects. In the field of education there are significant gaps in the achievements and in the level of education of different groups: thus, in 2009 half of the Jewish students reached the matriculation certificate and only 34.9% of the Arab students in Israel. Most of the students for the undergraduate degree came from economically established communities. 19.5% of the population aged 20-29 from established communities studied in the universities and colleges, as opposed to 13.4% of this age group from development towns and 7.3% of this Arab age group (Vargan, 2009). A research study published in the year 2007 (Traubman, 2007) noted that Mizrahi Jews constitute only 8.93% of the regular academic faculty in

⁶ The Gini Index is an index for inequality in the division of the revenues developed by the Italian statistician and demographer Corrado Gini and published in the year 1921.

the universities and Arabs less than 1%; the decisive majority of the staff, about 73%, is composed of Ashkenazi men. Ashkenazi women constitute about 17% of the faculty.

Moreover, in the examination of the students' achievements according to the student's social-economic background variables (the mother's number of years of study, the parents' income, and the economic-social level of the residential area) it was found that as the student's social-economic background is more established, his scholastic achievements are higher (Ben David, 2009).

The results of the economic-social policy of the Israel governments in past decades combine into an overall picture of difficult social damages that are not perceived on the background of the stable economy of the State. Beyond the slide into poverty and a life at a low and inadequate standard of living of large parts of the Israeli public, from a general perspective this is harm to the shared social goals of the citizens of Israel and Israeli democracy (Maron, 2012). The democratic idea sees the government to be responsible to provide and distribute among the citizens in a just manner resources and public services. A state where the democracy is essential and not formal does not see education, health, housing, and welfare to be consumption products but rights that each and every person deserves. It places at the center the shared interest for all residents of the State, each of whom can enjoy them equally, so that it is possible to realize the human desire of every person to fulfill himself and advance in his life (Yonah, 2007). According to the approach of human rights, the obligation of the state is to provide the appropriate possibilities so as to allow every person the possibility to grow and not only to exist (Doron, 2006). The access to education and appropriate existential conditions is required so as to allow every citizen to take an active part in the democratic game: to be capable of asking difficult questions and to be involved in social or political activity. When basic rights are denied to more and more people, when their dignity is harmed, when they struggle everyday over the basic living conditions, as is happening in Israel today, then democracy remains for them an empty vessel, a collection of laws without real content. When broad strata of the population do not have access to quality education, to health services, and to appropriate housing, the social cohesion, the feeling of social partnership, the sense of interest and

caring, and the feeling that the little citizen has the power to influence are all harmed (Kenyon et al., 2002).

The system of welfare services is today privatized into a long list of companies and associations, while the main office remains a factor in charge primarily of the division of the money. The private organizations do not always deliver the goods or do so only partially and in an unequal manner, especially in places where this is not profitable for them. The harmed parties are frequently among the populations that especially need these services. Raduntz (2007) holds that the crisis of the welfare state following the minimization of the government investments increased the polarization between the 'haves' and the 'haves not'. The Ministry of Welfare is only one example; this reality can also be found in the Ministry of Education, which finds it difficult to supervise all the private organizations entering into the education system and conveying into it unsupervised contents. According to the data of the Association for Citizen Rights(2011), a clear picture is delineated: the evaporation of the social services led to the trampling of the social rights of the citizens of Israel, harmed the equality, and sabotaged the shared goals of the State residents, as well as great poverty, income gaps higher than ever before, and the violation of fundamental rights such as health and education, which were privatized and have become consumption products sold to private organizations.

The described government policy caused a dramatic regression of the State from the supply of basic social rights and shifted intentionally the center of gravity to the private market. Thus, the citizens of Israel became more and more dependent on private factors for the purpose of the realization of their rights for education, health, housing, welfare, and employment, as if these are not basic rights but consumption products in all respects (Bank of Israel Report, 2011).

The hardship is visible in housing, health, taxes, and payment for water, cuts across populations and age groups, and includes harm to families and individuals from the middle class. The distress is especially difficult among those who exist from a low income, the elderly, and people with handicaps. The meaning of all this is that the citizens of Israel are forced to pay large sums for their basic needs of their livelihood. According to the data of

the Central Bureau of Statistics, an average family in Israel spends for its existence about 13,000 shekels a month, a significant part of which is spent on social services that in the past the country had supplied. In addition to these, the salary in Israel is low relative to the cost of living. In Israel of recent years, work does not necessarily help a person to leave poverty behind. It becomes clear that the average 'profile' of the poor person in Israel is not of an unemployed person but rather of a salaried worker with a post-high school education (Gal, 2010).

The use of the concept of social exclusion (Doron, 2006) is relatively new and has entered the public and academic discourse in the last decade of the 20th century. Social exclusion is the process because of which certain groups in the population are pushed to the margins and are denied full participation in the life of the society where they live. The phenomenon of exclusion derives from a series of reasons that act on and reinforce one another. At the head is poverty and economic hardship, but it derives also from inadequate education, deficient health, and lack of appropriate employment competencies and other social abilities. These reasons distance large groups in the population from workplaces, from the ability to achieve a suitable income, and from opportunities to advance on the path of life. It prevents these groups from taking part in the social and community networks. It sheds light on the status of citizenship and has far-reaching implications on the social integration of weak groups in the main flow of the life of society.

The researchers of exclusion agree that the exclusion first harms directly the living conditions of the people who experience it in their everyday life. However, it can also pass from generation to generation and harms the chances of life of people in the next generation. This type of transfer may occur when people or communities or geographic regions suffer from a combination of problems or lacks related to one another, such as unemployment, poor occupational abilities, low income, poor residential conditions, deficient health, belonging to a group of an ethnic minority, and a shaky family life. The difficult lacks that people and families suffer from tend therefore to influence not only their life path but also that of their children.

Ben-Peretz (2009) explains that one of the main changes that the globalization created is related to movements of the population such as migration. Members of the middle class tend to move from their countries to countries that offer a variety of opportunities and a higher standard of living. In the 21st century migrants experience discrimination and rejection. The migration may create classes, a multiculturalism in which there is a variety of religions, languages, and cultural traditions. Israel has been a country of immigrants since its establishment. However, in the 1980s following the immigration from Russia there were in every class 30% new immigrations.

Levin-Epstein (2006) explains that social mobility addresses the movement of the individual or the group from a certain level of control of resources to another level. The Israeli system of stratification is a product of a country of migration of many years, which experienced significant changes in a short period of time. The economic inequality in the first decades of the establishment of the country only increased and enabled less social mobility, and the capital is concentrated in the hands of a number of families. Families with means use the investment in the cultural and human capital of its children to ensure their status. The inequality can also be expressed in the ability of the parents to convey to the children material resources so that they can achieve a high level of life. A main component of economic status is ownership of apartment, which inspires a sense of security, belonging, and basis for the improvement of the standard of living.

Families convey advantages to their children not only through educational resources but also through ongoing economic support of the children's standard of life. In Israel this is very prominent because of the influence of the characteristics of the origin family on the chances of the children to own housing. The fact that the family still has an important role in the shaping of the patterns of inequality is proven again when we look at the rise in inequality of the uncontrolled market economy. In light of demographic movements that characterize processes of globalization in general and economic globalization in particular, new gaps are created. It is important to develop awareness among educators and shapers of policy of the difficulties facing the education systems. They face issues of multiculturalism, social exclusion, equality of students, acquisition of language, and ways of promoting achievements (Dahan, 2018).

The main points are as follows. Considerable importance is attributed to the exposure of gaps and expressions of social inequality. In Israel there is social differentiation that is primarily spatial, national, and ethnic. The scope of the phenomena is determined according to the policy of the state and the outlook that guides it (social democrat or liberal capitalist). Trends of the dispersion of populations and segregation of immigrants and groups from different backgrounds preserve the differences and class gaps. The poverty that is created is not only the absence of financial resources but the inability to function in society.

The emphasis of the market forces and government efficiency increase the gaps between regions and populations. They empower the dependence of weak regions on the strong ones. Globalization facilitates the empowerment of the social distance and the separations of meaning from it. Economic crises and perceptions of security broadened these trends and empowered the intervention of the state in the adoption of capitalist market solutions that created a division of the resources that increased the gaps in the population and intensified the segregation on an ethnic, national, religious, and community basis. The reality of ongoing social stratification is a mirror of the differences of ability and achievements as a product of political and public policy that adopts additional patterns of segregation in society and places the responsibility on the individual in it. Social stratification is a characteristic that shapes and establishes economic class affiliation, for the rich and the poor and their children, determining positions and possibilities in the fields of the economy, health, and education.

In recent years, the reports and the data indicate trends of the extension of the dimensions of poverty and social inequality and the responsibility of the state for the creation of this situation. Poverty and social inequality are related to social exclusion and marginality. There is intergenerational duplication, with the inability to leave this situation as a result of government policy that perpetuates and exacerbates its dimensions without the creation of opportunities for social mobility. Groups are pushed to the sidelines and denied rights or the ability to be a part of society. The education system and the shapers of policy face these issues of social exclusion, differences, and cultural gaps. It is important to study in-depth the ways of coping.

It is important to recognize the decisive influence of the political, economic, and social reality on the educational reality. It is important primarily in light of the prevalent perception that places education and the principle of the equality of opportunities and the reduction of the gaps as a central principle of justice in modern democratic society that ensures social mobility for all its members.

1.3 Relationship between the Economy and Education

The sociological perspective is what raises questions on the connection between the education system and inequality in society. To examine the extent to which the education system duplicates or liberates the individual and the weak social groups from the economic social status and what mechanism it uses, it is necessary to go in-depth into the relationship between economy and education and the fact that the acquisition of education (number of years and areas of education) may be an effective mechanism for the individual's progression on the social and economic scale (Sabag & Biberman-Shalev, 2014).

Studies over the years and the UNESCO Report (2008) determine that the home background and poverty are variables that influence more on the scholastic achievements. However, the departure from the cycle of poverty is influenced primarily by the level of education.

Aviram (1999), in his book *Navigating the Storm in Postmodern Society*, describes the new and different character of the postmodern era and its meaning regarding education. He notes that the main expression is the loss of the absoluteness of guiding coordinates of history and Western culture.

Harpaz (2014) maintains that fifteen years later Aviram's arguments about the fact that the modern education system, as it has developed in Europe and North America, is not commensurate with the postmodern reality. Until today, the system operates with characteristics of the 19th century, characteristics that are outdated and no longer relevant to the new reality. The lack of suitability is expressed in all the components of the school organization. The organizational structure of the school, which is hierarchical and depends on state organizations, is not commensurate with the postmodern reality. He asserts that

the school of today needs a paradigmatic solution that will allow it to redefine itself in the neoliberal reality and instead it attempts to function under an antiquated paradigm of modernity. Its advantages as a segregative institution that establishes the place of the elite and of the manufacturing workers seem to be no longer required. There is no longer a need for so many manufacturing workers since they come from the third world countries.

The public school is one of the social frameworks not suited to the pace of technological growth. Its teachers are not skilled in mass media and in computers, and therefore the economic potential of its children ‘clients’ is limited and is not interesting. The public financing of education is perceived in developing countries, including Israel, as a burden on the economy (Mark, 2008).

The processes of privatizations on an economic and social background (in the previous chapter) and their influence on the gaps and social inequality created the adoption of models of a market economy for the purpose of the management of public systems, such as education and higher education, in a way that undermines the perception of these as basic rights and that furthers the inequality. Thus, for instance, in the education system the self-management model was deployed, according to which every school is managed as a closed economy, with a separate bank account and its managers are permitted to make commercial use of the institution’s facilities so as to meet the budget targets. Furthermore, methods of appraisal and measurement taken from the business world are implemented on the schools and the universities: like commercial corporations are measured for success in terms of the profits for the stockholders, today education institutions are measured according to the achievements and outputs they can product (Kalinov, 2012).

National and international research studies show that in Israel the academic level of students from weak socio-economic groups is significantly lower than the academic level of students from high socio-economic groups. The possibility of changing the relationship between academic achievements and socio-economic background is based on the requirement for two conflicting tasks. On the one hand, there is the demand to function in a traditional manner – primarily as an organization for the inculcation of education. Conversely, there is a demand for social inclusion and the adjustment of the framework to

all its learners. In actuality, it appears that the educational and scholastic discourse today focuses primarily on standards, measurements, and outputs of the upper half of the population. It pulls the entire system to strong tracking and processes of internal exclusion in the school (Razer, Mittleberg, & Motoloa, 2014).

The French sociologist Bourdieu (1986) believed that what influences the chances of success in education are not only the differences in the economic capital but also the differences in two additional forms of capital: social capital and cultural capital. These, together with the economic capital, determine largely the structure of the opportunities and the chances of success of students in general. The cultural capital reflects differences in the education, values, beliefs, behavior, and attitudes among children. As the students are from a higher status, they have an advantage since their cultural capital is commensurate with the values and requirements of the education system. The social capital that includes social networks, reciprocal norms, social relationships, and the ability to use them so as to advance in the world. Therefore, social networks such as the family, the school, and the community are important components in the determination of the chances of success in the school.

Another reason for the loss of the place of the school is the social duplication in the neo-capitalist era that is performed in far more successful ways than school education, such as in the 'culture industry'. Horkheimer and Adorno (1988) and Marcuse (1988) explain the influence of advertisement and the media on the loss of the possibility for personal autonomy, for the purpose of the profits produced from the symbiotic relationship with mass consumption. In mass culture people appear not as subjects but as 'objects of manipulation' (Lavi, 2000). The similarity between the culture industry and the education industry, of which it is a part, is apparent. The discourse in education is subordinate to the measures of outputs and efficiency and acts as commercial companies search for clients. The expensive price that education pays appears in the figure of the reduction to the constellation of actions intended for the achievement of outputs directly. Slowly and gradually activities that cannot be measured in terms of output and achievements (arts) are reduced and the critical reduction of the adults' responsibility towards children and towards the commitment to the child's overall well-being appears (Lampert, 2008).

This reduction is dictated in the recent reforms in education in Israel, which was adopted by the governments and confuses the weak and the poor who believe in the education that still remains. The most difficult place where the reduction appears is the awareness of the teachers, who perceive themselves as having knowledge and training for teaching and not as educators. In the neo-capitalist reality, the place of cultivation, love, and defense is limited in the teachers' awareness and vanishes in the entanglement of the violent activity and the demand for achievements every day (Lampert, 2008).

Researchers (Lampert, 2008; Pasternak, 2013; Sabirsky, 2016) emphasize that the school does not produce capital but consumes it. In the neo-capitalist world, there is no need for the antiquated school hierarchies. The social mission of the manufacturing workers has ended and in any event members of the lower class are destined to reach a life of unemployment and unproductive social rejection and thus there is no point in investing in them the taxpayer's money. Neo-capitalism encourages flat and democratic organizations. However, it appears that public education has not vanished, not in Israel and not in other industrialized countries. The school is still perceived in its narrative as protecting values of continuity and stability as well as progress and success. In addition, the school is the ultimate babysitter, and there is no way to do without it. (Even people who work from home do not give up the school.) Members of the upper class do not want to remain at home with their children. The tendency of these parents to open private schools, so as to realize the fantasy of liberal education, is strong. In the schools in Israel today 'gray education' is widespread, and most parents find themselves paying for additional study hours for their children, which are given under different titles. In half of the local governments there today are private paths of study in the public schools as well as many semi-private schools, where tuition is charged for the special learning programs. It is clear that this dangerous deterioration of public education critically wounds the right of all children of Israel for equality in education and deepens the social gaps (Lampert, 2008). The education system is a tool serving the assimilation of economic and social ideologies among children and adolescents and their communities. Conversely, the education system may challenge these ideologies (Sabag & Biberman-Shalev, 2014).

In recent years the education system has enabled the increase of the parents' involvement in the school as consumers that address the school as a service provider. The parents are the client. The system of relationships emphasizes primarily the interest of the public school for the recruitment of additional economic resources from the parents and also empowers their direct intervention in the promotion of their children's interests. The parents who exploit the new opportunity are the parents who are skilled in language and in consumer patterns of behavior: they know to stand on their rights as clients. These are parents from the high middle consumer class who promote their children's interests. Parents from the lower class who are not accustomed to a consumer life find themselves generally not involved (Yustman, 2014).

The schools in Israel today are autonomous to implement an educational perception and to shape curricula freely. However, unsurprisingly the schools tend to adapt themselves to the emergent neo-capitalist reality, although this is not at all a necessity. It is possible to see a series of changes that increase the social gaps and exacerbate the difficult situation of lower class children, who characterize a large part of the schools in public education (Harpaz, 2014; Pasternak, 2013). What is prominent is the change of the reinforcement in actuality of social gaps on a systemic level: on the level of the city or region there is a clear differentiation between good schools and schools for the poor, in which the level of the studies and the motivation are especially low. These are schools where there is a high level of institutional violence. An economic analysis indicates the fact that most of the schools of the high middle class will find public budgets for education, despite all the projects for the 'reduction of gaps', those that serve as a basis for the demagogy of equality (Dagan-Bozaglo, 2016; Sabirsky, 2016).

Another change that characterizes the school in the neo-capitalist era is the reduction of the range of responsibility of adults towards what happens to the children in the school since the capitalist principle determines that the 'supplier' is indeed responsible to market good merchandise but does not have responsibility over the way in which the client consumes the merchandise. The reduction of responsibility appears through the loss of the ability of the adults in the school to hear and see the children's difficulties (Lampert, 2008). The loss originates in anxiety about the lack of ability to respond to the hardship.

This trend is supported by the ideology of ‘personal autonomy’, which recommends the development of the learner’s responsibility for the learning process (the client’s responsibility for the merchandise). There is the transfer of part of the responsibility to the parents. In addition, the power of the peer group and social activity is ignored, although a large part of the social life forms in the school (Razer, Mittleberg, & Motola, 2014).

The policy of the reduction of the social services in recent years has created cuts and holds in the budget of the Ministry of Education. In parallel, the number of students has continued to increase all the time. Therefore, examination of the overall budget in the calculation per student, which takes into account the rise in the number of students, indicates that in the decade from 1998 to 2007 the budget was eroded at a most sharp rate. In general, the government expenditure in the calculation per student declined by 8.3% in this period. The highest rate of decline was in the secondary education budget, 16.6 % . In the comparison to education systems around the world, the education system in Israel is found at a low level in terms of the budgetary investment, physical conditions in the classes, and the scholastic achievements. The expenditure for education, therefore, for a student at the different levels of education is lower by about 9-50% than that of the OECD states (Weiss, 2016).

The direct result of the cuts in the budgets of education and the withdrawal of the state from the budgeting of the schools – beyond the concrete expressions of number of hours of learning, quality of these hours, number of children in the classes, etc. – is the void that is created in the education system in which private factors enter. In other words, education becomes a product purchased with money. Dagan-Bozaglo (2016) explains that the withdrawal of the state in favor of the private sector is expressed in the erosion of the public budget to an extent that does not allow appropriate service to be provided without complementary private financing. In the field of education, the government expenditure was 9% of the product in the year 1985, in comparison to 6% of the product in the year 2012. Ichilov (2010) presents how in the field of education the private education services developed in the public system, alongside the principles of the free market. As a result of the neoliberal social and economic policy and the reduction of the public investment, the part of the private sector in the financing of education has increased, as has the importance

of the market forces and private factors that influence its design. The activity of the private factors on the basis of interests strengthens the inequality in the students' achievements, which is one of the greatest in the developed countries (Shtein, 2010). In Israel, as a result of the neoliberal policy, there is no possibility of preventing the opening of private schools and the funding of these schools from the budget of the Ministry of Education (Pasternak, 2013). The uniqueness of privatization in Israel lies in the fact that in Israel a totally private education system, like there is in the United States, England, and other countries, does not exist, with the exception of a small number of church schools and other schools. Hundreds of unique schools, schools of parents' associations and elite educational networks, are defined as 'recognized and not official schools' and receive budgets from the State at the average rate of 60-75% of the budget of the official schools (Dahan, 2013). In addition, they are permitted to charge tuition from the students' parents and to recruit private resources. The result is that in the public system in essence two separate education systems are created. One education system is for students from established homes and is characterized by the addition of funding, pedagogical innovation, and high level of achievements. The other education system relies on sparse public budgets and incidental philanthropy and is outdated in terms of the manner of learning and contents and has a far lower level of achievements.

Nir (2012) describes how privatization expresses a process of the commercialization of education: the implementation of the rules of the market on the field of education exchanges the perception of education as a basic civic right and as a means for the creation of equality of opportunities for a perception of education as a commodity that the State and the market provide the clients (parents, students) who act to maximize profits. Like the success of corporations in the private market is measured by the profits they achieved for the stockholders, the schools are measured by their ability to provide achievements in the basic subjects. The race for achievements is expressed in the adoption of a policy of standards that emphasizes the measurement of the learning outputs through the comparative tests, the transformation of the school (and not the Ministry of Education) into the primary factor responsible for the students' educational achievements, and the shift of school education from education as a goal in its own right to preparedness for the job market (Vargan, 2009).

There are about 250 organizations for the establishment of private schools, not including the Ultra-Orthodox education sector. Of these, about 33% are intended for specific areas, such as quality of the environment, sports, arts, and sciences. About 50% are intended for ideological areas, such as the values of tolerance, and anthroposophical, democratic, and humanistic values. About 6% are intended for treatment areas, such as learning disabilities, and about 11% are intended for religious areas (Michaeli, 2008).

In terms of the students, the schools have become more than ever 'factories for grades', especially from the middle school. Nir (2012) emphasizes that in all the learning subjects the perception prevailing in the job market called 'occupational flexibility' has penetrated into the education system and most teachers who are engaged in enrichment programs, complementary programs, and projects are contractor workers of private associations and urban companies who are employed under inferior conditions. The teachers' rooms are steadily becoming more like factories, where 'generations' of workers are employed under different conditions. The effort to 'improve the teaching workforce' focuses on the creation of teams of teachers employed under preferred conditions instead of the improvement of the training system of all the teachers. In parallel, the school principals are required to act according to the pattern of management of a business firm. A steadily increasing part of the principals' work focuses on the administrative domain – the recruitment of resources and the marketing of the school, while in the pedagogical domain the effort focuses on the presentation of measurable achievements and the development of unique programs that have the main goal of attracting the strong students (Nir, 2012). From the 1990s, a market of educational networks competing over the implementation of schools and the operation of projects in out-sourcing for the Ministry of Education has been created. In contrast to the traditional networks, which were established on a public basis, many of the new networks are owned by families and are managed as businesses in all respects. The areas of activity of the networks and their geographic dispersion are a result of business considerations, identification of opportunities, and victory in tenders of the Ministry of Education (Dahan & Yonah, 2005).

The results of the privatization and commercialization have greatly increased the differentiation and stratification that had existed beforehand between students from

different social and economic backgrounds. This is in addition to the many years of differentiation between the educational sectors – the state sector, the state religious sector, the Arab sector, and the Ultra-Orthodox sector. This is a diverging system of the tracking of students based on pedagogical and financial selection under the guise of the encouragement of excellence and choice. A regime of measurement and evaluation alongside the competition among the schools increases the teachers' burnout and incentivizes the classification of students and the dropping out of the less achieving students. It reinforces the class distinction and diverts resources to the reinforcement of the strong (Dahan, 2013).

As a result, the types of social equality or inequality are related to the perceptions of social justice prevalent in broader society and are justified and shaped according to the social reality. In Israel, it is possible to note phenomena of inequality in the complex social reality and there are expressions in the education system. Examination of the social structures that hold reciprocal relations with education enable greater depth and understanding of the phenomena of inequality in education (Sabag & Biberman-Shalev, 2014).

Lampert (2008), maintains that if the school upholds old paradigms over time, this means that there is a real social need for this type of existence. In other words, it serves powerful social and economic interests. Such service explains its social role that is related to adjustment and repression and not necessarily to education.

Some theories assert that against the processes that occur in the neo-capitalist era there is the real possibility to do things differently. It is possible to refuse the processes of capitalization, to stop the commercialization of education and the transformation of the people employed in education to merchants and merchandise, to refuse the limitation of the look at the children's hardships, to avoid their dehumanization and to act in a real manner to stop the overall social trend outside of the school. The school's relative weakness cannot eliminate the necessity to submit to outside pressures. The social chaos also invites possibilities of fulfillment and activism, the hope for new types of organization for equal, multicultural, and social solidarity. One of the ways proposed is to recognize the presence

of other people's pain and hardship in an uncompromising struggle to change the reality (Lampert, 2008; Razer, Mittleberg, & Motola, 2014).

Professor Shai Frogel (2018), holds that the education system is a reflection of the social situation. According to him, excellent classes are an economic interest that pushes everyone who has high abilities to the sciences and shape a perception that grades are a way to success. The school shapes a perception on the students and their abilities, according to which they can learn and succeed. In the last year, the Ministry of Education announced a reform in the five units of study in mathematics, through the shaping of a perception that the harm to the studies of mathematics is harm to the strength and security of the state. The increased studies of mathematics create an infrastructure for the strengthening of the Israeli economy and its global leadership in the development and advancement of hi-tech. There is even a promise that five units are the entrance ticket to academia and integration in hi-tech in desired positions at a high salary. Hence, the relationship between education and scores is related to economic aspects and a perception that is built in the students' minds. These facts require the school system to separate, classify, and track those who can and those who cannot, while they adopt a social and economic justification, "to take and to track the excelling individual for needs that are not his but those of the economy, society, and hi-tech" (Frogel, 2018).

This chapter focuses on the importance of research studies and theories that examine the relationship between the economy and education and the importance of education as the effective mechanism for the individual's progress on the economic and social scales. Research studies determine that this is the alternative to leave the circles of poverty and social differentiation.

Despite all the global economic and technological changes, education occurs in a system of characteristics, such as hierarchy, dependence on state organizations, segregative perception that is not commensurate with the postmodern reality.

In education in Israel it is possible to note the adoption of the models of a capitalist market economy in a manner that undermines the perception of the basic rights of children and thus deepens gaps and inequalities towards them. Consequently, gray education or

private education, financed by the parents or business organizations developed, and thus the basic right of education for all is harmed. Research studies and data indicate a relationship between the students' academic level and the economic class to which they belong in Israel. The cuts in the education budget and the policy of privatization explain the erosion of the public budget so that without complementary private financing the system does not have the right to exist. Private factors and parents have interests that strengthen the inequality in the students' achievements. The privatizations produce the commercialization of education, the inclusion of market rules on it, and the duplication of mechanisms that are taken from the culture industry for profits and increase of the culture of consumption.

The schools, although they are autonomous to implement perception of education and shape ways of learning, tend to adapt themselves to the neo-capitalist reality. In every city it is possible to differentiate between good schools and weak/poor ones. The level of the school budget is different. The level of the teachers is also different and of course the level and motivation of the students are different. The learning discourse focuses on the outputs and standards and pulls the system to strong tracking and exclusion of children. It is possible to find harm to the students' right for education and creation of equality of opportunities, which the education system continues to proclaim. The gaps of differentiation and stratification among students from different social economic backgrounds are apparent in the results of the tests in Israel and in the countries of the OECD.

1.4 Summary

The first chapter reviewed the social structures that teach about gaps and social inequality that are have been preserved since the establishment of the State and in part even continue to be strengthened until today. This period is characterized by globalization and neo-capitalism, which are influenced by neo-capitalist economic ideas and structures, which have influence on the perpetuation of the gaps and social inequality.

Society in Israel is characterized by social gaps that create class, ethnic, and economic inequality, which is apparent in many areas between populations from different

origins and cultures that are preserved from the establishment of the State. The relationships between globalization and the neo-capitalist economy have far-reaching implications and outcomes on education. The promise of education facilitates the successful coping with the socioeconomic world, education that becomes consumerism where every person can purchase his future. Competition that empties the role of education from its contents is thus created. Hence, there is a shift from education that involved moral and value-oriented aspects with the goal of the building of an equal society to education that empowers competition and scores (Ben-Peretz, 2009). Differentiation, Social exclusion, and poverty, characterize society and even extend the scope and dimensions of the phenomena, under the ideological justification that you must take care of yourself through your abilities and personal effort.

The next chapter will address the issue that seeks to clarify the extent to which the manner of the education system liberates from or ‘replicates’ the social inequality and how it does so. The tracking of the assumption of the sociological perspective of the manner of functioning of society enables the prediction and explanation of certain behavior. I want to examine the mechanisms and manner in which the education system contributes to mobility or replicates and perpetuates the inequality. The emphasis is on the weak in society and on the students who are at risk and are excluded.

Chapter 2. Tracking – How Modern Societies Duplicate Social Structures in the Schooling System

A sociological perspective of education is one that raises empirical research questions around the connection between the education system and inequality in society. To what degree does the education system replicate the initial social economic class of an individual or of disadvantaged social groups or release them from it? What are the mechanisms used for this purpose? if the education system enables social mobility or replicates the inequality between the different groups according to their initial social economic class. The sociology of education emphasizes the importance of the acquisition of an education and examines the extent to which education (number of years and areas of education) may be an effective mechanism for the advance of the individual in the social economic ladder (Kalinov, 2014; Sabag & Biberman-Shalev, 2014).

In Israel there is a relationship between the student's social economic status and his scholastic achievements. The percentage of the difference of the scholastic achievements explained through the student's background data is among the highest in the world (OECD, 2014).

Educational sociological research exposes mechanisms that duplicate and perpetuate the inequality in the educational opportunities and have implications on the ability of individuals to change their initial social status and the chances of their life (Torres & Antikainen, 2003). In other words, the individual social economic status can be described as duplicated from his parents' social economic status, despite the broadening of the education system, which includes in it more students who belong to a low social economic status (Sabag & Biberman-Shalev, 2014).

It is important to examine the education system in Israel and the structural changes that characterized it after the establishment of the State, from the 1940s. After the establishment of the State in 1949, the Prime Minister led the legislation of the first law in education,

Free Compulsory Education Law⁷, for all. The Zionist ideology supported the merger of the exiles (the Jewish communities from abroad) and the socialist promise of social and economic equality. In the year 1953 the public state education law was enacted. The law was intended to collect schools under a centralized control of the State, from the goal to promote all the students by granting equality of opportunities in education to all students, regardless of their social, economic, and national status (Kalinov, 2014).

In the period that preceded democracy and industrialization, the family was responsible for education and for the processes of socialization. For the most part, the population did not have access to education. Education served as a mechanism that ‘replicated’ the inequality between the different social groups in a given society. In other words, the education system was a part of the mechanism of social stratification that created a social duplication that reproduces the individual’s initial social status and maintains the equation according to which the social status of a person who is born rich is assured, while a person who is born poor will remain poor for all his life (Hallinan, 2000). Following the Industrial Revolution, when parents were forced to enter the world of employment, a formal education system developed that supported extensive vocational training for children. According to democracy, this was an education system open to all groups in the population, regardless of differences of religion, race, sex, and nationality. Gradually, with the development of the welfare state, this became a public system that obligated participation in it. The education system assumed the control over knowledge and values from the hands of the elite group and made them accessible and open to all (Parsons, 1972).

Society saw the education system to be the main instrument of social mobility, or in other words, the education system is what enables change and the climb of the social hierarchy, while providing equality of opportunities in learning on the basis of meritocracy – advancement according to effort, achievements, and ability – and not according to family or class affiliation as was in the past (Lampert, 2013). The education system became a

⁷ In the year 2007 the Knesset of Israel (Parliament) passed the extension of the period of compulsory free studies until the end of the twelfth grade.

mechanism that liberates the individual and enables him to change his initial status and served as a mechanism for the socialization for the values of democracy (Hallinan, 2000)

It appears that until today the education system is perceived as replicating the stratified class structure. Despite the aspiration for the equality of opportunities, there still exists differentiation between different groups that is expressed in the creation of learning programs, learning tracks, and even learning regions, which create the differential social placement of individuals from different statuses (Sabag & Biberman-Shalev, 2014). When there is social stratification, the person conducts his life from his status. The reproduction in the school indicates that the student's status determines his future (Lampert, 2013).

The American sociologist of education Labaree (2012) asserts that the main reason for the constant gap derives from the existence of statuses between the different groups. Families that enjoy an advantage in the education system feel the pressures that come from below, from other families and groups, and so that their children will not slide down the social economic scale they push them to rise another level on the scale and thus to maintain the actual existing gap in their favor. The use of the gap also exists in the Israeli social reality. Groups from an established economic and social status create separate educational tracks that give their children advantages over other groups. Sometimes this is done at the initiative of the State. The analysis of the failures indicates a number of main reasons. First, the gaps of education are a symptom that indicates profound perceptions found in the transition to the education system. Second, the strong groups act and find ways and mechanisms, by using their political and economic advantage, to preserve their relative advantage and indirectly increase the gaps (Tamir, 2015). Third, a policy intended to advance affirmative action for the weak groups tends to evaporate through political constraints and even broadens the gaps. Research studies indicate that despite the many proposals and initiatives for the reduction of the gaps, most of the attempts have failed and some have even increased the gaps (Blass, 2015).

2.1 Policy of Differentiation, Social Exclusion, and Poverty

In the 1950s, the Compulsory Education Law constituted a challenge especially in light of the mass immigration that included a wide variety of populations and cultures that

were fundamentally different. Broad educational gaps were prominent. The gap between the population of native Israelis and the new immigrants was prominent. These gaps made it difficult to formally implement the state education laws because of the difference in the opening point of the children of different populations.

Pasternak (2003) explains that the conceptualization and implementation of the concept of equality underwent transformations that were expressed in the official policy of the education system in Israel. In the 1950s the educational policy aspired to implement the State Education Law through the creation of equality in inputs. This equality expressed in uniform standards in all that relates to the structure of the school, contents, and resources. This policy intended to reduce educational gaps and to create uniformity in the Israeli identity, through the disconnection of the immigrants from their origin cultures, including insistence on the use of the Hebrew language. The result was the broadening of the educational gaps between the different populations. In the 1960s in the education system a series of decisions were made that perpetuated the separation. A policy of ‘cultivation’ in education was proposed, from the assumption that to obtain educational equality it is necessary to have differential division of resources, so that greater resources will be directed towards students from the lower classes (Pasternak, 2003).

This differential division is expressed in the reduction of the forces and change of the curricula, which were supposed to compensate the students with low initial background data. The decisions included the large-scale establishment of vocational schools, the establishment of middle schools, and the introduction of tracking in the middle school framework. The representatives of the educational establishment explained this policy as appropriate for immigrant children and members of the lower classes. Their conclusion was that Mizrachi⁸ students, whom they defined as ‘disadvantaged’, succeed less in their studies because of ‘cultural retardation’, ‘deficient cognitive development’, and ‘primitiveness’, and so on. Thus, there is a mechanism that is used to strongly inhibit the

⁸ Mizrachi, meaning East, refers to the Jews whose origin is in the countries of the Middle Eastern and North Africa.

increase of the number of students who achieve the high school matriculation certification and higher studies (Sabirsky & Dagan-Bozaglo, 2011).

In this period, the scholastic separation between the schools was also made permanent (Sabirsky, 2004). The education system created an academic separation and a social separation on the background of ethnic affiliation that created social stratification, in which those of Ashkenazi background⁹ are worth more (Pasternak, 2003). These included elite study programs in the academic schools versus inferior study programs in schools for the disadvantaged, a low level of learning that does not enable the lower classes to integrate in the future in the system of higher education, and scholastic separations that awakened stigma and were affixed to students through ethnic and national affiliation. The expression of 'disadvantaged' meant battered intelligence (Minkovitz et al., 1977).

In light of the limitations of this policy, in the 1970s a comprehensive structural reform was enacted in the education system – integration in education (Resh & Yechezkel, 2011). The goals of the integration were to increase the level of scholastic achievements of all the students, the reduction of educational gaps between the strong Ashkenazi group and the Mizrahi group. The reform emphasized the structural division as a solution in schools. The rationale was to encourage the social encounter of different groups on an ethnic and socioeconomic background through the promotion of the weak and their integration in the classes of the strong. The aspiration was for the weak to profit. However, the attempt to give uniqueness to every ethnic group contradicted the desire for uniformity and a shared Israeli culture and contradicted the desire for achievements. Again the separate starting point of students of different backgrounds who did not receive an appropriate response was brought up. In parallel, pressures were added on the part of the parents of strong students for the encouragement of excellence (Pasternak, 2003). These created 'segregation within the integration'. Separate learning frameworks, classes divided according to levels, and programs for less desired subjects were created. Thus, the homogeneity and the existing social fabric, which are based on ethnic division, were preserved (Resh & Yechezkel, 2011).

⁹ Ashkenazi refers to the Jews whose origin is the countries of Europe.

Despite the attempts to assimilate a policy of the equality of opportunities there is separation of opportunities in terms of the study programs (academic versus vocational), levels of study, and units of study, all of which perpetuate the socioeconomic composition of the school (Sabirsky, 2004). The implications of the separation are apparent also in the access to the system of higher education, which largely determines the individual's chances in terms of status. The inequality is preserved in the perceptions that manage the education system and the system of higher education (Bar Haim, Yaish, & Shavit, 2008). When the country extended the access to the systems of higher education through the establishment of colleges, the inequality in opportunities and the stratification of the academic institutions between the prestigious universities and the colleges that serve different social economic groups was preserved (Dahan & Yonah, 2005).

The prevalent opinion is that the structural division into classes in education, through tracking, perpetuates the situation and explains the data (Zussman & Zur, 2010). The implementation of the reforms performed in education facilitated the reduction of the inequality in the number of years of learning in the population. All the groups improved their education, but the influence of the reduction of inequality in the years of education on the inequality in the salary in the economy remained limited to what it was. This fact indicates that the education system controls the number of years of learning but not the change of the return for them in the job market (Kalinov, 2015).

It is argued about the educational policy in Israel that it directs students to learning tracks in secondary education and determines their future already at an early age. The argument is that the discriminatory governmental policy in the 1950s is what caused Ashkenazi Jews to have high representation in the academic high schools while the Mizrachi Jews have high representation in the vocational tracks, and thus a class and economic separation was created that overlaps ethnic lines, a separation that survived at least until the 1990s (Molcho, 2011). Researchers confirm this reality of the reproduction of social patterns into education. Geographic separation and structural gaps between children in the population, such as separation between Mizrachi children and Ashkenazi children in essence created two systems of education, characterized by unequal material conditions and different curricula (Sabirsky, 1990). Mizrachi children learned in separate

schools with poor budgets in their distant towns and neighborhoods that suffer from deprivation. Many of them dropped out of the schools or were tracked and channeled to vocational schools (Yonah & Saporta, 2006). The group of Ashkenazi children learned in distinguished schools situated in well-off regions, and in these schools the education was of a higher quality and prepared the children for the academia and from there for prestigious and profitable professions. Already in 1958 especially high rates of dropping out were reported among Mizrachi students in comparison to the low drop-out rate among Ashkenazi students and a low rate of Mizrachi students in the high school and academia (Sabirsky, 2004). The academic secondary school education institutions were under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, while the vocational education institutions were the responsibility of the Ministry of Labor and the agricultural education institutions were under the Ministry of Agriculture. In each one of the three types of secondary institutions, a different population of students was absorbed, according to their nature and goals, and each educational institution had different curricula, textbooks, and testing systems.

Many of the students who completed the elementary schools in the transit camps and in the development towns did not continue their studies in the high school because of their lack of success in the texts or because of the economic inability of their parents (Aran, 1967). The question of the social mobility of the new immigrants from the Islamic countries, who were called 'Mizrachi' Jews, stood largely at the center of the discussion. The absorption of extensive numbers of the Mizrachi Jews and the structural gaps created in society created for them a reality that experienced generational duplication and yielded poverty, inequality, and bitterness, which were emphasized. On the one hand, there was the encouragement of trends for equality, especially in the field of employment and education, while on the other hand there was a trend of the increase of differentiation, separation, and closure in the cultural and political space, in light of the formation of the Ashkenazi elite culture. This polarization had many dimensions, and at the center there was the overlap between class and ethnicity, between proletariat and Mizrachi affiliation and upper and middle class and Ashkenazi affiliation. The decline in the presence of the students whose origin is the Islamic countries as the grade rises is very prominent. The results of the annual test in the elementary school confirmed this. About one-half of the students who completed the eighth grade in 1968 were the children of immigrants from

Europe and America. Of all the students who achieved a high score in the tests, the children of immigrants from the Islamic countries constituted 20-25% while the children of immigrants from Europe and America constituted about 75%-80%. The Ministry of Education (Aran, 1968) clarified “The situation of selection is severe as it exists today before the reform in education”. The Israeli education system contributed to the replication and strengthening of the ethnic and cultural biases and continued to support the unequal division of work (Yonah & Saporta, 2006). Despite the commitment of the State to the Free Education Law and the equality of opportunities, the public policy tended to undermine it and to explain the failure as an individual failure. It was enough to know the community from which the person came and the decile to which he belongs to know his chances of completing the high school matriculation examination and studying in the university. Today as well, after six decades of ‘integration’, ‘cultivation’, and ‘equality’, there are still great and significant differences in the educational achievements between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews, between Jews and Arabs, and primarily between the rich and the poor. In the Arab population as well, the highest success is that of students from the rich families. The PISA¹⁰ 2012 test among students aged fifteen and sixteen indicates that Israel is situated in the second place in the gaps in the achievements between the students from a different social economic background and in the first place in the gap between the members states in the OECD (2014).

Until the 1990s, the trend in the reforms implemented in the schools was to transfer authorities from the government, but the policy of replication continued and thus the existence of two subsystems of education. Steps that at first were perceived perhaps as temporary solutions became permanent solutions and fated generations of Mizrahi students and new immigrants from third world countries to study in programs that do not lead to high achievements (Zussman & Zur, 2010). Today, too, the vocational program is for the most part a program intended for students who are perceived as incapable of studying in the academic programs. Vocational tracks of this type are especially prevalent

¹⁰ The PISA, Programme for International Student Assessment, is a global study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in member and non-member countries. The aim of the PISA is to evaluate education systems by measuring 15-year-old students’ scholastic performance in mathematics, science, and reading.

in the disadvantaged neighborhoods, in the development towns¹¹, and in the Arab villages (Goodman & Mizrachi, 2013).

Beginning in the 1990s, when the neoliberal policies encouraged the development of the individual into education, the policy of integration gave way to the policy of decentralization, which emphasized processes related to the autonomy and self-management of the school, and trends of privatization, which left space for the parents' involvement and for greater differences in the education system (Noy, 2014). In essence, the era of integration as a main strategy for the reduction of gaps ended, and today this issue is no longer a part of the educational discourse (Givton, 2004; Kizel, 2011).

Israel is a national ethnic country, and there is great overlap between the individual's national ethnic affiliation and his social economic status. These differences are expressed in the level of education and salary of different groups. As the individual's level of education is higher, his chance to earn a high salary increases. In other words, education is an indicator of economic and social status (Ben David, 2009). Hence, despite the striving for the reduction of the gaps of education to which the education system directs, there is an ongoing reality of structural discrimination, since the possibility the individuals face to convert education to a high social economic situation is limited because the ethnic and national gaps are preserved in the education system itself, primarily in higher education (Kizel, 2011).

For the most part, there is a strong correlation between the students' background data and their scholastic and educational achievements. The proposed solution is the allocation of differential resources as a necessary condition for the reduction of the gaps in the scholastic and educational achievements (Blass, Romano, et al., 2008; Carter & Welner, 2013). In most of the developed countries, despite the existence of different programs of affirmative action, the resources at the disposal of the students from the established groups are generally greater than those at the disposal of the students from the weak groups, and the different programs of affirmative action do not eliminate in actuality the gaps in the

¹¹ Development town is a term used in Israel to refer to the new terms established in Israel in the 1950s so as to provide permanent housing for the mass influx of Jewish immigrants, mainly from the Arab countries.

educational and scholastic outputs (Blass, 2016). Sociologists of education indicate also the continuous existence of a high correlation between origin and social economic status and scholastic achievements, which is expressed in the ethno-class division into different programs of study (Ayalon & Shavit, 2004). This division is apparent in the over-representation of students from a Mizrahi background in the vocational or non-prestigious tracks, in contrast to a prominent numerical advantage of students from an Ashkenazi origin in the prestigious theoretical tracks (Cohen & Haberfeld, 1998). The professional literature is unanimous in its opinion that the most important school resource, with the greatest influence on the scholastic and educational achievements is the teachers who teach in the schools (McKinsey, 2007), and thus the way in which the teachers are 'divided' among the schools that serve populations of students from a weak social-economic background and schools that serve students from an established social economic background is of paramount importance. The international findings show that schools that serve weak populations suffer from a lack of teachers more than do schools that serve established populations. It also becomes clear that in schools with weak populations the turnover of the teachers is higher, while their experience and education are lower. In Israel the findings are similar. According to Blass (2016) the main reason is that the topic of equality and the reduction of the gaps no longer is perceived as important, despite the multiplicity of the declarations on the topic.

In a local look, in Israel research studies present a neo-capitalist critical position towards the policy of education in Israel, from the educational policy of the beginning of the state, through the reforms of the policies of integration and cultivation, to the policy of privatization, a policy that perpetuates the inequality towards the weak groups in society: Mizrahi groups, women, and Arabs (Sabirsky, Conon-Atias, & Abu Hala, 2010). The arguments of Sabirsky (2004) are that those with capital and control, primarily the group of Jews from an Ashkenazi origin, replicate their social status through the utilization of different education systems in such a way that they are intended for 'elite' (academic) study programs while the working class, primarily Jews of Mizrahi origin and Arabs, are directed to 'inferior' study programs, the vocational programs.

This description describes and clarifies how the education system over all the years seeks equality from the assumption that it is necessary to enable social mobility on the basis of achievements. This assumption ignored the traits of background and affiliation of individuals, such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, and race. This paradigm sees the education system to be a means of the reproduction of the cultural economic equality between social groups – the ruling group and the ruled group – through the classification of students on the basis of status, which prevents social mobility and makes permanent the excess rights that depend on status (Blass, 2016; Sabirsky, 2004).

2.2 Segregation and Meritocracy in the Education System

A meritocratic society is a society that supports the equality of opportunities and advancement on the basic of achievements and presents a picture of a social reality that ignores social factors such as family background, status, and residential area, which indicate that the opportunities given to individuals are not equal. There are mechanisms that copy and preserve inequality in educational opportunities so that the individual's social economic situation is duplicated from his parents' social economic situations, despite the extension of the education system, which includes in it students who belong to the low social status (Sabag & Biberman-Shalev, 2014).

Educational sociological research reveals mechanisms that replicate and perpetuate the inequality in educational opportunities that has implications on the individuals' ability to change their initial situation and their life chances. It was found in research studies that socioeconomic background variables, intelligence quotient, and scholastic achievements (meritocratic factors) predict the future success of individuals in the employment world (Torres & Antikainen, 2003). One of the tools given to the education system for the replication of class inequality is expressed in the main idea according to which schools serve the interests of the capitalist system in modern society through the reproduction of the values and Strengthening personality characteristics required in capitalist society. For instance, the implicit curriculum of the school structures and reconstructs the power relations between groups that act in capitalist society through practices of competition, individuality, inculcation of partial knowledge, and the race after scores and rewards. The

researchers Bowles and Gintis (2008) maintain that the curricula teach students to take upon themselves roles and through practices and pedagogies make children disciplined, obedient, and avoidant of the expression of opinions and independence.

The representations of this in the school are the division into different levels of study and various education tracks (tracking). At low levels of learning values and skills that accentuate obedience of rules and performance of routine activities that suit training of workers are emphasized. In the high tracks, emphasis is placed on autonomy, creativity, and expression of judgment, which suit a high level of employment. However, in the high levels of learning in vocational education there is the adoption of the practices that are expressed in the low levels of study (Davies & Guppy, 2010). These practices lead to the students (primarily from low classes) learning to accept as obvious the hierarchical capitalist structure. There is the compartmentalization of knowledge, which is expressed in the inculcation of separate prestige into different areas of knowledge, through the classification of the students relative to their degree of exposure to the areas of knowledge necessary for those with high prestige (Bowles & Gintis, 2008). These researchers hold that the reduction to a localized role in a general constellation lessens the individual's power and control and increases his sense of alienation towards the school.

Addi-Racah, Greenstein, and Bahak (2015) emphasize the sectorial structure of the education system in Israel, differences between the sectors in the scholastic achievements, and class differences in every sector. This has implication in terms of the ability of the education system to cope with the class inequality according to the characteristics and needs of every sector and regarding the community context in which the schools are situated. The differentiation according to place of residence has influence on the degree of inequality in education, since the context in which the individual grew up develops, and functions may influence his achievements in different areas – employment, education, health (Berliner, 2009; Harding et al., 2011). In addition, the place of residence may have indirect influence on the educational opportunities.

The research literature that addresses the differentiation / inclusion / segregation / integration indicates that the social composition (class, ethnic, racial) in general and the

place of residence in particular have significant impact on the students' cognitive dimensions and hence on their chances of mobility (Lee, Iceland, & Farrel, 2014). Differentiation according to residential regions has impact on the processes of education in the schools that tend to be the mirror of the neighborhood where they are located. This influence may be expressed in the resources and culture of the school, the learning processes, the students' motivation, the parents' involvement, and so on (Silverman, 2014) and accordingly inequality between schools and their students' achievements (Bischoff & Reardon, 2013). Differentiation in residence thus reflects and strengthens the differentiation in the education system (Goyette, Iceland, & Weininger, 2014). Thus, for instance, research studies emphasize the relationship between the results of national tests in the schools and the value of apartments in their environment (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Examination of the relationship between the social context of the school and the community and the scholastic achievements as measured according to the entitlement for the high school matriculation certificate illustrates that students who learn in established schools and in established community environments (communities from a high social economic cluster) reach the highest percentage of entitlement to the high school matriculation certificate. This trend is consistent in all the sectors (Addi-Racah, 2015).

The education system in Israel is competitive and aimed at achievements and abilities. The achievements of the learners are determined according to their ability and effort. The perception is that success or failure – the student chooses. Educational meritocracy maintains that a person who wants to succeed does so. This is a perception that places the cultivation of excellent and talented students as its top priority. This perception does not negate equality in education, but in the end it seeks to train 'excellent' people for positions of influence, decision making, and leadership. According to this perception, education in the school and consequently in the academia brings the most talented to the finish line (Lampert, 2013). It is possible to identify a perception according to which a teacher removes a student from the classroom or gives him a failing grade since the student is disruptive and does not want to learn.

Another aspect that emphasizes the segregation is characterized by the quality of teaching in the schools in certain neighborhoods. A number of research studies in the world

address the teaching personnel and emphasize that there is preference of teachers of the choice of certain schools where they will learn. In the United States it is shown that teachers prefer to teach in schools where most of the children are from a high socioeconomic status and seek transfer within a relatively short period of time from schools at a low socioeconomic status (Cowan & Goldhaber, 2015). The trend is characterized also by relatively low motivation of teachers in weak regions and consequently lower stability among teaching personnel in the weaker regions (Boyd et al., 2011).

In Israel it is possible to see this phenomenon. In recent years, a number of programs that address the phenomenon and focus on the ‘improvement’ of the neighborhood and/or the school have been deployed. For instance, there is a program with the goal of recruiting quality personnel to the periphery regions, and recently in the framework of the Committee for the War against Poverty a project for the physical rehabilitation of the neighborhoods and investment in the public space was recommended, as well as social, educational, and employment investment in the disadvantaged neighborhoods (Report of the Committee for the War against Poverty in Israel, 2014).

In Israel, the level of differentiation according to the parents’ education (examination of post-high school education among mothers) is high relative to other states (Fogel, 2011). Another research examined the education of parents of students in first grades in 48 different communities, out of the assumption that elementary schools are neighborhood schools and the social composition of the students in the first grade reflects the social composition of their residential environment, a situation in which every school in every educational sector is similar in the composition of the parents’ education. It was found that there are schools with a high percentage of parents with education of more than fifteen years of study and schools where the parents’ education is very low (Addi-Racah, Greenstein, & Bahak, 2015). Also neighborhoods in the communities are distinct from one another. There are prominent concentrations of weak regions and well-off regions, and a high percentage of children who are defined as poor are concentrated primarily in the communities that belong to the low social-economic cluster (Report of the Committee for the War against Poverty, 2014).

Fogel (2011) explains that the education system is composed of four prominent sectors distinct in their social and organizational characteristics. These sectors build a differentiated (segregative) education system on the basis of nationality (Jewish/Arab) and level of religiosity (there are separate educational institutions for secular and religious populations, according to the level of religion taught in them). The differentiation on the basis of nationality is included in the differentiation on a geographic basis, and it has direct implications on the differentiation at the level of the school. The sectorial structure of the education system is also linked to the social-economic cluster of the communities, which reinforces the social separation and limits the possibilities of interaction between the different groups.

Blass et al. (2014) examined the differentiation in the years 2001-2010 between the schools (elementary school and middle school) and in the schools in the different educational sectors, according to the measures of the parents' education and birth country. The data indicate that the differentiation between schools was strengthened. There is a report on differentiation in the schools in many communities, some large and central cities in Israel. It was found that segregation in the schools is an outcome of the diversification in the composition of the students, of the size of the schools, and of the importance of the scholastic facet, which leads to differentiation according to the scholastic ability, which largely overlaps with the social economic background, especially in Jewish education (Blass, Zussman, & Zur, 2014). The result even indicates that these data leave considerable space for activity that grows from the field (such as involvement of associations in the field of education, local governments, or initiatives of parents). This is in addition to the frequently changing educational policy, primarily in light of the changes in the government. In the years 2000-2015, there were eight Ministers of Education, who had educational policy with different emphases.

Educational meritocracy is an expression of a social ideology according to which education can at a certain level be equal but eventually it is intended to train excellent students for positions of influence, development of decision, and leadership. According to this perception, the role of education is to create a gradual process, at the end of which only the most talented remain and they will reach key social positions (Lampert, 2013).

Meritocratic education is providing individual permissions to each and every child to compete under fair conditions over a place on the stage of scholastic success, which will be translated eventually to social success. The social values at the basis of the approach are equality of opportunities and cultivation of children from all strata of the population. Education that is interested in bringing the most talented to the finish line obligates difficult and selective competition. An achievement-oriented ideology is at the basis of the meritocratic thesis and defines educational success as deriving from personal effort and work. Hence, a position in the low status in the economic social hierarchy will always be the fault of the individual who did not put forth sufficient efforts (Mehan, 2008).

Meritocracy became an educational device for the creation of closed elites. The concept of meritocracy became legitimate to the shapers of educational policy, and instead of the social division of work according to the abilities of people it created a mechanism of control and power that leads to the duplication of status when the expression ‘everyone can’ serves as a cover a forged type of equality of opportunities. Thus, in the schools, instead of the arbitrary determination of status, there are tests that explain to the students that the fact that they do not have value is not arbitrary but is a simple result of the lack of capability and therefore there is no possibility of objecting to it (Lampert, 2008).

The main function is selection (choice and direction) according to the intellectual ability and scholastic achievements and their direction to suitable tracks both in the education system and then the job market. The choice and direction are undertaken gradually through tests, scores, referral to groupings and learning programs, and high school matriculation tests and psychometric testing, which influence the choice of the academic subjects. According to this approach, choice on the basis of ability and achievements promotes the equality of opportunities in education and society (Kalinov, 2014). Gottman (2002) maintains that the striving for equality in education reveals the shortcoming of meritocracy. The principle of equal educational opportunity necessitates that the state allocate educational resources so that the chances of children whose starting point is inferior will be brought as close as possible to the chances of those with the greatest advantage, while the adoption of a meritocratic policy requires the state allocate educational resources according to the children’s proven natural ability and willingness to

learn. This interpretation leaves the responsibility for the abilities and willingness to the child. The first possibility requires that the State dedicate as many resources as possible to education so as to achieve the most life opportunities for every child. The cost of the use of education to achieve the most opportunities in life of children obligates the surrender of the good of others in the same society (Gottman, 2002).

The practice that leads the meritocratic perception is a competition for excellence. Instead of an effective society in which every person finds his occupation according to his abilities, there is the social capitalist perception, according to which every role is won by the person excelling in the field. Hence in this society the role of education is to give to everyone the opportunity to stand on the racetrack and in the continuation to create a selective process that will notice the excelling and deserving individuals. Emphasis on a consumer society that encourages consumption and making its members personal consumers, when the message is to see to yourself and a person is responsible for his reality, harms the weak and casts the blame for their reality of their life. A parallel can be found towards students at risk when the education system expects them to be responsible and to promote themselves and thus strengthens the risk and excludes them socially (Razer, Warshevsky, & Bar-Sadeh, 2011).

There is less known cognitive approach that has a familiar and established theoretical framework: the differentiation between circumstances and effort. This distinction was coined by John Roemer (Roemer & Trannoy, 2013) and distinguishes between effort, voluntary actions of the person, and circumstances, all the things that the person does not control. Examples of 'circumstances' are the person's birth circumstances, his parents' education, his birth as an Arab, Jew, Black, white, man, or woman, and so on. According to the normative position of Roemer, society should compensate for circumstances so that the results of the person (in welfare, profession, achievements in education) will be a result of the effort he does. As this connection is weaker, there is more equality of opportunities.

To summarize, different reforms and a policy of many years that supports the reduction of gaps and creates further programs do not change the reality in which the gaps

are steadily increasing. The social structures are preserved, and the meritocratic concept helps to preserve them. In each period, explanations and perceptions are found that justify and reinforce the necessity for and retention of these mechanisms. In every case, the system is busy with explanations and leaves the kids behind.

2.3 Exclusion and Inequality in the Education System

Sabag and Biberman-Shalev (2014) maintain that the educational institutions are a part of a broad education system and they fill their unique roles in this system. There is fit between the needs of the broader system and the roles that the educational institution fills. Frequently the educational institution preserves the advantages of the strong groups in society.

Dahan (2018) recognizes that scholars are concerned with the role of the education system in capitalist society. On the one hand, the education system instills knowledge and skills and encourages social mobility through the equality of opportunities, while on the other hand the education system perpetuates and replicates capitalist relations of power and reinforces the economic social inequality between social groups out of the intention to ensure the continuation of the exclusion control of the strong groups over the social resources. The curricula and the inculcation of practices of obedience and discipline are a part of the duplication of an ideology that supports the relations of power represented in the capitalist system. The ideology includes in it class bias that emphasizes the self-interest of the strong group and the classification of students on a meritocratic and class basis (Dahan, 2018).

The education system instills values that are commensurate with the outlook of the strong groups. Curricula are chosen for the adoption of a social ideology that justifies the control of strong groups instead of values of partnership and agreement. Instead of mechanisms of reciprocity, trust, and free desire that represent patterns of social capital, for the good of all, achievement and excellence are promoted for the good of society. The mechanisms are external rewards (punishments, grades). In addition, there are implicit programs that emphasize the compartmentalization of knowledge, or in other words, it is emphasized that knowledge acquired in the school by students in specific knowledge suited

to the social mission in the capitalist system. The knowledge is compartmentalized so that the individual obtains the localized knowledge in it he needs to display his skills. The reduction to the localized role in the overall system reduces the individual's power and control and increases the sense of alienation in society (Sabag & Biberman-Shalev, 2014).

In the social reality of our time, when citizens are channeled to be consumers and to adopt for themselves the consumer logic, education becomes a process of production that is supposed to provide products, or in other words, to bring about learning outcomes and academic achievements. This social process creates a situation in which parents and children who are found in a high place on the economic scale are practiced in demanding and competitive consumer language and stand on their consumer rights, even with the school (Lampert, 2008). They demand the 'best merchandise', which is academic excellence. They demand it selectively for their individual child. The striving for academic excellence became the leading educational logic, when the teachers and parents are partners. The schools are loaded with diverse programs of excellence, a large and rich industry of schools that encourage excellence without question, to the point that the objection to excellence is perceived as the surrender of the hope for the success of the students and as support of mediocrity. Mediocrity is perceived as an existential threat (Pasternak, 2003).

Kalinov (2014) represents the contemporary perception according to which education is a capital for which the financial return is the factor that most influences the worker's salary during his life. Education is the capital funded primarily by the public monies, which enables the state to act so as to bring about a more equal division of the ownership of capital among the residents. Moreover, education, in contrast to other forms of capital, cannot be expropriated from the person. Therefore, the actions and discourse on equality in the level of education has main importance also to equality in the division of the incomes (Kalinov, 2014).

In Israel, the education system is a public system. Lampert (2013) maintains that the public school surrendered every mechanism for the creation of value, except for the scholastic achievement. The grade has become the social value in the school, the 'capital'

that manages the school. The language and conceptualization is on outputs, incentives, and competition (Kalinov, 2014). The grades have economic value and educational target that create in the present era an institutionalized, graduated, and selective process that paves the way to the club of the ‘successful’, of political power, control over commercial resources. Scores are a social parallel to property, funds, and power. In this way only a few achieve a sense of social value, and all the rest learn that they lack value in dual structuring: the first time they lack value relative to their place in the school and the second time they lack value when they finish school and discover that their value is not commercial and not human and that it is less than that of other people with value (Lampert, 2013).

Others maintain that as the social system is more important and central, the need to evaluate its performances and the temptation to use a sole criterion for this purpose, the scholastic achievements, is strengthened. A single agreed-upon criterion enables more easily the definition of problems, the awakening of public interest, the recruitment of political support, the formulation of organizational solutions, and the contribution of the people in the field to focused activity (Yustman & Bokovza, 2010). The education system of course is not exceptional in this regard, and the criterion chosen to evaluate it is generally its students’ scholastic achievements. Despite the greater complexity of the education system and despite the difficulty creating broad agreement on its goals, the public discourse on the quality and direction of development of the education system in Israel revolves, for the most part, primarily around one main axis – the achievements of the students in the present as opposed to their achievements in the past or in contrast to the students’ achievements in other countries, when in the examination of these achievements help is received to a steadily increasing extent in the results of the international tests (Kalinov, 2014). The discourse that exists in education is about scholastic achievements in the competitive atmosphere that reigns in the world in general and in the educational world in particular. This discourse generally promotes talk about standards, measurements, and outputs. The reforms of the 2000s also aim at the development of human capital and education of the Top median in the population of young people (Tobin, 2012; Zussman & Zur, 2010).

Researchers examine the question of whether the school can provide every child with an equal opportunity and the protection needed for the encounter with the social reality. Dahan (2018) emphasizes that today the perception of the equality of opportunities is radical and determines that the student's chances of success do not need to be determined by the social economic background from which he comes and also not on the basis of his natural abilities but according to the degree of efforts the he invests in his studies. However, Rawls (1971) emphasized that the social and economic circumstances are a part of the student's "natural" abilities and all these are not under the individual's control. He maintains that only the recognition of this fact will help with a different division of resources in education that will compensate for the child's inferior social starting point and the abilities that are a product of a starting point that makes us relatively inferior.

The school is perceived in many respects as an institution that provides children who were historically deprived, because of their status or poverty, the opportunity for mobility and social extraction. This optimistic outlook that addresses the school as an institution with potential for equality and freedom remained the province of conservatives. Most of the schools are a part of the pan-ideological structure, one intended to ensure interests of the upper classes. The school also acts as a part of the forces of the free market and global economy. As such, it is characterized by privatization and aggressive commerce, which means reduction in the relationship between the teacher and the students and client-supplier relations and transformation of the educational work into industrialized action of creation of defined scholastic outputs (Lampert, 2013; Sabirsky, 2004). These harm all children and especially children at risk, since their distress is ignored as a paramount human challenge. There are research studies that examine the procedures, content, organizational, and structural changes through which the school creates, preserves, or does not prevent the distress (Motola, Mittleberg, & Razer, 2014; Razer, Warshevsky, & Bar Sadeh, 2011).

Ben-Peretz (2009) maintains that the achievement structure in education creates frustration among children is not a mistake; they are truly lacking social value. The public investment in the education of these children was intended to help them accept this fact and develop the belief that we all have personal value since we are human and very talented. Lampert (2008) adds that schools and teachers are builders and shapers of the lack

of value of children. In essence, they are the agents of a social paradigm. The researcher emphasizes the existence of structured mechanisms according to which education directs to cultivation and promotion of competition of a small and exclusive minority from the children that should be promoted. One of the mechanisms is the existence of tests in the leading subjects (mathematics, language, English) in young classes, and according to their outcomes the predetermined tracking commences. 20% of the children are referred to the program for excelling students, 70% of the children are directed to the intermediate program, and 10% are defined as weak. They are referred primarily to learn the mother tongue and some mathematics and English. The chance for the transition between the tracks is low, and it is intended primarily for the transition downwards at the recommendation of the teachers. Before the entry into the high school, all the students undergo classification tests, which are the almost final tracking and which seal the children's future. The main revolution, according to Sabirsky (2004) and Pasternak (2003), is the fact that this inequality is not perceived as problematic or disappointing, as perceived in the past, and the inequality is justified in the name of the needs of achievement and economic growth. The result, in the end, is the preservation of the principle that the strong are strengthened, the gap increases, the mechanisms of integration are bypassed, and the reduction of the gaps is distanced. The education system becomes a classification system, tremendous in scope, which separates and differentiates meticulously between groups and subgroups, as existing in society (Sabirsky & Dagan-Bozaglo, 2011).

In the examination of the school territory, here too there is the replication of the geographic differentiation that preserves social constructs. Inside the school, there is geographic division of distant invisible areas when the teachers' ability to see and hear what occurs in them is more limited, such as a services, yard, the classes of those with difficulties, and so on. It is possible to see the territorial structure in the school, according to which students in distress are found in the concealed spaces that are pushed to the margins and are not central in the school, so as to reduce the ability to see and to create continuous blindness. The school does not seek to see the children or to draw close to them but rather the reverse, to maintain the disconnection and to allow the teachers to continue to ignore their needs and their experiences (Addi-Racciah, Greenstein, & Bahak, 2015). Cultural resources and not only economic resources constitute an obstacle for students who

belong to the schools. An academic culture characterizes and is validated through curricula and pedagogies suited to the mood of culture of the governing class and thus preserves the class inequality in society. In other words, the classification of students in schools was undertaken according to the degree of the students' fit to the dominant culture. Children who come with a culture and language or family and language codes that conflict with the school culture have increased likelihood of academic failure. Hence the idea that the social and cultural structure has influence on the activity of the individuals in society and is duplicated in the education system (Ayalon & Shavit, 2004).

In recent years, data are published about the high correlation that exists between the academic achievements of the students of Israel and their socioeconomic situation. These data indicate that the academic level of students from a low socioeconomic situation background is significantly lower than the academic level of students from a high socioeconomic background. For years, the different Israeli governments defined as a target the reduction of the gaps. The report of the team for the 'reduction of gaps' of the Ministry of Education (2014) shows that despite the thinking and ideology that education is a main tool for the reduction of gap, the data indicate that the education system in Israel does not succeed in reducing gaps, and as of today it continues to constitute a mirror of Israeli society. Significant educational gaps continue to be found between different sectors in society and between the center and the geographic, social, and economic periphery. Most of the students whose performances are poor come from a low social-economic background (Blass, 2016; Sabirsky & Dagan-Bozaglo, 2011).

The research discovers that gaps and inequality have practices that can be revealed in the education system. In schools with poor prestige more failing and exclusionary pedagogical practices were found than in schools with high prestige (established populations). In schools where the achievements are higher and the populations are established, there are better staff relations, greater cooperation, and engagement in aspects of teaching and learning. These schools engage less, in comparison to their fellow teachers in the schools for weak populations, in bothersome implications of social exclusion. Phenomena such as violence, poverty, low parent involvement, and so on are found at a lower frequency in schools where the populations are established (Motola, Mittleberg, &

Razer, 2014). In addition, the research indicates that schools where the students from low socioeconomic learn offer education at a lower quality and there is a difference in the teacher-student relations in the schools with a different background. In Israel, there are fewer teachers in distressed regions than in economically strong regions. In general, strong students receive more teachers in full-time positions who have academic degrees. According to these data, many students cope with a dual problem: they come from a weak economic background and also learn in schools where the human resources are weak. Another finding is that regardless of the students' personal social economic background, the students who learn in a school where most of the students come from a low social economic background function scholastically at a lower level than do students who come from a high social economic background who learn in a school where most of the influence of the economic status is that of a population from a high social economic background (Addi-Raccah, Greenstein, & Bahak, 2015).

In the year 2009, there has been an increase in the education budget in Israel, but this increase was insufficient for the realization of the principle of equality of opportunities on the essential level. According to Blass (2016), the findings of the research study that examined inequality in education indicate that to bring students from a weak social economic background to achievements similar to those of students from a strong social economic background it is necessary to allocate a budget higher by 50% than that allocated to the strong group. Therefore, the policy of affirmative action of the Ministry of Education cannot lead to the real reduction of gaps in achievements (Blass, 2016). The gaps are even greater when the funding by the local authorities is taken into account. In the high schools, the state deviates from the principle of equal allocation to all the students and discriminates against the poorest students, some of whom study in the periphery or in the Arab schools. The weak schools have lower budgets than do the strong schools in elementary education and in middle school education (Weissblay & Weninger, 2015).

Ayalon (2009) explains that segregation exists also in the curricula, in education in the high school in Israel. The separation in the curricula is a strategy for inequality in education. The separation exists through the distinction between 'high' study programs and 'low' study programs. In her research study, Ayalon (2009) found that separation between

professions is a tool for preserving social inequality. The concentration of students from high economic social groups in certain fields of study increases the prestige of these areas. This prestige attracts students from esteemed social groups to specialize in them. Thus, a relationship between the differentiation in the study programs and the inequality in the achievements is created. These replicate the social segregation. These findings contradict the planners of educational policy in Israel who initiated differentiation in the curricula, in the hope that these programs will encourage students to specialize in the subjects that are commensurate with their tendencies and thus will contribute to the reduction of the inequality in education.

Bowles and Gintis (2008) maintain that in the everyday experience of the class is reflected a dynamic of the division of work and the hierarchical system of values, skills, and abilities that are required for the inclusion of the students in the capitalist economy. The school also reflects the division of labor and – with a broader view – the class system of society. They argue that the school is related to the future workplace, through the ‘implicit curriculum’ ‘behind the backs’ of the teachers and the students. These researchers argue that the schools serve the interests of the capital owners. The goal of the schools is to prepare an effective and disciplined work force of laborers through the ‘implicit curriculum’, requiring precision, order, discipline, and obedience of authority. In contrast, in the higher groups, who are intended to manage the factories, education inculcates the ability to make independent decisions. The broadening of education is related, in their opinion, to the changing requirements of employment. The high school prepared officials when the need for this increased and higher education met the new technological and economic needs. Their main argument is that the schools preserve the control of those with capital and perpetuate the class inequality. There is discrimination in the schools on a class background, and therefore there are differences in the scholastic achievements of different classes. Moreover, the schools help convince that there is equality of opportunities on the basis of achievements and ability (Bowles & Gintis, 2008).

The variables that should be focused on when discussing gaps and inequality are the students’ background socioeconomic data, whether as individuals or whether in the

framework of the schools where they study, as they are expressed in the cultivation index¹² (or educational lack) and nationality. In general, it can be said that most of the research studies of this type reached the conclusion that the addition of budget required so as to bring the student with weak socioeconomic background data to the basic achievements required of all the students is at least 50% beyond the budget required for the student from an established background (Arroyo, 2008). Regarding the reality in Israel, it seems that it is possible to say that as this pertains to the basic level of funding granted according to overt and transparent principles, the budgeting per student is rather equal. This is true to a greater extent in pre-elementary school education and in elementary school education, where the budget is for the student, and less true in the middle school, where the budget is for a class, and while in the high school the budget is for a student it is determined according to the program of studies, when the data indicate that the distribution of the students according to the programs of study is not equal (Blass, 2015).

Another phenomenon that is prevalent and that indicates to segregation and student exclusion is the removal of students from weak populations in socioeconomic terms to frameworks of special education. Children who have difficulties in the studies are perceived as harming the general outcomes and achievement of the school. It is possible to notice the disproportionate increase in the number of students with learning disabilities and mild behavioral disorders and increasing and unjustified referral of students from weak population groups to frameworks of special education (Blass & Leor, 2002).

The percentage of dropping out of students also indicates the social inequality. Data show that the percentages of dropping out of members of the weak social groups from the education system are generally higher than the percentages of dropping out from the

¹² The Cultivation Index is an index developed by the Ministry of Education. Its goal is to regulate the allocation of study hours to the schools according to the sociodemographic characteristics of the population of the students, which the Ministry defined (Ministry of Education, Director General's Circular, September 2007). The components of the cultivation index are: (1) parents' education (40%), (2) degree of peripherality (20%), (3) economic index (20%), and (4) combination of country of birth and country of distress (20%). The measure is expressed in deciles, so that in the 10th decile there are the highest students in the index, namely, the weakest population in socioeconomic terms. In the 1st decile there are the 10% of the students who constitute the most established population in socioeconomic terms (Ministry of Education, Director General's Circular, September 2007). As the cultivation index is higher, the allocation of the hours per student is lower.

education system of members of the established social groups (Lahav, 2004). An apparent percentage of the students who are members of the weak social groups who learn in the upper classes of the secondary school are frequently directed to the programs and tracks of study that do not lead towards the completion of the high school matriculation certificate and the percentages of those who take the high school matriculation tests are lower. Students who are members of the weak social groups and who pass the high school matriculation examinations often then face difficulties and economic constraints that make it hard for them to realize their entitlement to higher studies. The meaning of this reality is dual: the number of years of study that students from an established socioeconomic background learn is higher than the number of years of study that students from a weak socioeconomic background learn. However, even when the number of years of study of all the population groups is equal, or at least similar, the value of the years of study that students from an established background learn is higher – because of the higher level of studies and achievements – than that of students from a weak background (Avidan, Lampert, & Amit, 2005; Ayalon, 2009).

The research studies of Mizrachi, Goodman, and Peniger (2013) examined the explanation and the meaning that teachers and students give to the processes of classification that they experience and the stratified structure in which they act. It was found that they negate the ethnic origin and even negate social factors, such as economic background and parents' education (if at a lesser extent) – as a relevant factor that influences the placement in the different programs of study in the school. To give meaning to the social differences in the school, all the students in the school used social categories based on choice of the lifestyle. In terms of the students, the categories of ethnicity and status, which are routine in the sociological discourse, were foreign to the everyday life experiences in the school. To express the social differences in the school as they experience them, the students used social categories of the school world. The use of these categories enabled the students to adhere to the meritocratic-individualistic principle so as to explain the processes of classification and placement in the learning programs in the school and to ignore the social differences between the students in the different study programs (Goodman & Peniger, 2013).

In Israel there are both public schools and private schools. The main explanation of the existence of public schools is related to the fact that the school is supposed to produce simultaneously private human capital that provides a return to the social human capital that belongs to all. In contrast, the private schools were selected by families or organizations primarily interested in the private human capital or the group capital that collects a certain group in the population (Kalinov, 2014). Private schools serve primarily well-off groups and their existence contributes to social segregation or at least preserves it. Public schools are necessary to ensure that the level and types of social capital in which the state is interested will indeed be produced. In Israel the elementary schools are for the most part public, and a large number of the high schools are private. Kalinov (2014) explains the justification of this phenomenon: as the stage of education rises, the importance of the social benefits as opposed to the private benefits declines. Uniformity in the curriculum declines in importance as the number of years of study rises and the importance of the considerations of the professionalization and functioning in the job market increases. The education system in Israel is more privatized relative to countries that call for free initiative. In the OECD countries and the United States 90% of the students of the elementary school education are in the public schools in comparison to 77% in Israel.

Another aspect is related to the owners of the public school, generally the local government. Here there is a difference between small and distant communities and large and central communities. The principle employed for the distribution of the budget to the schools is differential budget according to the socioeconomic situation (Yustman & Bokovza, 2010). However, the rules of budgeting apply only to the public elementary schools. While the payments in the public elementary education system are differential in favor of the weak groups, there are large differences in favor of the strong groups regarding the payments of the families for additional education services, such as enrichment in courses and private tutors. The increase in the share of the households in the national expenditure in education (parent payments) is one of the factors for the increase of inequality and harm in the accessibility of public education services for the groups of populations from the low deciles. The education system keeps behind the schools in the

disadvantaged neighborhoods and development towns that do not receive budgets. The ‘gray education’¹³ becomes legitimate in the established neighborhoods (Dressler, 2010).

Private organizations provide education services and are perceived as a legitimate instrument for the promotion of equality. According to this perception, the role of the State is not to reduce gaps directly but to support activity of private organizations in the weak regions so that they will solve the problem. The outcome of the reduction of the state involvement is further privatization of the education system.

This privatization has expressions that it is important to mention. The first expression is the commercialization of education, the transformation of education into a product. Therefore, the parents who want to invest more and can invest more will do so to obtain higher quality merchandise, while those who do not have the means to improve the merchandise will be forced to be satisfied with mediocre and inferior education for their children.

The second expression is the reversal of the roles in the process of commercialization, which is derived from the privatization, as described in the research of Michaeli (2013). The school principals note that they respond to the private programs from the budget reality that in essence forces them to search for answers to diverse difficulties in the private sector. Many principals have admitted that the introduction of intervening organization is not done intelligently and as a part of planning but as a result of constraints and considerations, such as the response to the requirements of role-holders in the Ministry of Education or in the local government, who are interested in promoting some or another program, the desire to receive concomitant resources, to satisfy the parents, to label the school, and so on. Dagan-Bozaglo reached a similar conclusion in her research (2010), which describes how principals describe the economic distress and the pressure to upgrade the resources at the disposal of the school as denying them the possibility of the choice from pedagogical considerations. Conversely, there are organizations that seek to find a channel for the transfer of the different messages they support, whether they are ideological

¹³ Gray education. Cuts in specific subjects of study led the parents from the strong classes to organize and establish associations and to hire teachers at their expense so as to compensate for what the schools could not supply.

or business-marketing. The hours of education and students become a required resource. There are places where the resource is worth more, and places where the resource is worth less. For instance, the education hour of the class in the school in a region with a high socioeconomic level will be worth more for an organization with better business goals than a study hour of a class in region with a low socioeconomic region. These trends explain how the neoliberal perception that became hegemony creates a reality in which concepts of the parents' involvement and pluralism receive a serious part of the shaping of the character of education in the state education system that remains lacking in means and behind. These constitute another expression in the process of the transformation of the education system into an unequal system. A trend that strengthens the strong and increases the weakness of the weak (Bar Haim, Blank, & Shavit, 2013).

A survey undertaken by the Ministry of Education so as to examine the intervention of the enrichment programs in the schools found that they are catalogued according to an index of cultivation. The examination of the interventions of programs funded by the private sector found that the distribution of the programs tended to a greater weight in favor of the schools with a high cultivation index and to a low weight for a low cultivation index. The examination of the topic of the programs found that there is a connection between the index and the topics active in it. The topics of the activity, which according to their goal direct to weak populations (in economic terms or in terms of scholastic achievements), overlap with the core topics in the school, while with a low cultivation index the topics are beyond the core of the curricula and topics that are highly funded by the parents. In addition, it was found that the involvement of the outside factors increases in schools with high cultivation indexes while in schools with low cultivation indexes the parents have a considerable part in the financing of the program. Furthermore, in the high index a low weight of the programs intended for excelling students was found, as opposed to a high weight for programs intended for students who have difficulties (Weinhaver, Ben Nun, & Shipman, 2009).

Moore and Luriah (2010), who work in exclusion, maintain that in modern capitalist society there are two main mechanisms of exclusion: exclusion through the concept of property and exclusion through the formal education system. Bourdieu (1986)

holds that in every society the education system is responsible for maintaining the social order and the replication of the existing relations of government and power, with the preservation of the nature of the unequal distribution of the cultural capital. Hence, students who belong to the weak groups of society are educated for the exclusive supremacy of the ruling culture from which they are excluded. They tend to see the reasons for the exclusion as a personal failure, a model that reflects the objective inferiority of their cultural capital. According to Bourdieu (1986), the students who did not succeed in getting accepted to schools attributed this fact to their social class.

Elements such as tests and report cards are an effective instrument in education for the insertion of policy and the enforcement of values. The convention is about a conversation that is essentially about the student's lack of ability. All the concepts that link to the individual's special needs are versions of inequality. A student who does not achieve the required level of knowledge is defined as deficient. Teachers who act according to these procedures reproduce the existing order without knowledge or desire (Bourdieu, 1986).

The research studies indicate that the possibility of changing the relationship between academic achievements and social-economic background is based on another functioning, alternative, of the school. So as to bring students from a weak socio-economic background to high academic achievements, the school must fundamentally change its educational, professional, and organizational behavior. Motola et al. (2014) maintain that a change in the outlook on the issue of social exclusion and inclusion is required, a change in the professional practice that will take into account aspects of exclusion and inclusion and structural change of the school, which will reduce to the greatest possible extent tracking and separation (Motola, Mittleberg, & Razer, 2014). However, the inclusion of weak populations endangers the high level of achievements that the school aspires to and requires. Hence, in the schools professional practices of exclusion and distancing are created, which are deployed for the weaker populations in the school. These populations are excluded from the school in different ways. These students experience ongoing failure, considerable absences, alienation towards the school, and a rise in aggression. Other factors include the degree of perseverance of the school with the student and the broadcast of low expectations (Kfir, Ashkenazi, & Zeiger, 2005), the absence of the existence of tailored

methods of teaching and learning assistance (Bridgeland et al., 2009), the channeling to programs with a low image (Flowers & Herman, 2008), the initiative of the school to cause the student to leave (Lahav, 2004), and the lack of access of the teachers to the students (Dube & Orpinas, 2009). These behaviors constitute a threat to the professional and personal efficacy of the teachers who cope with them (Razer, Warshevsky, & Bar-Sadh, 2011).

Further research studies found significant differences between schools with high prestige and schools with low prestige in the indices of the characteristics of the students' behavior: vagrancy, physical violence, and verbal violence. A correlation was found between a high number of cases of vagrancy and a low prestige index. In addition, it was found that schools where the populations of students from a low socioeconomic index have a higher frequency of violent behavior, both verbal and physical, and vagrancy (Kfir, Ashkenazi, & Zeiger, 2005; Lahav, 2004). Since the high schools are measured according to the percentage of the students who obtain a high school matriculation certificate and the averages of these matriculation certificates, the presence of a weak population is experienced as damaging to the school's status and prestige relative to other schools (Motola, Mittleberg, & Razer, 2014).

Israel is not the only country that copes with gaps in achievements between its students. However, International indices indicate that Israel is leading among the developed countries in the gaps in achievements on a social economic background. As the social economic background is higher, the achievements are higher, and as the social economic background is lower, the achievements are lower. The gaps in the scholastic achievements between the students from a strong social-economic background and the students from a weak social-economic background are of the highest according to the OECD (2014).

Following these data in the year 2014, the Ministry of Education has established a professional team that examined the gaps in the budgeting of the Ministry of Education and ways to reduce them, so as to lessen the gaps between students from a strong social-economic background and students from a weak background and to promote equality of opportunities in the education system. Analysis of the findings of the budget of education

for the year 2014 shows that the budgeting in actuality is regressive. The meaning is that the schools that serve populations from a weak social economic background do not always receive the highest budget. The meaning is critical, since the single factor that can reduce the gaps is the Ministry of Education, but the budget of the Ministry contributes to the broadening of the gaps and preserving inequality. This contradiction between the Ministry policy and the performance of the policy further reveals the gaps that preserve the situation of the inequality. The gaps do not lessen; they increase (Sabo-Lal & Zedaka, 2015).

Economists and educators no longer dispute the fact that the education system in Israel is found at a low point in terms of the quality of the human capital that it provides (Sabirsky, 2004). There are large classes, discipline problems, and a high percentage of poor children who do not receive appropriate conditions of development in their homes and find it difficult to function in the school. There is a lack of professional teachers. Many teachers have a poor cultural infrastructure, the result of many years of neglect, inappropriate training, low salary, and low prestige. Students complain of boredom, violence, and lack of methodical learning. Culture, values, intellectual thinking – all these are not up for discussion at all. This is evidenced by the few existing findings in Israel on gaps and intergenerational conservation that perpetuate them (Bar-Haim, Blank, & Shavit, 2013).

A society that excludes populations, which cannot access their resources and do not belong, cannot use the advantages of the changing reality and the infinite possibilities. For them, this is more risk and exclusion. The social requirement for education and achievements is not open for many students who feel excluded from society and do not belong to the school where they study (Fogel, 2011; Reichel, 2008). Moore and Mandelson (2006) describe the expressions of the exclusion in the school. Students who are excluded in the school describe a feeling of inferiority, dependence on an expert, passiveness, and loss of authenticity and an independent voice.

This chapter reviewed the gaps and inequality that exist in the education system. It is apparent that there is no disputing the importance of education in the reduction of social gaps. Education develops in the person the ability to live a social life. It promotes personal

and professional growth and may provide access to resources, such as employment and high status and salary. Education is supposed to fulfill the promise of modern society for the equality of opportunities and for a more just world.

The education system perpetuates and replicates social inequality of different populations, while it uses practices of distancing, exclusion, classification, and separation between populations. Even when there is a declared policy of the promotion of equality in education system, the system is perceived as an exclusionary. The main reasons the preservation of social and political structures, some of which exist from the founding of the State, and a capitalist economy that encourages achievement, competition and the production of capital. The researchers support the fact that both the schools and the teachers continue the exclusion of the students. There is a clear structuring of social ideas, and they are implemented in practices in the school. The geographic place in the school or the place of the school in the neighborhood Help to prevent the social mobility and empower the differentiation and their remaining behind.

2.4 Tracking in the Schools and Exclusion

Tracking is a prevalent concept in sociology and education. It refers to the different social mechanisms that create or form a track for individuals or groups. Different tracks are built for students with different needs and abilities. The term ‘tracking’ in education explains how a student is followed so that the learning can be adjusted to him.

In the State of Israel, there is a Law of Compulsory Free Education, for children aged three to eighteen. This law was legislated one year after the State of Israel was established (Book of Laws of the Knesset, September 12, 1949) Which means that the State is responsible to provide compulsory studies in a recognized educational institution free of charge. In the year 1953 the State Education Law was legislated. The aim of the law was to provide education that is free and uniform to all children in Israel, regardless of the party, ethnic, or organizational association outside of the government, under the supervision of the Minister of Education.

To examine the processes of tracking in general and tracking as an exclusionary process in the school, the previous chapters reviewed and raised the social logic that constructs their action. Tracking originates from policies and perception that help to maintain them. Tracking is an overall name for classification and division. It is important to examine How the school and the study programs reinforce the inequality between groups from different class backgrounds.

The Law of Compulsory Education until the age of eighteen (from the year 2007) caused an increase in the number of learners in the high school. Mizrachi students and many children from the poorer groups were added to the system. ‘Naturally’ in the class society the additional need to classify and track the students is created, so as to retain the class structure, through the support of the educational policy, since these are the tracks that help these students (Blass et al., 2014).

The struggle against segregation in the education system in the world and in Israel ignored the existence of supposedly integrative schools, which use in them mechanisms of separation, tracking, and ability grouping. These separation mechanisms assign students to homeroom classes according to social economic background or according to their scholastic achievements, although the curriculum is supposed to be uniform for all (Lipstat & Glickman, 2014). The tracking mechanisms supposedly implement placement according to scholastic ability, but in actuality it is according to social economic background, so that the curriculum is not uniform but is tailored to the students’ needs. The students are divided into certain subjects according to their scholastic level and create differentiation according to social and economic characteristics (Cohen-Navot et al., 2001). The middle schools in essence became an educational site in which there are processes of classification that mainly are the distinction between ‘successful’ students and ‘unsuccessful’ students – processes that by nature are in contradiction with the value of quality and social integration (Yonah & Dahan, 2013).

The penetration of the business perceptions from the world of the corporations to the education system in the past decade also reinforces the trends of tracking. The emphasis on the competition between the schools and the measurement of outputs creates a race for

achievements. A regime of the monitoring of the achievements incentivizes the schools to classify the students into homogeneous groups and to cause the students with difficulties to drop out as opposed to investing in their promotion, and accelerates the establishment of segregative schools that painstakingly classify the students who enter their walls (Sabirsky & Dagan-Bozaglo, 2011). The difference between the learners is an inseparable part of the nature of education (Inbar, 2000). While some see the difference between the students to be an educational value that contributes to the learning and constitutes an opportunity to promote it, others see it to be a problem that needs to be diminished (Dressler, 2010).

Models in economics today analyze the school as a factory for production that has inputs and outputs. The goal is to produce human capital. A student is perceived as investing and interested in maximizing his future. Students are motivated by their desire to reach a social status in the present and not only what is expected of them in the future. The economy of identity engages in strategies of the school that aspires to increase the scholastic effort of its students and to cause them to internalize the norms of the school through the identification with them. The researchers find that the students direct themselves to an accepted norm and less to the maximization of achievements (Levitt, List, Neckermann, & Saidoff, 2012).

Schools serve the interests of a capitalist system in modern society, or in other words replicate the values and the personality characteristics required in capitalist society. In society there are constructs of differentiation, segregation, and inequality. In the schools these are called trackings (Addi-Raccah, Greenstein, & Bahak, 2015). Curricula reconstruct the power relations between groups that act in a capitalist society through practices of competitiveness, individuality, inculcation of partial knowledge (for instance, in mathematics students are classified and not all learn the same material), and the strengthening of the pursuit after achievements. Researchers maintain that through the curriculum the students learn to assume upon themselves the role of a 'serving power' through the use of practices and pedagogies that obligate the students to be disciplined, to obey the teachers and authority, and to avoid the expression of independent opinions. The expression of this in the school is in different levels of learning and types of training. In

the low levels of learning values and skills are emphasized that stress the obedience of rules and performance of routine activities such as in the training of workers. At the high levels of learning, there is more autonomy, creativity, and expression of judgment that suit higher employment companies. At the high levels of learning in vocational education there is the adoption of practices that are expressed in the low levels of learning (Davies & Guppy, 2010). These practices lead the students, mainly from the low classes, to accept as obvious the capitalist hierarchical structure and to be enslaved by the concomitant ideology (Sabirsky & Bozaglo, 2011). The fit of the students with the social constructs is expressed also in the nature of the role of the rewards. Like in a capitalist company, where the goal is to maximize the economic benefit as the main motive in the market forces, in the education system outside rewards, such as grades, become a main target in learning. The values of learning for the achievement of high scores are the goal. The encouragement of these values leads to alienation, relative to the individuals for whom this is a difficult task. In any event, the result is additional tracking (Oakes, 2005).

The tracking of students was performed in the past and is performed today in the same ways in the school. There is the classification of students to tracks according to achievements. There is the division into the higher, preferred, prestigious tracks, and the other programs, of a lower level, where students of a low level are concentrated (Gamoran, 2009).

Sabirsky and Dagan-Bozaglo (2011) maintain that for many years the education system has been built on intensive tracking. Sabirsky (1990) in his book *Education in Israel: District of Separate Tracks* tells about the separate and unequal systems of education populated by different groups in society in Israel since the first years of the country. Sabirsky (1990) leaves no room for the argument that this is a random process; he sees the tracking of the children of the peripheral communities and development towns to vocational education to be an intentional and clear position.

Students of both sexes from different sectors and from different social classes are placed in different programs of study and learn a curriculum that is different in content and

quality, and accordingly the students reach different endpoints. The normative manner of action of the education system entails the constant classification of the students.

The tracking in the education system has a variety of channels: division or expulsion of students into classes according to levels, academic and vocational programs, and classes for excelling students and classes for students with difficulties. Tracking is performed also through the transfer to smaller classes, the dropping to a lower level, the groupings in which the learned level of material is different. In many schools only a part of the curriculum is learned, and the starting point is that a large percentage of the students cannot learn the program completely and reach the high school matriculation examinations. The tracked structure gives the teaching staff a 'recipe' that became a norm that manages the coping with heterogeneous: transfer or of the students who for different reasons do not meet the normative criteria into low-achievement tracks – a low grouping, a vocational track, a lower level high school matriculation examination. This formula created structural gaps known beforehand between different groups of students.

The researchers seek to emphasize that this is a social-political policy that was expressed in historical steps: the groupings were implemented in Israel at the beginning of the 1990s on the background of the failure of the schools in the communities of immigrants from the countries of the Arab countries and on the background of the fear that this failure will lead to the alienation of the immigrants from the country leadership. Instead of investing in the upgrading of these schools, the State chose to divide the students into three levels, which enable the cultivation of a select minority in the framework of the high grouping (Sabirsky & Dagan-Bozaglo, 2011).

The high schools are divided from the 1950s until today into two categories: academic and vocational. The academic schools have a high level. They are selective and adopt a strict policy for the acceptance of students according to their achievements. There is no possibility for students whose achievements are low to learn there. Moreover, these schools classify their students into classes based on achievements and on the chances of future success.

The researcher Arviv (2011) shows that vocational tracks constitute a safety net that prevents the dropping out from the education system. However, simultaneously they lessen the learners' chances to achieve a high school matriculation certificate and to continue to higher studies.

Thus, the segregative processes are intensified. For the most part, the academic schools enjoy prestige and a high status, facts that are important to the school principals and the heads of the local governments (Blank, Shavit, & Yaish, 2015). Most of these schools are located geographically in main cities, in well-established neighborhoods, and most of the students are Ashkenazi. In contrast, vocational high schools were found to suit the students (for the most part Mizrachi) where the percentages of success and achievements in the tests were low (Sabirsky & Dagan-Bozaglo, 2009).

The establishment of the middle schools in the 1970s was a further step in the policy of separation, despite the declarations of the education system on integration. In actuality, since the students who were Mizrachi, immigrants, and Arabs received unsuitable education in the elementary schools, separate classes were created for them in the middle school, and the tracking and the separation were preserved. The middle school in essence helped the earlier tracking – in the seventh grade as opposed to the ninth grade (Yonah & Dahan, 2013).

During the 1990s, the percentage of learners in the vocational tracks and schools lessened, and in the past decade it was 30%-40% (Blass, Zussman, & Zur, 2014). In addition, from the 1990s the name of these study programs was changed from 'vocational' to 'technological', in the attempt to imbue them with prestige. The tracks received names, when the name of the track constitutes labeling. Tremendous resources are directed to students who learned advanced units in mathematics, at the expense of the weak students. All these factors widened the gap. The excellent students have an open path to the future, to the more profitable professions, while the weak students do not receive what they need. The compartmentalization of the knowledge is expressed in the inculcation of prestige to different areas of knowledge, through the classification of students in relation to the degree of exposure to the areas of knowledge with high prestige (Apple, 2004).

Researchers maintain that in the academic schools there are two types of tracking: *de jure* tracking and *de facto* tracking. *De jure* tracking is the formal and comprehensive referral of students to tracks according to regular and explicit mechanisms of classification that determine the constellation of subjects that the students in the track will learn. *De facto* tracking is expressed in different levels of the study subjects in these tracks. The research of Livneh (2006) on the academic track in high school education in Israel found that in *de facto* tracking there are clear differences between state education and state education in the religious sector and in the Arab sector. *De facto* tracking is associated with social inequality. This research study found that in the prestigious tracks, the sciences and mathematics, students who belong to the strong groups were found and that the schools encourage strong students, whose social background is perceived as enabling meeting demanding requirements, to go to these subjects. The main characteristic in this context was the parents' education. This enables the parents to better know the education system and to understand what happens in it. The *de facto* tracking in the academic track is tracking in all respects and it is influenced by the students' social background and creates differences in their access to limited educational resources and continues to constitute a basis for the inequality.

In Israel, there are at least three distinct technological tracks that are different from one another in the social economic profile of their students and in the achievements expected of them in the education system. About 15% belong to the practical scientific and engineer track, which is selective and demanding, dropping out from the studies is very lowest, and the findings indicate that these students have the best chances of obtaining a high school matriculation examination. The rest of the technological/vocational tracks are less selective, relative to this track and relative to the academic track. These tracks are attended by students from social groups considered weaker: girls, Arabs, and those with a low social economic background. In addition to the characteristics of the students in every program, the transitions of the students between the different programs were examined. The percentages of the students who changed study programs was 12% of the students who were examined in the research, and the low percentage indicates tracking that is predetermined (Shavit & Ayalon, 2004).

In addition, the data indicate that the strong students reach the academic and practical engineering tracks in comparison to the other tracks. For the most part, the students in these programs have educated parents, they attain better results in the tests, and they learn in schools with a higher social economic status (Blank, Shavit, & Yaish, 2015). Unsurprisingly, it was found that in the practical engineering track and in the academic track the chances of obtaining a high school matriculation certificate are higher than in the technological and vocational tracks and the percentages of the dropping out are lower by one half and even more. The facts indicate that the relationship between the student's social background, his previous scholastic achievements, his classification to a certain track, and his entitlement to a high school matriculation certificate is similar to the data found in the 1970s and 1980s. Like then, there still are social and economic influences of the classification to the different tracks and the study program still has significant influence on the chances of completing the high school and obtaining a high school matriculation certificate (Gabay-Egozi, Shavit, & Yaish, 2015).

It should be noted that the Ministry of Education prohibits the classification of the students in the acceptance to the elementary schools and the use of separation, tracking, and grouping in elementary school education and limits these processes in secondary school education. The examination of the Director General's Circulars¹⁴ found that the secondary education institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Education forbids conditioning the acceptance of the students on the holding of classification tests of every type and states that classification tests must not be held as an acceptance condition to the school in the transfer from one school to another or in the transition from one stage of study to another stage (Ministry of Education, 2010, 2014). In actuality this is not the case. Despite this prohibition, mechanisms of separation and differentiation were found, beginning in the first grade, when instead of levels, groups are named by colors or another marker. Already in the first grade the student know whether they belong to the group of weak students or the group of strong students (Blass, Zussman, & Zur, 2014).

¹⁴ Director General's Circulars of the Ministry of Education are divided into 'permanent instructions' and 'announcements and information'.

Goodman and Mizrachi (2013) In Research examined whether in the different study programs and tracks there was use of different learning techniques on the same learned topic. The research study revealed the stratified and tracked dimension of educational work. The techniques that the teacher used were fundamentally different. On the lower levels, the teachers were givers of information, authoritarian, while the students remained sitting in rows and were passive. In the prestigious classes, there was a discussion in a circle. The students were active and told about their feelings. The toolkit with which the students departed was different. The focus on the techniques of making decisions and solving moral dilemmas among students from a high social-economic status is commensurate with the argument of Lareau (2003) on the work of cultivation among parents and educations in relation to the children from a high social-economic class. According to Lareau (2003), the cultivation work fills an important role in the training of these children to become citizens with knowledge, social abilities, and social skills that will allow them to participate actively in the shaping the future of society. In contrast, children from a low-moderate social-economic class do not experience training that positions them as having knowledge and skills and as deserving of advancement. These children, as Lareau (2003) shows, primarily enjoy the concern for the satisfaction of their basic physical and emotional needs. Their emotional world is shaped from the reliance on the symbolic hierarchies and regular social roles in a way that does not encourage thoughts, dispute, or negotiations over the social order. The differential use of the learning techniques in the prestigious and low classes expresses and re-establishes a constellation of positions that is ethnic and class. The ethnic origin and social-economic background of the students serve for the teachers as guidelines when they go to adjust the educational curriculum to the different populations of students (Goodman & Mizrachi, 2013).

Findings indicate that despite the changes that occurred in professional/technological education, social economic factors still support the classification into programs. Some maintain that the professional tracks distance them from taking the high school matriculation examinations and lead, in the end, to positions with low salary and status.

Others maintain that the vocational education gives the students abilities that help them achieve an acceptable income. The argument on this issue refuses to die and awakens every time anew. It seems that tracking of students in the education system to an academic or professional track, according to their choice, is a structural characteristic in the education systems in general and is widely found in the education system in Israel (Blank, Shavit, & Yaish, 2015).

Although the topic occupies the education system, the research on the topic is not current. In the 1960s and 1970s, vocational education in Israel expanded significantly, to include nearly 60% of the total number of students in high school education. Vocational education was intended for students considered unsuited for academic studies on the basis of their previous achievements. Most of the children of immigrants from the Middle East who immigrated to Israel in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as many students from an Ashkenazi origin, were found to be unsuited, at least in the opinion of the leadership of the education system of that time, for the high requirements of these high schools and were directed to vocational schools, when the scholastic requirements in these schools were relatively low. The extension of the tracking to vocational education was justified in that this was commensurate with the requirements of the economy that was developing in the first years of the state. This was a period of rapid industrialization, which created a demand for the professional and semi-professional workers and these were trained in the vocational schools. Thus, the vocational schools served a number of goals: they provided a skilled workforce for industry, constituted an opportunity for the acquisition of an education for the population considered weak, and enabled the academic schools to select students and to adhere to the values of 'excellence' they supported (Goodman & Mizrachi, 2013).

The research study of the Bank of Israel (Zussman & Zur, 2010), which examined the contribution of vocational high school education versus academic high school to the education and success in the job market, reveals that vocational education leads to an insignificant career, but it helps the reduction of the dropping out from the high school, and this is its main target. The arguments of Zussman and Zur (2010) are that in vocational education there is greater tracking and with it labeling and exclusion that lead to far inferior scholastic achievements and lack of basic skills required for the person in modern society,

and they acquire less post-high school education. Consequently, the earning ability of the graduates of vocational education is detrimentally influenced, in comparison to that of the graduates of academic high school, and the inequality in the distribution of the incomes is increased. In addition, Research shows the percentage of mobility between the tracks is rather low. Oakes (2005) and Brunello and Checchi (2007) found that as tracking is used at young ages, the chances for the continuation of higher studies lessen, as does the income from the job in future.

Researchers indicate the trackings as a mechanism that preserves social structures in education, structures that preserve gaps between classes and groups in the education system in Israel. Their research study reflects a reality that indicates that as the subject is perceived as more important it is tracked more, for instance, the subject of mathematics. Hence children who belong to families that struggle to survive economically or have subsistence and survival difficulties will be in classes of students with difficulties. In parallel, the academic tracks in the high schools, according to the region and the school, include means of filtering and tracks for the children of the elite (Motola, Mittleberg, & Razer, 2014; Razer, Friedman, & Sykes, 2004).

The teachers are the victims of the social reality, just like the students are. The contradiction between their action and the declarations and the educational policy that they adopt is explained. This is a political organizational structure of the teaching profession that directs and cultivates 'successful' children at the expense of the children who are not successful. The teachers themselves lack social value: they engage in a profession that is not esteemed and is not rewarded. Moreover, the teaching profession is the social punching bag every time data that cannot be explained are revealed – violence, racism, poverty, exclusion (Lampert, 2013). Razer et al. (2011) called this the 'circle of exclusion'. In their research study, they emphasize that the encounter with populations that are socially excluded and at-risk exposes those who meet teachers, caregivers, and principals with a range of experiences, emotions, and images too difficult to bear. When referring to children and youths, the power of depth of the emotions arise and simultaneously the drive to disconnect, to abandon, or to respond with violence. Educational teams who work

populations at-risk tend to develop group and organizational processes that perpetuate their failure. These facts raise the following question. Who benefits from this situation?

The collection of data on high schools in Israel and the achievements of the students, which was published in the year 2016 (RAMA, 2016), perhaps in the attempt to reduce the meaning of the low entitlement (56%) for the students and for the economy and Israeli society, joined for the first time data reported from student reports about what is done in the high schools, the climate, On issues as climate, rate of violence, the social involvement and the attitudes of teachers towards them. This is for the purpose to show that the situation of the high school matriculation certificates is influenced by the situation of behavior that that Ministry of Education rejects. Students reports depict a picture of severe violence, lack of closeness and caring of the teachers towards them (Moore & Luriah, 2010; Moore & Mandeleason, 2006).

Researchers maintain that tracked students whose basic human needs are ignored by the school, when for a long time the students do not have a significant figure who will give them attention, when there is no reference to their opinions and needs, when the students feel they are objects of one-sided actions, become unsuccessful and alienated and their chances of dropping out from the school are great (Moore & Mandeleason, 2006). The lack of commitment to the school, the lack of motivation to attain achievements, the failure in the school, and the poor achievements in the studies are risk factors among children, and they increase the chances of developing aggressive behavior (Ben Rabi, Kovarski, et al., 2013).

The declared goal of the tracking is reflected also in the policy of inclusion that the Ministry of Education set as the top priority in 2012: “Every student will receive according to his ability the help that he needs.” This approach intends to create mobility instead of tracking. The purpose is the inclusion of students instead of their exclusion. If we examine before and after the inclusion, it appears that there is no change that indicates greater success. The trend of tracking continues (Motola, Mittleberg, & Razer, 2014).

The conceptualizations and the language of educators indicate also the tracking mechanisms and the extent to which they are inherent in and built into the system. The

tracking conceptualizations became the daily reality “he won’t be here if he does not learn”, “his parents will see to him and not me”, “the student should be removed, his place is not here”. The conceptualization and the language express and preserve the exclusionary mechanisms. These students are concentrated in classes with others who are similar to them and the question is asked regarding their chances in the environment of those who are similar to them, when these are classes with difficulties with discipline, anxieties, learning disabilities, and attention disorders. They are students who are characterized by ongoing failure and frustration. They encounter teachers who express a feeling of frustration and powerlessness that are expressed in the abandonment of the students and in their being blamed for the situation (Razer, Warshevsky, & Bar Sadeh, 2011).

Grouping by ability is one of the channels of tracking of different education systems around the world that sought to cope with the heterogeneous classes through the transfer of students who do not meet the normative criteria, for different reasons (Sabirsky & Dagan-Bozaglo, 2011). The grouping addresses the way in which groupings of students into groups on the basis of their abilities, so that homogenous groups are created. The grouping can be class that includes all the subjects in the school for certain students, and conversely it can be specific to a certain subject, so that the student will learn at different levels in different subjects. A main consideration in the formation of the groupings is related to the assumption according to which a group is homogeneous in terms of the ability and the achievements is more effective than reference to the diverse needs of a group with heterogeneous (Belfi, Goos, De Fraine, & Van Damme, 2012). In elementary schools the division into groups according to ability occurs for the most part in the classes, when students are divided into small groups of levels of achievements.

According to the directives of the Ministry of Education, study groupings should not be held in the elementary school; in the first to sixth grades the learning should be held in the heterogeneous class. It is possible to divide the class into groups, but this is regardless of the students’ achievements and without processes of classification. From the seventh grade, the Ministry of Education allows the groupings in mathematics and English, but this is with the careful creation of conditions that enable the students’ mobility and their rise

from level to level (Ministry of Education, Director General's Circular 1994/8, March 3, 1994).

In the middle school and the high school, the use of groupings is more common in Israel (Belfi et al., 2012). In actuality, the classification of students into groups of ability in the core subjects is common in the elementary schools, and the Ministry of Education ignores it. Over the years, the opponents of the approach, as well as the supporters, discussed and investigated the possible harm caused to the students from the low ability group. A number of research studies found that belonging to the high ability group influences positively the academic achievements, while the reverse is true for the low ability group (Hadar-Packer, 2013). A longitudinal research that examined the influences of learning in ability group (Tach & Farkas, 2006) studied the influence of grouping according to reading ability on different characteristics of the psychosocial development (ages five-six) related to scholastic success (at the start and end of the year), including attitudes towards learning, self-control, interpersonal behavior, and problems of extraverted behavior. The research results supported the criticism of the groupings, since they lead to negative psychosocial implications for students in the low grouping while they are beneficial for students in the high ability grouping. These implications may influence the students' self-perception, values, interest, goals, and behaviors (Catsambis & Buttaro, 2012).

The scope of the groupings in the school influences the students' academic self-perception but not their general self-perception. It was found that the students' academic self-perception was more positive in schools where there was less learning in groupings. Another research study indicated that students from the low grouping may feel better about their achievements when they compare themselves with their fellows in the group while they may feel less secure in their achievements when they compare themselves to students in the strong classes (Catsambis & Buttaro, 2012).

A negative influence of the placement in low groupings was found on the students' mental wellbeing. Students with low levels of mental wellbeing and academic self-perception were found to be at-risk of depressive responses, low grades, dropping out from

the school, and delinquency – while students in the high grouping may experience the school as a positive environment since the belonging to the higher grouping gives them social status (Oakes, 2005). Students in the low grouping may suffer from loss of social status and develop negative approaches to the school. These students may suffer from social stigma, low scholastic expectations, and low motivation (Hadar-Packer, 2013; Teller, 2003). It was found that the grouping is the factor that most influences the parents, teachers' expectations of the student. The placement in a low grouping creates a cycle of low negative expectations, which are created following the negative labeling that leads to a poor self-image and to failure (Sabirsky & Dagan-Bozaglo, 2011; Teller, 2003). In addition, it was found that students in the low grouping are labeled as slow, difficult, or stupid (Teller, 2003) and that teachers who teach in the low groupings use more criticism than do teachers who teach in the higher groupings. Students in the low groupings begin to experience a decline in their self-confidence and motivation to learn. Consequently, they despair and disconnect from the learning process and sometimes develop disruptive behaviors in the school. Beyond the emotional and social implications of the division into groupings, it is argued that this way may cause an increase in the gap in achievements, since the teaching that the students in the low ability groups receive is not equal to the teaching that the students in the higher ability groups receive (Teller, 2003). Another disadvantage of groupings is related to the problem of mobility, the transition from one grouping to another grouping, and mainly to the rise from a low grouping to a higher grouping. The gap in the curriculum reduces the students' ability to move between groupings.

Although the primary aim of the groupings is to boost the students' level of achievements, it was found that as the schools more frequently use the placement of students in groupings by quality in the different subjects and as the schools more frequently shift to other school's students with low achievements or with behavioral problems or learning disabilities, the level of achievements of the entire system declines. Indeed, in a number of countries found at the top of the table of achievements in the comparative international tests, and at the head Finland and Japan, it is not customary to divide the students into groupings (OECD, 2014).

An ethnographic research performed for three years in two elementary schools, with an interpretative analysis of the findings, found that in actuality there is routing to special education. This is a process of social classification that begins with the entrance in the first grade and is driven by two main goals of the school, when their fundamental assumptions are contradicting: inclusion and social classification. While the fundamental assumptions for inclusion include a liberal and equal system of values, which sees difference between people to contribute to society, the fundamental assumptions for the goal of social stratification is anchored in a capitalist and achievement-oriented system of values, which sees difference to be an obstacle and which drives the system to classify into groups according to principles of status and differentiation. While the ideology of the staff was that of inclusion and objection to stratification and differentiation, the discourse and everyday activity of the staff indicate the social representations of stratification. It was further found that the professionalism of teachers in the school is evaluated according to the degree of involvement in the stratification and differentiation of students. For instance, as the teacher in the first grade stratifies and classifies the children according to their performances in reading earlier, she is perceived in the school as more professional (Tuval, 2006).

A longitudinal research study conducted over eleven years examined the long-term results among students who were identified in the first grade as having learning and behavior difficulties. It was found that in the twelfth grade these students were at risk of placement in special education, use of mental health services, poor scholastic achievements (in mathematics and in reading), and dropping out from the school. Different emotional and social problems were found to be related to failure in the scholastic realm, to learning difficulties, and to difficulties with adjustment to the school framework (Cohen-Navot & Aida, 2012).

Studies address the question - Has the method of grouping reduced the learning gaps since its inception, in the late 1960s, in Israel? The picture delineated from many research studies says the opposite. It appears that in actuality the method of grouping increases scholastic and social gaps and constitutes a main part in the mechanisms of tracking in the education system and determines, at least in part, the professional-class

choice of the graduates of the system (Teller 2003). Data from a number of comprehensive research studies conducted in recent years show that most of the students who study in the vocational school or in the vocational programs in the schools studied in the middle school in the low groupings. Moreover, the grouping in which the student learns in the middle school is the factor that most strongly predicts his placement in the program of study and it constitutes a stronger predictor than the student's achievements, his origin, his parents' education, his parents' expectation (Teller, 2003).

The Circular¹⁵ of the Ministry of Education (2010) determines that a pedagogical council of the school determines according to classification tests the grouping in which each student will learn in each subject. This requirement leaves the responsibility for the promotion of strong students, as well as the weak students (Tobin, 2012). Another difficult problem is the problem of mobility – the transition from grouping to grouping and primarily the rise from a low grouping to a high grouping. The findings of the research studies on what happens in the low groupings confirm what every student in grouping C can say: in grouping C the students learn slowly and little and they are very disruptive. It is very difficult to go up a grouping, and as the student stays in grouping C for longer time, the chance that the student will get to leave it is lower (Tobin, 2012).

Groupings are a major tool in the education system that assists in the process of tracking. At the end of the middle school, there is the classification into many divergent tracks – high school matriculation programs, programs of partial high school matriculation, and vocational programs (without the high school matriculation certificate). The grouping in the middle school is important and critical criterion, according to which the students are classified into the different tracks. The structure of the tracks and the nature of the classification change according to the different sectors, communities, and schools, but the principle is identical – according to the student's achievements in the middle school (if his achievements are high, then according to his desires) a program for the continuation of his studies is set for him, in the tenth to twelfth grades. In essence, in this stage the value of the certificate that the student will acquire at the end of twelve years of study is determined,

¹⁵ Director General's Circulars of the Ministry of Education are divided into 'permanent instructions' and 'announcements and information'.

as well as the possibilities of further studies and future employment (Sabirsky & Dagan-Bozaglo, 2011).

Tracking creates a cycle of low expectations that lead to failure, low expectations of the principal and the supervisors of the teachers and of the teachers from themselves, low expectations of the teachers from the students, low image of the students in their own eyes and in the eyes of the teachers, and a tradition of failure. A research study performed by Tobin (2012) found that the stage of tracking includes the events that lead each student to choose the study track suited to him. However, students with learning difficulties, poor achievements are tracked to a track where there is increased help, where they learn in small groups and with a boosted curriculum. The students are intended for the full high school matriculation certificate, generally, without the possibility of the choice of a learning program. This is determined for them ahead of time. These tracks are known by names such as MABAR (regular high school matriculation examination certification), ETGAR, LEV (towards the high school matriculation examination certification), and OMETZ (believing in the self, willing to put forth effort, expecting achievements). All of these programs act according to the same principles of small classes, reinforcement, and personal work. A learning track is determined for every student at the end of the ninth grade by the educational staff on the basis of the inclusion of a number of parameters: achievements, behavior, and motivation. The Pedagogical Council informs the student of the educational staff's decision to be assigned to the classroom. The decision of the adjustment of the track to the student is undertaken on an individual level, with the student. There is also organizational-systemic thinking on the learning tracks versus the identified needs of the community that nurtures the school, and thus it is found that in weak communities there are fewer academic classes, more MABAR classes, and more reinforcement classes. Again the reality dictates the gaps and inequality. It is possible to see little movement between the trends and the learning groups over the years of the upper school (Tobin, 2012). Here it is possible to see the important role of tracking regarding the student's future achievements. When a student is interested in moving a learning group, the 'gatekeepers' of tracking enter the picture. In every school, this is a main figure (for instance, the pedagogical coordinator, a senior counselor) who is in charge of the examination of the process of the re-tracking and enables – or for the most part does not enable – it to happen.

The method of grouping is not a mistake of the system, just like the fact that less than one-half of the students in Israel receive a high school matriculation certificate is not a failure of the system. The story of the education system is filled with programs and reforms with characteristics similar to those of the grouping method – vocational education, the ‘cultivation policy’, the comprehensive schools – and all were created to reduce the gaps and specially to help the ‘disadvantaged’ students. All failed, and the gaps remained. The education system apparently does not aspire to truly reduce the gaps and does not attempt to bring all the students to achievements with value to their future (Hadar-Packer, 2013).

2.5 Summary

The main statement in this chapter is that it can be argued that in Israel the institutional classification into different and graduated homogeneous frameworks (grouping, scholastic track) is the variable that most influences the aspiration for an education and the future employment status. The children of the populations at risk (the poor, the immigrants, the residents of the periphery) experience the risk that is replicated in the school. Classification and tracking are structures that perpetuate and strengthen the risk and social exclusion of these children and thus preserve the cycle of risk and social exclusion. There is the reconstruction and preservation of the exclusion from society to education. Researches and data indicate that tracking, separation, and classification express and preserve gaps and the inequality among the students. In Israel there is no mobility between the groupings. Tracking also prevents mobility and serves the social stratification and the neoliberal economic structures. Tracking has long-standing practices and mechanisms that are preserved in the education system at all ages.

There is a relationship between the students’ achievements and their socioeconomic status. As the class is more classified and homogenous, comfortable and familiar social structures are created that maintain the stratification and prevent social mobility. The basic insight is emphasis of the influence of the inequality in education system that denies the students opportunities as a goal and influences the future life outcomes. This inequality serves and reflects the general preferences of society.

Oakes (2005) concludes that even after a century of research on tracking and ability grouping, a definitive answer to the question of how best to organize students for teaching can be expected. Yet the dilemma persists, because the goals of commonality and differentiation lie in uneasy proximity to one another, because every approach has disadvantages as well as advantages.

Chapter 3. Students At-Risk - Conceptions and Perceptions

This chapter presents studies and theories that deal with students at-risk and the context of tracking. The exploration of student perceptions is an area lacking in the educational field. There are research studies that examined the students' perceptions towards the school and the teachers as they are engraved in their memory as adults. These research studies have a significant contribution to the educational field, to the understanding of the world of students in general and of students at-risk in particular. Few research studies in which students are the respondents during their period of studies in the school, primarily during the age of high school.

Risk is characterized by the dropping out of the students from the system. The focus of this research study is on the students whose dropping out is covert. Covert dropping out is called 'disengagement', which refers to the students' lack of connection or disconnection. The covert dropping out or disengagement characterizes students who are found in the classroom but who do not function in scholastic terms. They are disconnected from the existing frameworks and feel alienation towards the class and towards the school.

A research study of Brookdale (Ben Rabi et al., 2014). illustrates that in Israel, as opposed to the average of the OECD countries. Students report an emotional disconnection, a feeling of lack of belonging and alienation with the school. Another dimension of disconnection is the perceptual disconnection, which is expressed in the perception of the school as contributing to the student's life and future. Different expressions of disconnection exist already from the classes of the elementary school, and there is an increase in the scope of the phenomenon primarily behavioral disconnection, which is expressed in many absences and instances of tardiness, with the rise in age. Students from a low social-economic background report disconnection more than do students from a higher social-economic background, primarily behavioral disconnection and emotional disconnection (Cohen-Navot et al., 2001). The disconnection may lead to significant harm to the student's wellbeing and ability to realize the scholastic and social processes in the school (Ben Rabi et al., 2014). Research studies maintain that youths at-risk find it more

difficult than others to adjust to the school and to display willingness to accept upon themselves the requirements of the learners (Harel, Allenbogen-Frankovitz, Molko, Abu Asba, & Haviv, 2002).

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, its education system has declared its commitment to the promotion of the students who have difficulties and to the closing of gaps between the different populations. A report from the Brookdale Institute (2017), reports that in Israel there are more than two and half million children in the age 0-18, of whom over than 500,000 are at-risk. It was found that the risk profile among youths aged twelve to eighteen develops from the factors of the environment: poverty, belonging to a minority, family factors such as parental dysfunction, delinquency, violence, and changes in the family structure (divorce, death, single-parent families), and economic difficulties. Other factors are related to the child: learning disabilities, poor achievements, discipline problems and vagrancy, antisocial behavior patterns, low threshold of frustration, and low self-image. These students have normal potential, but their scholastic achievements are poor and they live in an experience of ongoing failure (Harel, Allenbogen-Frankovitz, Molko, Abu Asba, & Haviv, 2002). Researchers (Razer, Warshevsky & Bar-Sadeh, 2011) found that personal, family, or cultural situations of risk increase the chance of exclusion and adjustment difficulties in the school. Another statistical datum indicates that there are more children and youths at-risk in the periphery and in low socioeconomic groups. The main cause of being 'disconnected' youth or youth 'at-risk' is their social origin and their geographic position or residential region – the town/city or neighborhood. They feel often imprisoned in the difficult experience without the ability to see the future (Moore & Luriah, 2010).

The definitions of youth at-risk are mentioned in the literature in different ways and contexts, which can be summarized into two types of definitions. The one definition addresses future outcomes, while the other definition addresses their life in the present (Schonert-Reichel, 2000). In recent decades the perception is increasing that the school is the factor responsible for the success or failure of the child in the studies (Cohen-Navot et al., 2001).

The State and the education system can endanger the children to the same extent as it can protect them and cultivate them (Boyden & Mann, 2005). It influences the level of risk and in contrast the level of endurance in the different systems of the family, the school, the community, the peer group, and the individual's personal traits.

Through the social cultural system, it is determined what 'at-risk' entails and what not, who is perceived as resilient and who is not, what is permitted and what is prohibited, what global protection factors can be developed, and how many resources will be invested in the coping with risk and in the development of the necessary endurance against it (Sharland, 2006). The narrative of risk and resilience provides the justification of the regulation of the behavior and tendencies of the youths for the future according to the preferences of the dominant culture (Sharland, 2006).

The research study emphasizes that the attention and response to the students' voices significantly improve the learning, the relations between teachers and students, and other areas vital to the school experience (Cook-Sather, 2006). Cook-Sather (2006) emphasizes that the research of the student's voice facilitates the development of practices and progress in the continuous struggle to find places of meeting of teachers with students, researchers with students, and thus influences an educational cultural turning point that supports the students' re-positioning (Cook-Sather, 2006, p. 361).

Few research studies describe the life stories of graduates who in the past were defined as youths at risk and who even suffered lack. In most stories, the youths describe the school as an alienating environment in which they were exposed to humiliation, violence, shame, and powerlessness, thus leading them in the end to drop out from the studies. The tracking of these students is the creation of contact with a group of peers who are similar. This contact gave them on the one hand delinquent models and on the other hand an experience of betrayal, incrimination, anger, and violence towards the regular classes (Igbaria, 2004). The stigma they bear and that of the classes in which they study derive from the sense of 'otherness' implemented when the components of labeling, stereotyping, separation, reduction of value, change of class and discrimination exist concurrently, when the attitudes of one group has enough power in social, economic, and

political areas so as to have meaningful implications on the group that has been labeled with the stigma. This is the story of tracking in the schools.

The research of Nevo (2010) among students in secondary education, looked at the ideal figure of the teacher for them, the students describe ideal student-teacher relationships as in contrast to the relationships they described as existing in reality. Many described the general framework as oppressive and referred to the school as a depressing place, the student as an object, learning to a passive situation, and the teacher as a technician. An important and prominent conclusion of this research study is that when students are interviewed at all ages about their lives in the school they seriously address the connected topics. They have opinions, desires, and expectations, and they are enthusiastically desirous of expressing this. It appears that a serious attitude towards students causes a similar attitude on their part. As they feel themselves active partners and not passive objects, they will address their learning more responsibly. The attention to students reflects their world, their aspirations, and their abilities. Attention to students can contribute to the understanding of their world and thus can improve the reciprocal relationships between teachers and students and influence the appropriate and significant planning of studies for them (Nevo, 2010).

Schultz (2008) emphasizes that it is necessary to dedicate time and allocate small and intimate rooms in the school, revolving around the importance of attention to students and what they bring to their learning. The researcher speaks about listening to the students' lives as a way to understand the community and family relationships and as a resource for the teachers for their way of learning (Schultz, 2008).

Robinson (2014) adds that the teachers must fill their responsibility and make decisions for the child's good, but even more they have the responsibility to respect the children's rights and to pay attention to their voice and to know their opinions and their outlook. The students are the experts who know about their experiences in the schools and topics related to what helps or inhibits their learning. The researcher emphasizes that teachers must believe in the children's ability, engage in dialogue with them, and thus contribute to discussions on topics related to them in the school.

Lampert (2013) explains that the difficulty in the management of dialogue with students derives from the fact that the education system still places at the center the curricula and the inculcation of knowledge. These eliminate the teachers' ability to see the children beyond their scholastic functioning and in essence negate from the teachers and from the children their existence as subjects. The researcher explains how teachers undergo a methodical process during which their ability to ignore the children is improved. The process of the transformation of the school into a device of knowledge and achievements contributes decisively to the creation of blindness and the ignoring of children. In this reality, many children feel that it is not enough to make sounds or express distress to bring the adult to address them. Even when they express themselves, it is not heard as appropriate, or in other words, their needs are not appropriately addressed. In essence, there are whole populations that are not visible at all, populations that the institutional glance passes over.

In another research in which high school students were asked what is important to learn at school, the students' responses focused on areas that will help them in important aspects of life, such as getting along socially, understanding how the country works, understanding couple relationships and family, and a profession for the future – “they should teach us what will help with success in life” (Ganor, 2015). In this context, another research study that examined the students' reference to learning indicates that students perceive the school and the teachers as factors that are interested in their evaluation primarily through grades. The students noted that good learning means a high school matriculation certificate that will bring them benefit in the future (a high salary or an entry card to higher education). In the students' perception, this is the entry card to the achievement of the upgrading of social status in society, which is competitive and aggressive. This information reveals the manner of their thinking on society, in which the achievements, as well as materialism and competition, are the leading values (Hotem & Linor, 2010).

Yaron (2013) emphasizes that students ask to have their voices heard. “We are not asked what truly suits us. It is necessary to listen to us more and to encourage our initiatives.” The students maintained that what is most important in the school is quality

teachers, those who listen to students and display towards them a personal and equal attitude. Only later do students see the importance of the freedom of choice of subjects and programs. A significant argument of students was that there is an unwritten contract between students and teachers: “You come to teach me what is needed for the test. If it is not for the test, leave out the nonsense.”

Tadmor (2007) asked adults who they perceive the teacher about who influenced them when they were students. He found that the influential teacher, as engraved in the students’ memory, is the teacher who touched their souls, who shaped their identity, and whose educational contact with them was experiential.

In a number of studies adults describe how they experienced the school as a difficult place where a war of survival was waged, as a place of pain, frustration, fear, and disappointment, where a sense of lack of worth accompanied them in the school and in the continuation of their lives. Einat and Einat (2006) researched adult prisoners who were defined in the school as ‘youths at-risk’. Their research study examined retrospectively the prisoners’ attitudes towards the relationship between their failing studies and their dropping out from the education system and antisocial behaviors, so that for them the risk was realized. The research respondents reported an injurious attitude on the part of teachers, obtuseness, and lack of understanding of their scholastic situation primarily. They reported continuous failure that is accompanied by feelings of anger and frustration, which led to their dropping out of school. This research study is titled: *Indictment*. The main finding in it emphasizes that the education system does not build a preventative constellation that provides care for students who are found in situations of risk. Kaine (2013) adds that adults who were defined as ‘youths at risk’ described the school as an alienated environment in which they were exposed to humiliation, violence, shame, and powerlessness, thus leading them eventually to drop out from their studies.

This chapter emphasizes the importance of research about students in the schools. The students’ voices tell of the attitude of the education system and the school to youths in general and to youths at risk in particular and about the society's attitude towards.

Researchers call on teachers to continue to learn to listen to the students' voices as a method that helps to work with them.

3.1 Students At-Risk and Future Orientation

Erikson (1968) and Lewin (1939) were the first to emphasize that the period of adolescence is the period in which people plan their time for the future and built subjective reference about it. The researchers who followed (Nurmi, 1991; Seginer, 1988) described this process as future orientation and argued that the subjective picture of the future motivates and regulates the individual's behavior towards the hoped-for future (Bandura, 2001). Adolescents do this through the definition of goals, planning, and search and also by their obligation to these goals, which consequently guides the program of their development towards the future (Nurmi, 1991; Seginer, 1988). Seginer (1988) emphasizes the necessity of motivation among adolescents as facilitating the process of the preparation towards a career. In her opinion, this is a long-term developmental process that begins long before the end of the school. The adolescent is required to identify his areas of interest and abilities, to balance between them and the opportunities existing in the job market, and to develop gradually occupational preference.

The concept of future orientation (Nurmi, 1991; Seginer, 1988) includes broad reference to the process of preparation and construction of the future among adolescents. The way in which the young people see and delineate their future has impact on the shaping of their identity and on their commitment to the creation of this future. The contents through which they will examine the future are related to the management of the systems of relationships, empowerment, beliefs that accompany the process, belief in the success, the degree of the pressure, and the excitement of those involved in it (Michael, 2012).

The research literature on future orientation showed that adolescents described their future in terms of future areas of life (Seginer & Mahajna, 2004), such as higher education, family, and career. Moreover, research studies showed that adolescents with a developed future orientation have higher motivation to perform their tasks, to be involved in the school life, and to achieve higher grades in the studies (Seginer, 2009). They better understood the relationship between their present behavior and the future outcomes of these

behaviors (Blustein, 2001). According to this explanation, adolescents who understand the value of the goals of the future to their personal development are more occupied in the search for the possibilities for the realization of these goals, are more aware of the obstacles in the realization of these goals, and consequently can adopt the optimal behavior so as to realize the goals they set for themselves. It is important to note that the fulfillment of future goals occurs in a wide network of factors, such as the quality of the relationship in the family and in the school and with those their age and factors from the more distant environment as well as the system of values of the socio-political environment (Seginer, 2009).

Most of these factors endanger and are even absent for the students whose school experience is a failure. These students for the most part were already transferred from the basic classes and separated into classifying groupings or other groups. In the continuation, they were assessed and transferred to the classes that suit them (tracking). This experience is built in their minds and manages them. They believe that the framework in which they are found is best for them. The education system is pouring into these environments forces of a low level and programs that are supposed to compensate, but they in essence perpetuate the situation (Michael, 2012; Razer, Mittleberg, & Ayalon, 2017).

Mahajna (2014) examined the meaning that emphasizes the role of future orientation in the preparation of the individual towards his entry into the world of adults and his preparation for coping with the challenges of the tasks of adulthood. The future orientation in this meaning constitutes an anchor from which the individual can derive the specific actions that can promote the fulfillment of the future plans. In other words, the ability to imagine the future can influence the type and manner of actions and the current behaviors of the individual that promote or inhibit the realization of the future goals. The meaning of future orientation is not only the presentation of the alternatives of choice; this is a process of the formation of the personal future identity in which the individual learns about himself and his environment for the setting of personal objectives that he can fulfill (Mahajna, 2014). These research studies indicate a trend according to which adolescents who will know to plan their future during the period of adolescence found it easier to reach a situation of the choice of a track in adulthood, while adolescents whose planning of the

future was less crystallized reached a situation of lack of making a decision (Mahajna, 2014). The basic assumption on the research literature is that there exists continuity between the planning and the engagement in areas of life in the period of adolescence and the fulfillment of these programs and the choice of a life track with the entry into the world of adulthood (Walker & Tracey, 2012).

In this context, the school experience that is expressed in the relationship with teachers, relationship with friends, and identification with the school constitutes a motivating factor for the formation of the future orientation. In other words, it is important to see that the school experience will become a tendentious experience with the goal of the strengthening and shaping of the future orientation, which can be realized and enables the individual to derive current actions for the fulfillment of future goals. This means that the school must actively and tendentiously see to the strengthening of the relationship between its students and its teachers and among the students themselves. In addition, the school must cultivate and strengthen among its students the view of the period of the studies in the school and the school experience in general as a period and an experience related to the choice of the career track and the fulfillment of future goals (Mahajna, 2014).

Students at-risk are missing future orientation. Few research studies in Israel addressed this aspect. It was found that children who were characterized by positive expectations or high motivation regarding different areas in the future were found in the continuation to have greater strength, higher scholastic achievements, and more positive social adjustment and mental wellbeing (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). Moreover, positive expectations for the future were found related to a lower level of behavior problems and the negative influence of the peer group, higher school involvement, and higher internal resources and social support.

Adolescents at-risk are bothered about their future in many areas. While normative adolescents are busy with the question of their future education and its influence on their social status, students at risk are bothered on topics of family, livelihood, health, and social relationships. Education and studies figure less in their future plans. They are characterized by difficulties with adjustment to their expected future (Suleiman-Aidan, 2012). This

tracking has influence on the level of future aspirations, such as aspirations for higher studies, and since most of them are forced to cope with an accelerated and intensive process for adult life, they are found at a higher risk of developmental disruptions during the period of the transition to adulthood (Stein, 2006). Their perception of the scholastic experience as a failure for them influences the motivation to close scholastic gaps in the future, even when this may constitute for them a large absence in the job market. These findings are significant also in light of the fact that the acquisition of an education constitutes an important component in the success during the period of transition to adulthood since it constitutes an opportunity for the graduates¹² of the placement for proper and normative integration in society and the increase of the possibilities for their advancement for social mobility (Gershtanman-Shlaf & Lazar, 2006).

3.2 Tracking – The Relationship with Situations of Risk

Good education systems around the world aspire for the student to receive the education necessary to compensate from the student's background. These systems act to constantly improve the pedagogy and teaching. However, the need arises to develop pedagogy that will suit the rules of the game of the new economics and to provide an answer to the following question. What will help the student attain a respectable job? This question is critical when referring to students at-risk (Mourshed & Barber, 2007).

Considerable importance is attributed to the discussion of the question how to organize the learning frameworks in such a way as to ensure quality teaching for all the students, while providing an answer for the students who are different from one another in their learning ability. Do separations and classifications according to ability create or intensify the risk for these students? Is the collection together of students on the basis of similar characteristics, whether as a class (tracking) or as a group of learning for a certain subject (grouping), supposed to bring about the realization of the ability of every student? The presumption of dividing the students according to needs is problematic, since in the same grouping there will always be students with different needs and different styles of learning, so that the assumption that the teacher can teach in a way that will suit all the students in the class is not necessarily valid.

Reality shows that for the most part students do not realize their ability because of the division into groups. The extensive literature in the field is filled with evidence indicating significant differences between groups in the same school in terms of the quality of the instruction and even the degree of the achievement of the objectives determined for students. The balance is tilted in favor of the groups on the higher levels (Oakes, 2005). This issue has additional aspects, which are not academic but nevertheless influence the student's academic profile in matters such as self-image, sense of belonging, satisfaction, challenge, and motivation and even define them as students at risk (Hadar-Packer, 2013). Oakes (2005) maintains that the use of tracking and groupings reflects social norms that connect between the students' affiliation to a certain grouping or class and hypotheses and assumptions regarding the future direction of these students. Discrimination is always at the basis of the tracking, even if it is well camouflaged (Hadar-Packer, 2013).

It is possible to distinguish the replication of the mechanism of separation in the education system as well, a fact that explains the existence of a separate department in the Ministry of Education for children and youths at risk. This department is responsible for the classes into which students from regular education were tracked, and it is separated from regular education. The main objective of the department is phrased as a social mission of primary importance in the reduction of gaps for the population of students at the edge of the continuum, with the goal of building a profound sense of belonging to society in Israel and a sense of high self-efficacy. When this task is not achieved, the practice of tracking continues. Another department, called Youth Promotion, is intended for disconnected youths aged twelve to nineteen who dropped out of the education system and are not placed in any formal educational framework. The main objectives of these departments are different from the objectives of regular education, camouflaged by the consideration for and understanding of the needs of these students (Cohen-Navot, et al., 2001).

Dropping out is a risk factor that may threaten sharply the student's future. It is very difficult to bring back to the educational framework a student who has dropped out and left the school, a fact that raises wonderings and questions about the treatment of their problems for which they may drop out. Lezzotte (2001) maintains that these findings

emphasize the school activity. In her opinion, an answer to the difference of the students is essential for making the school more effective.

The sociologist and educational policy expert Gamoran presents a number of findings and main recommendations that arise from his research works on the topic of grouping and tracking in the school (Gamoran, 2009, 2011). His argument is that sociological conditions outside of the school are the reason for the classification of students according to test scores. In essence, the tracking and grouping are classification according to origin and social-economic positioning. In the higher groupings and the prestigious learning tracks, it is common to find over-representation of students from a high social-economic status and from populations with a social advantage, while in the low groupings there is over-representation of students from a low social-economic situation and from weak populations.

Another finding relates to classifying students according to learning ability, whether by grouping or by tracking, the gap between the different levels of achievement tends to broaden over time and to continue to exist (Gamoran, 2009). Classes into which students are tracked are characterized by unequal learning conditions. The teachers who are more experienced and better trained are for the most part placed in the higher level groupings and trackings, the material learned in these tracks and groupings is more challenging, and the emphasis on discussion and interaction between the students is greater.

This phenomenon is called in the literature stratification, and it means the unequal distribution of status, which causes the unequal allocation of resources (Tal & Fresko, 2014). The division of students into groupings according to ability causes more serious inequality as it is more 'rigid' and sweeping (for instance, in the case of tracking), when the students learn separately all the subjects or when it begins at young ages (Gamoran & Weinstein, 1998).

The researchers indicate gaps between the idealization of heterogeneous teaching as a 'slogan' of equality of opportunities and the implementation in reality of this ideal. It was found that in the schools the standards are reduced in the classes where weak students were placed. The teaching in these classes is based on low order thinking and on a poorer

curriculum (Gamoran & Weinstein, 1998). Additional findings indicate that among weak students whose teachers emphasized in their teaching the inculcation of high order thinking skills there was an improvement in the achievements similar to that of their classmates with the high achievements and in certain cases this improvement was greater. They assert that it is important to enable students as much choice as possible, with the help of the staff, of the level in which they are interested to learn, and also to allow mobility between the groupings as needed. Such a model can allow the existence of different groupings (Zohar & Dori, 2003).

Those who obligate the division into groups by ability maintain that homogenous groups of students enable the implementation of focused curriculum and a pace of learning that maximizes the learning of most students in the group. The opponents are concerned that students from the low groupings will suffer from systematic and continuous harm to their learning achievements since the learning environment does not allow the development of their abilities in a way similar to the learning environment in which the students from the strong groupings learn. In essence, the opponents object to the inequality innate in the division into groupings and even call the tracking the glass ceiling that does not change (Razer, Mittleberg, & Ayalon, 2017).

However, despite what appears to be a legitimate argument or an appropriate goal, the division of students according to ability perpetuates the inequality inherent in this practice, which derives from the fact that the students who learn in the strong groups tend to strengthen their abilities and to increase the gaps in relation to the students who learn in the low groups. When the seeds of inequality are sown in such early stages of life, they have implications also on inequality in the adult lives of the students and in essence on the structures and patterns of general inequality in society and on the preservation of their status at risk (Gamoran, 2011).

The schools employ a variety of names that themselves conceal accepted contents that were 'wrapped' in a tempting marketing package, as a strategy for the presentation of the school in an impressive way to its students and to its community. The school curriculum is the main channel through which education systems fill their main mission, which is the

inculcation of knowledge and membership. Therefore, through the preservation of its structure and the contents instilled in it, which are perceived as the necessary nucleus of cultural knowledge (basic skills, cognitive abilities, shared values), the young people are prepared for the roles of adults in society and in the job market (Kalinov, 2014).

The phenomena in the context of inequality that may derive from the teaching in the groupings characterize the situation in both the classes of the middle schools and the high schools in Israel. The argument is that in Israel of 2010 there is economic, social, and cultural failure since 30% of its young people are 'at-risk', a result for which the State and society are responsible. When a child and a youth are defined as 'at-risk' in human terms they are marked. If there are many like this, then the failure is not of the individuals and the families. Alongside the inequality towards these distinct youths, there is also harm in terms of the social benefit. Youths at-risk become a burden on the institutions of society. They will detract from the work force required in an era of global competition. The paradox is that society and the economy are dependent on the quality of education given to the young people. Social-economic mobility in modern society depends primarily on education, and this is denied to them at an early stage in their life. Therefore, children and youth at-risk will later on give birth to 'children and youth at-risk', who will in turn give birth to 'children and youth at-risk', and it appears that this trend is a part of the continuous social structure (Zubeida, 2010).

As a part of the care of youths at risk, in the year 2007 there was an amendment to the Compulsory Education Law, which provides free compulsory education until the twelfth grade, from the perception and need to address the problem of dropping out. These students, who for the most part were not absorbed in the alternative educational frameworks, therefore had the potential to become delinquent and to constitute an economic burden on the country (Ministry of Education, Administration of Society and Youth, 2008). However, they did not change or adjust programs for these students. Thus, instead of the tracking and exclusion that they experienced outside of the education system they experience tracking and exclusion inside the system (Motola, Mittleberg, & Razer, 2014).

Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison (2006) found that most of the dropouts from the school are well aware of the importance of education for their future, and most of them dropped out when they had but two years to complete the studies. In their research study, the dropouts indicated five primary factors of the dropping out: failure in the studies, few borders, friendship with people who are not interested in the studies, boredom, and lack of understanding and absence of involvement and interest in the studies, in the classes where they were placed and learned. Children at-risk disrupt the prestige of the school and endanger the data of success on the high school matriculation certificates and the percentage of those eligible for the high school matriculation certificate. Therefore, schools are not interested in them (another reason for their tracking and their remaining in the tracked classes). Researchers (Motola, Mittleberg, & Razer, 2014) found that teachers who work with youths at-risk do not enjoy prestige or value and their work for the most part is not suited to their needs. Even after the tracking, the students encounter teachers whose perception is segregative and meritocratic and who argue that the achievements are the students' responsibility and a reflection of his abilities. One of the frequent outcomes of the division into groupings is the determination of a reduced curriculum in the weak groupings and the setting of low expectations for their students.

The argument of the researchers is that so as to bring students from a weak social-economic background to high academic achievements, the change that is required from the school is a change in the paradigms that engage in issues of social exclusion and inclusion, from which it is necessary to derive a change in the professional practice that will fundamentally take into account aspects of exclusion and inclusion. Primarily they argue for the structural change of the school that will reduce to the greatest possible extent tracking and separation that are mainly internal exclusion. Their experience in the educational field indicates that the effective ways of management at the level of the authority and at the level of the school can change the equation of the 'fate' that links between social and economic capital with which the students come to the schools and their achievements (Razer, Mittleberg, & Ayalon, 2017; Razer, Warshevsky, & Bar-Sadeh, 2011).

Scholastic achievements grant a social value. Tests and standards are a mechanism of replication that creates the social bell curve. According to these tests and standards, children are classified to successful schools, or in the school they are classified into classes at high levels. Competition between and in the schools over achievements and grades will, like always, keep the low classes in the schools weak and those with means in schools for excellent students, most of which are private. These tests facilitate the selection so that not all of them will reach higher education. In the past, they attributed the facts to separatist and racist approaches. Today we are told that the world is no longer like this and in essence the young people who suffer from rejection, exclusion, and lack of value are sent to schools and receive an opportunity and fail themselves. The problem is with them. They are lazy, they don't know anything, and apparently they are also not talented. The situation is their fault. The school provides for them opportunities but they in their failing behavior do not accept them. Then they feel lack of value since they truly lack in value, and thus the feeling becomes knowledge (Lampert, 2013).

Karnieli (2004) confirms in an ethnographic longitudinal research the existence of distinct scholastic and social patterns between the two groups, youths in a well-established and well-off community. The quality youth was defined according to the level of his scholastic achievements, as was also the inferior youth. Alienation, hatred, lack of tolerance, and violence, which were characteristics of the intergenerational system of relations, were duplicated into the school in the community. According to the research, scholastic and social patterns in the school were differentiated according to the two populations. The approach of the teachers towards them was different. The education system had a main role in the creation of the separation and in its institutionalization. The teachers solve problems by distancing students as much as possible. The graduates note that when students were sent to low classes, it appeared natural and correct to them, even when they did not feel they belonged. The researcher tells that even when she met the children of the distanced students twenty years later, they were a distinct group. The decisions about the fate of the students were arbitrary and unilateral. The system did not allow choice or partnership of the learner regarding his studies in the school. Even when the student initiated and sought to advance and to take the high school matriculation

examination in a subject in which he was successful, the organization caused difficulties and in actuality even fought him, with emphasis on the loss and not the gain.

The open message of the teachers and the principal presents a situation in which he who succeeds will be promoted. However, the implicit message shows that there is no true intention behind the declaration and that the school is not really prepared for the possibilities of the promotion and thus keeps these students on the side. Some even argued that teachers made it difficult for the students and thus strengthen the learners' isolation and their low image (Elimelech, 2004). The difficulties that the school places before the students in these classes and the attitude of the teachers towards them encouraged the students to be passive and unmotivated in the studies. Thus, students whose self-image was low anyway experience again humiliation and failure.

In the school there was a dual message: an explicit message according to which the school is comprehensive and is intended for the entire variety of the population of the students and in contrast an implicit message that the integration is secondary in its importance and the academic achievement are the objective and the resources are directed towards it. The findings show that the implicit message is what manages the school, including the students and the teachers. The students are all aware of it. The school's attitude towards a wide range of topics and problems occurs accordingly and the students absorb and internalize this. The message of principals to the teachers in the tracked classes that they are 'babysitters' is an example of this. The message is to keep the students quiet, so that they don't make unnecessary noise and to shift the students' difficulties to outside factors (psychologists, welfare, etc.). The principal and the teachers do not see themselves as responsible to directly handle the students' difficulties and the social tensions in the school (Karnieli, 2004).

Boaler (2008) conducted a number of research studies in the topic of the teaching in the groupings in mathematics. Her conclusion is that the teaching in the groupings was less adjusted to the individual's needs than the teaching in a heterogeneous class and limited the weak students' chances for high education. The researcher found that the success of the heterogeneous teaching in the mathematics classes depends on the teachers'

profound commitment to equality, use of innovative curriculum, and nontraditional teaching methods that emphasize thinking and discussion and the setting of high academic standards for all the students. The conclusion of Linchevski and Kutscher (1998) was that it is the heterogeneous classes that push the average and weak students to realize their level.

3.3 Tracking- Influence on the Motivation and Self-Efficacy

Empirical findings indicate that the reinforcement of the personality resources of adolescents who are found in the stage of development and definition of the self-identity and training for autonomy can contribute to the reinforcement of the young people's ability to cope with personal and social difficulties and the reduction of the feeling of alienation, which constitutes one of the factors of social marginality (Yucht, 2002). Youths who grow up in situations of distress develop a personality characterized by indications of a low threshold of frustration, impulsiveness, deficient self-control, low verbal level, feelings of alienation and lack of social belonging, and low level of aspirations regarding the future and the possibility of social mobility. Emotions of continuing lack of powerlessness and alienation were found to be important factors in the adolescents' difficulties with adjustment to the laws accepted in society, deficiencies in their functioning in the educational-scholastic functioning, and difficulties with self-restraint of aggressive behaviors and responses (Sohlberg, 1994).

Boudon (1974, in Bulle, 2009) links dropping out with tracking. He addresses the dropping out of students as an expected phenomenon among the members of the lower class and maintains that the placement into the low tracks (short term) because of the negative labeling harms both the scholastic motivation and the self-image. The low groupings that precede the tracking classes in the middle schools are the initial seeds of the disconnection and dropping out from the school and a product of the institutional segregation. Cohen (1967) holds that their negative behavior and in their referral to the deviation that is characterized by negativism and lack of benefit, they are an expression of the frustration and protest (configuration-response) towards society that caused them to internalize the value of education and the achievement success in the school but in actuality did not help them realize it.

There is a relationship also between the placement of students into tracks and meritocratic principles to which the system is intended. These principles cannot be fulfilled for children at-risk since most of them are not aware of their abilities and capacities, and certainly not the effort they are capable of. The classifying school builds for the student a perception that this is what he is capable of and that in the regular school he will not succeed. The responsibility is that of the student. The arguments of educators strengthen the lack of ability and efficacy with the argument that the tracking is the best possibility for them (Sabirsky, 1990). Lampert (2013) adds that teachers ask from the students to thank them that they were allowed to remain in the framework. He calls this abusiveness and the denial of education to the students. A perception is built in these students' mind that the regular school is not for them. This perception denies them the feeling of equality and the advancement in society.

Teachers maintain that students in the tracked classes refer to their self-image as low. This low self-image is characterized by emotions of inferiority and rejection. Teachers also address the scholastic difficulties of these students and the low motivation that characterizes them and their attitude to the studies. This approach focuses the teachers' attitude towards these students. They are skeptical about their abilities and they do not allow them to choose since they do not rely on them. They compare them to the other classes in terms of the ability and the motivation and thus reduce their value and ability. Many teachers are even angry because of the fact that they need to teach in these classes and they feel that their image is harmed by this. Regarding these students' social situation, teachers act in comparison to the group of established students. They argue that the tracked students do not connect with the rest of the children, they are always in gangs, and they create for themselves power groups. These students experience a split. They maintain that nobody listens to them in the school and that they feel bad in it. Outside of the school, they can say that they learn in a reputable school (Blank, Shavit, & Yaish, 2015).

A number of researchers maintain that regardless of the student's level of performance, the placement in the low groupings conveys to them the message that their abilities are lower than those of others (Oakes, 2005). Students in the low grouping may suffer from the loss of social status and develop low motivation and negative approaches

to the school (Van Houtte, 2005). The placement in the low grouping creates a circle of low negative expectations, which lead to a low self-image and to the failure that accompanies them in their adult lives (Teller, 2003).

It was further found that the most significant influence on the achievements in the studies is related to the student's motivation (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993). Different motivational models emphasize specific beliefs and emotions that were found to promote or inhibit achievements. These include the belief in the self-efficacy, internal attributions to success, internal motivation supported by happiness in the learning process, identification with the learned material, and determination of goals for the promotion of achievements and successes instead of goals for the prevention of failures (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

The research study found that children who experience positive emotions more frequently were more involved in the learning process, invested more time and effort in the learning of new material, and were more active in the class, were more curious, and asked more questions relating to the learned material, while children who experience negative emotions more frequently tended to invest less effort in the learning of new material and to be less curious and less active in the class (Reschly, Huebner, Appleton, & Antaramian, 2008).

Research studies emphasize the negative influences of the method of the groupings on the social emotional functioning of the students in the low groupings (Belfi Goos, De Fraine, & Van Damme, 2012). The names of unique programs for students in tracking indicate the stigma and influence exerted on the students. There is the OMETZ class (the word, which means courage in Hebrew, is an acronym in Hebrew standing for belief in the self, willingness to put forth effort, and expecting achievements courage). According to the rationale of the program, these students experienced during all the years of their lives in the school a continuous feeling of failure and they cannot extract themselves from the vicious circle that leads to their dropping out. Their expectations of themselves and the expectations of the factors around them are low, in all that pertains to their scholastic achievements, and this influences directly their self-image and their sense of efficacy to integrate socially in the future (Tetter, 2002). These students are placed during their studies

in the middle school at the lowest grouping levels in High school. This placement broadens the scholastic gap between them and the other students. As a result of the scholastic gaps created in the middle schools, they are placed in the low classes and tracks. The decisive majority of these students do not achieve a full high school matriculation certificate. Most of this population, both the students and their parents, generally comes from a weak socio-economic stratum (Hadar-Packer, 2013).

Two contradictory psychological processes are involved in the influence of the groupings on the students' academic self-perception: the comparison between the groups and the comparison in the groups. It was found that the students of the low groupings experience naturally negative emotions after the division into the groupings and these influence their academic motivation (Belfi et al., 2012). The low groupings suffer from a low image. The emotional implications of this situation may have a negative influence on the learners' achievements. In different tracks there is a different learning climate that influences differentially the achievements in the tracks. In the academic track there is a positive climate that derives from the teachers' attitude, from the students' high feeling of commitment (Ziv, 2009).

Mental wellbeing in the school is a concept that defines on the basis of different parameters the extent to which the student feels good in the school, likes the school, is satisfied with different aspects in it (teachers, the peer group, the climate), feels confidence and protection, and lacks fear (Belfi et al., 2012). In general, emotional mental wellbeing has influence on the educational achievements, and it was found that it is related to positive aspects of academic motivation. Teacher behaviors that support autonomy, the feeling of efficacy, and the need for a relationship that promotes internal motivation to learn, positive emotions, and achievements thus facilitate the students' mental wellbeing (Zeidner, 2010).

To succeed in scholastic terms, students need abilities to effectively cope with pressure, academic load, and different academic difficulties (Martin, 2008). Resilience is a process of successful adjustment to difficult or threatening situations (Howard & Johnson, 2000). Academic resilience is defined as the ability to persevere and to be positive and adaptive (Kennedy & Bennett, 2006). Academic resilience is positively related to the love

of the school, participation in the lessons, and preparation of the homework, as well as to self-efficacy, perseverance, and motivation (Martin & Marsh, 2006). Research studies indicate that the children's social-emotional situation and achievements in their studies influence one another and are mutually influenced and that cognitive differences are not answered by grouping and tracking (Hallinan, 1994).

Much evidence in the world that the programs that were developed for the improvement of the students' social-emotional situation in the school lead to an improvement not only in these aspects but also in the scholastic achievements. These programs represent the perception of the best psychology, which in addition to the inculcation of knowledge and disciplinary skills attributes considerable importance to the formation of a learning environment that promotes hope and motivation for teachers and students (Ziv, 2009). It was found, for example, that emotional interventions may lead to an improvement in the relationships between the students and their scholastic achievements (Yeager & Walton, 2011). Researchers believe that the improvement in the students' achievements is created by the change of the students' subjective experience in the school – the way in which they think and feel in the school and the manner in which they perceive the school, the class, and themselves. Therefore, different intervention programs propose ways to promote the emotional, social, and academic development through the establishment of a sense of self-worth, the development of supportive relations, and the creation of a secure place in the group (Martin, 2008; Martin & Dowson, 2009). When the school ignores basic human needs of children and adults, when for a long period of time the students in adolescence do not have a significant figure who will give them attention, when there is no reference to their opinions and needs, when the students feel they are objects of unilateral actions, they become unsuccessful and alienated and their chances of dropping out from the school increase. The lack of commitment to the school, the lack of motivation to obtain achievements, the failure in the school, and the poor achievements in the studies are risk factors among children, and they increase the chances to develop risk behaviors (Blank, Shavit, & Yaish, 2015).

3.4 Tracking- Influence on the Self-Worth and on Belonging

In recent decades, the theoretical literature discussing the school's ability to influence children who live in an environment of high risk has flourished (Moore, 2018; Razer, Warshevsky, & Bar-Sadeh, 2011). In the schools where there are teachers who constitute a positive model of imitation and who give support and attention, the students obtain good results of success in the studies. The schools that cultivate a high self-esteem and that promote social and scholastic success reduce the chances of emotional and behavioral disorders among the students. The student's functioning in the school is related to his sense of belonging and to his relations with the peer group and the teachers. When the student perceives the school environment as supportive and concerned about him, there are positive impacts both on his functioning in the school and on his positive functioning in the future (Moore, 2018). Rosenthal (2003) found that students who drop out have low self-esteem, low self-image, low sense of worth, problems with interpersonal communication, impulsive behavior, difficulty with self-control, and higher attention disorders.

A significant relationship was found between youths who are characterized by a sense of social alienation and the youths' maladjusted functioning in the school. Moreover, youths who reported a high feeling of alienation were absent from the school more than youths who did not feel a high sense of alienation (Cohen-Navot, Allenbogen-Frankovitz, & Reinfeld, 2001).

One of the main factors of distress is the school itself. The students at-risk experience the school as a difficult place where there is a war for survival, a place that represents pain, powerlessness, and feelings of frustration, fear, and disappointment (Avidan, Lampert, & Amit, 2005). The schools have difficulties that limit the ability of the adults who work with them to take responsibility and to act against the students' distresses. The researchers' assumption is that the roots of the difficulty of the adults who engage in education lie deep in the political, social, and capitalistic structure of industrial democracy. In this sense, the school teachers, like the children, are denied the possibility of realizing a meaningful human relationship. Children at-risk are children who are found in the

definition of 'distress', as a concept that notes a private experience but also a social phenomenon. Social distress is a shared and concrete experience for a social class. Their people express feelings such as lack of value, lack of benefit, lack of ability to act for change, alienation, and detachment. In this sense, the distress is the specific distress of the child who lacks a sense of value and who is depressed and humiliated, and the distress is concrete for this social status (Avidan, Lampert, & Amit, 2005).

The feeling of belonging in the school helps the students adopt for themselves the beliefs and values they need. When students are concerned about the belonging and something goes wrong in this context, for example, when a student feels that he is subject to criticism, abandoned, or not appreciated, then he experiences this as proof that he does not belong. This may increase the pressure and harm the student's motivation and the investment in the studies over time (Yeager et al., 2013).

Research studies that examine what happens to students who were tracked when they grew up and are in their forties indicate that the influence on their personal identity and the stigma from their years in the school accompany their lives in actuality and influence their future and they do not feel belonging to society and their personal efficacy is low (Einat & Einat, 2006; Kaine, 2013). Researchers explain that in different tracks there is a different learning climate, which differentially influences the achievements. In the academic track, there is a positive climate that derives from the teachers' attitude, the students' high sense of commitment, and so on. In essence, the organizational differentiation, which is expressed in tracking, gives a preferred opportunity for the members of the middle-upper class, who are set in the high track. There is a relationship between the track where they learn and the future social belonging.

The researchers Einat and Einat (2006) examined the relationship between learning disabilities and delinquency. They report that the school system faces real difficulties in the encounter with learning disabled students. The teachers' responses to their own situation of failure in this coping were characterized by embarrassment and tiredness, anger, frustration, and despair, which influenced the student's self-image. The respondents reported lack of caring and a feeling of abandonment, which largely shaped the course of

their lives. This is prominent inferiority relative to the peer group and absence of cognitive or emotional support, to the real harm in the emotional field. The abandonment was accompanied by scholastic failure already from the beginning of their studies in the elementary school, failure that was expressed in the frequent transitions from one educational institution to another. In addition, this research study emphasizes that the repeated shifts from one school to another school were undertaken without clarification of its reasons and purposes and without any explanation about the rehabilitating or supportive role of the next scholastic framework. The interviewees in the research study describe the process of the transfer from one framework to another framework with passive expressions “they tossed me out”, “they placed me”. Another main motif in this research study is the lack of chance. The experiences of lack of success in the school became a feeling of expected and immutable fate in life.

In another research study (Einat, 2001), graduates who were learning disabled students were interviewed about their transition to the middle school and then to the high school. The participants describe the middle school as a trauma after the elementary school. Primarily they note the groupings, the classification, and the sorting. The respondents note that to move from a low grouping to a higher one is an impossible task. The interviewees describe that they felt small and unintelligent. They describe their struggle to move to the ‘high’ class, since the people who were better regarded were there. In the school they felt like a number. Most of the time, they did not have the possibility of explaining how they felt. Teachers insulted them in front of all the children and caused them pain. Their main feeling towards the school was hatred. They felt like they were prisoners. Most of the respondents indicated the harm to their self-image. They address the school system as lacking all sensitivity about what they underwent. The school set conditions: “If you do not meet the requirements by the end of the year, then you cannot be here or you will go down a grouping.” The explanation they received was adjustment difficulties. The system did not attempt to understand or help. From a social perspective, the system let them feel different from others, “screwed up”. Others explained that in the high school they preferred to pull a mask over the pain. They pretended to be indifferent, cynical, and crude, but inside they were tortured. Their teachers always gave up first. From their perspective, the students should only not interfere with their teaching.

Explanations of the research findings can be found also in the perception of Akerlof and Kranton (2010), leading economists of the economy of the identity. The assumption of identity economics holds that the student's motivation in the stages of elementary and high school education is the choice of the identity group to which he will belong and this strengthens his self-image and his efforts in the studies. Their research study explains that students are divided into three identity groups: leader, scholar, and 'burnt-out', when the last group gives up a defined identity group. Every group has an ideal stereotypic description, which includes outside indications – clothing, speech. The 'burnout' group gives up the aspiration for a high social image and do not have a methodical preference for a scholastic effort or the cultivation of social relations. A student decides whether to belong to the category proposed by the school, if he has a chance of achieving a high status in it. Accordingly, his effort will be determined. If the school ideal contradicts the ideal of the student's environment and if his chances of success in meeting the norms of the school are low, he will choose low effort and sometimes even active resistance and disruption of the school action. A weak child in a class of weak children where there are many disruptions, weak motivation, low efficacy and self-image, receives labels of 'I am screwed up, nothing will help' or "nothing will ever come of you". This is the story of a system that has given up ahead of time on the students called 'burnt-out' (Lampert, 2013).

Seligman (2011) developed a model of the observation of the positive psychology of wellbeing. The possibilities of moving during learning between the present (the practical and the concrete learning) and the future (the individual's ability to see himself learning and advancing, obtaining achievements, succeeding in developing meanings for his life, developing and building objectives, hope, and optimism) may create a sense of self-worth that includes experiences that develop in the child the feeling that he is necessary and contributes significantly to the environment and expressing his abilities. The feeling of self-worth generates mental wellbeing, and its presence positively influences the children's normal development while the absence of wellbeing causes situations of risk (Aloni, 2005; Zalka, 2015). The concept of emotional resilience among children links between the social-economic position and achievements in the studies, as expressed by Yisraelshevili (2013), who discusses the importance of such resilience already in the early stages of life. A person who is gifted with emotional resilience and who has the resources required for the

cultivation of resilience has immeasurably better chances of succeeding in the studies in contrast to a person who has not developed such emotional resilience.

Teacher-student relations, in their different dimensions, are essential to the children's best adjustment to the school framework (Jini, Sagi-Shwartz, Mark, & Aviezer, 2014). Moore (2018) emphasizes that the teacher-student relationships influence the students' emotional, social, and academic development and are expressed in their grades. She maintains that from their first day in the school young children rely on the relationship with the teacher, on her understanding and support so that she will allow them to fulfill their abilities. These relationships help them function better since they know that if they encounter difficulty or frustration, they can rely on the teacher to identify it and respond effectively (Moore, 2018).

Research studies indicate that children at-risk who maintain significant interactions with significant adults in the school develop resilience in the school framework and improve their behavior and their scholastic achievements (Mark, 2007). Positive relations between the teacher and the student increase the student's self-confidence and support his learning, since they enable the student to use the teacher as a learning resource. Children who established positive system of relations with the teacher succeeded in the school more than did children who did not succeeded in establishing such a system of relations. The success of these students was expressed in the scholastic achievements and in behavioral aspects.

The child's perception of himself is influenced by the manner of perception of the significant adults in his life. For children at-risk, the systems of relationships with teachers and their need for the mediation of the adults are critical to the creation of successes. Therefore, relations of conflict or lack of relations between teachers and students can be a factor that increases risk. Research studies have shown that a stronger sense of belonging to the school, expressed in the student's feeling that the teachers exhibit towards him warmth and caring, and a feeling of belonging to the peer group are related positively to the level of academic achievements in the school (Baker et al., 1998).

This feeling is positively related to the students' expectations to succeed (Goodenow, 1993; Skinner & Belmont, 1993) and to positive attitudes towards the school, involvement, participation in learning activities, and investment in learning and negatively related with absences from the school and tardiness coming to the studies. The researchers found that a high feeling of belonging to the school predicted the students' achievements in the school over time. The feeling of belonging is expressed in positive attitudes towards the school and even created motivation to increase the achievements in the studies and appropriate behavior (Trumer, Bar-Zohar, & Kfir, 2007).

3.5 Summary

The literature lacks retrospective research studies, which enable in-depth understanding of the lives of those who were defined in their childhood as children at-risk. The conditions essential to the success of the transition from tracking or grouping to heterogeneous teaching are missing in the education system in Israel. These conditions are a profound commitment to equality, the meticulous adherence to high academic standards, the use of personally tailored differential teaching inside and outside of the class, and the deployment of mechanisms of scholastic and emotional support for different students.

Researchers (Razer, Mittleberg, & Ayalon, 2017) maintain that the primary obstacle to upward mobility in the schools is the mechanism of tracking. In Israel, The tracking itself is a tool of exclusion that diminishes and decreases the students' feeling of effectiveness, a mechanism that strengthens and facilitates the perpetuation of inequality and social exclusion.

If we combine the cumulative result of tracking in the school and the policy that leads to the tracking between and in the schools, we find a rigid system for students who have a weaker starting point in their lives in the school and in the home. Groups according to ability and lack of upwards flexibility or mobility between the tracks are a rigid mechanism that schools maintain and cultivate. Schools make a significant contribution to the creation and perpetuation of socio-economic gaps through tracks in which there is different learning that will not enable the gaps to be closed. Research studies clearly determine that it is not possible to improve the academic performances in the present

structure of tracking according to ability (Razer, Mittleberg, & Ayalon, 2017; Sabirsky & Dagan-Bozaglo, 2011).

In Israel, an educational or public conversation or discussion on this topic is lacking. The system does not focus on the issue of the separation in the schools or on ways of coping with the students' self-efficacy. The schools that maintain that there is no tracking in them, hold selective acceptance of students so that they choose from the start students with higher abilities. Students are tracked to classes and groups. Low ability constitutes the 'glass ceiling' for students who come from a weak background or from risk (Razer, Mittleberg, & Ayalon, 2017). The positioning in a low track makes their low status permanent. The very fact that they are in a weaker group does not allow them to move upwards. Groups according to achievements of ability are deeply rooted in the school culture, even when their influence on the students and on their outcomes and achievements is known to the system.

The education system declares equality and reduction of gaps but in actuality preserves and perpetuates tracking practices and structures that have existed for many years in the system and even finds for them ideological justification. The tracking is a mechanism; it is possible to see its expressions, patterns, and practices, and these are no longer being examined in the school and in the education systems.

Chapter 4. Research Methodology

This chapter addresses the principles, methods of action, rules, and assumptions upon which the research is based. The topic of the research is related to my encounters with the formal education system over the past thirty years, as a teaching worker and a lecturer in a college of education. My primary engagement is with the group of researchers studying exclusion and inequality in the schools and education systems so as to identify the exclusionary mechanisms and inequality towards the students in general and students at-risk in particular from perceptions of inclusion and social equality. Hence, the research study focuses on structures and policies, mechanisms of tracking imprinted and enrooted in the education system, which do not encounter or ignore those who learn in it. I found that the investigation of the of these students is necessary, so as to add additional viewpoints to this discussion. I have a perception on tracking. Tracking is researched in the research literature; there are theories and data that facilitated the development of my outlook and perspective of the topic.

Thomas and Znaniecki (1958) address society as a product of the continuous interaction between the individual awareness and the objective social reality. In their opinion, in the social sciences a change in the social reality is influence of social values and individual approaches that act on them. Individual attitudes towards existing social structures and values serve to explain the appearance of new social values, and social values that act on personal attitudes can explain the appearance of personal attitudes. In the analysis of the experiences and reference of the individual, we attain data and basic facts that are not limited only to this individual's personality, and it is possible to address them as general cases and to use them to determine the rules of social formation. These researchers emphasize that we can use the mass phenomena as material only when we understand and investigate the life history of people who are a part of this phenomenon. The ultimate goal of the social sciences is to resolve the general and the specific in theoretical conclusions with the possible concreteness that addresses the object that these conclusions talk about. Since the social life is concrete only when taken from the participant's individual life at the basis of social events, the personal factor is a formative factor for every social occurrence. This perception reinforces the necessity for this

research, which addresses the students who are being tracked, their experiences in the school, and their initial years of studies as information relevant to research in education.

Social science aspires to reach in actuality human experiences. These constitute the full active social reality under every formal organization of social institutions (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1958). We do not have the possibility of learning the history of all people who participate in a certain social event, and therefore the research limits itself, like every scientist in nature, to a number of representative cases, the investigation of which will yield as many results as possible. The choice of the cases, according to these researchers, is easy, since the diversity that people present is always great.

A social phenomenon tells the story of society. The education system is a microcosm of society. It is important to clarify who the tracking benefits, how it is expressed in society, and how it influences the educational field. An education institution is a natural arena of a system of life in which there exists a world full of occurrences. It is a system that builds in it a unique culture that includes values, roles, patterns, behaviors, and so on. To better understand the conditions needed for the optimal existence of an education system, it is important to research and to learn it according to its culture and unique characteristics. The education system does not operate as an independent organization disconnected from the environment and society.

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the value of social unity has been one of the values examined in society. It appears that every student knows that unity exists in rituals and perhaps in special days in the school but does not exactly exist in life. Every student knows the division into social groups, into sub-groups, into genders, into groupings and knows from childhood the social, class-based, ethnic, community, religious, and gender logic that explains why those are good and those are better and why others are not at all here, why the future of those tracked is different, why those are unofficially isolated or shunned, and what happens to the many students who are called “at-risk” or “children on the edge”¹⁶. It is difficult to whitewash these differences and the constant failure and

¹⁶ These are children who are characterized by impulsive externalized behavior and a low threshold of frustration. Their behavior is externalized. These are children who tend to harm themselves or their environment.

the ability of some students to cope better. The conversations of homeroom teachers about the need to be patient towards the “other” are insufficient. Acceptance tests, personal interviews, high tuition, acceptance to prestigious programs – these are only some of the methods that enable the schools to choose their best students. In every school there are methods that channel weaker students to schools or classes that are weaker academically and socially. The Ministry of Education prohibits methods of classification but looks the other way when they are deployed and even provides financial incentive for schools to have a high percentage of students taking the high school matriculation certificate examinations (Hadar Packer, 2013). We are in a reality in which many members of Israeli society prefer the family and personal economic interest over the collective interest, from the understanding that there is nobody to take care of us (Ben Porat, 2011; Sabirsky, 2006).

Conversely, there are slogans about equality and unity and fairness. One is the declaration about equality or inclusion in society and primarily in the education system. It appears that we pass over social problems and asking the education system to educate for unity: if we only insert into the curricula chapters or values related to unity, then the students will internalize that this is a solid basis and so it will be. However, every child knows well the complex reality and knows that the model of behavior presented by the street or by society to him reflects other values, opposite to the educational values. When we examine in the education system how it behaves with the students, then we find the same separating bases.

This research study seeks to bring up the need and importance of the perceptions and thinking of the students themselves, from the desire to attempt to cope professionally with contradictions and complexities. Education has the role to perform the work that society cannot. There is no way to do this other than to learn the reality and the complexities and to listen further to the voices of the learners themselves. Hence, an environment is necessary in which it is possible to examine new ideas out of in-depth study, learning, critical and methodical examination, strategic thinking, and discussion of new and contradicting ideas and exposure to profound ideas. The research knowledge about the perceptions of students in general and their perceptions in the context of their tracking and resultant exclusion is sparse.

The research looks at ourselves and our daily routines as if we see ourselves from the outside, and this so as to look at them with the adoption of different perspectives in the examination of self-evident phenomena and behaviors in society and in education. More personal phenomena among individuals reflect broader social issues, and through them it is possible to predict different aspects in society. Social life is not random; rather there are methodical patterns of behavior. The following up after the functioning of society enables the prediction and the explanation of behaviors and patterns.

Korczak (1976) spoke about the first and inalienable right of the student to express in public his thoughts and to take an active role in the considerations and decisions made about him. In his opinion, when we raise a child with trust and respect, the child will give trust and there will be fewer riddles and mistakes.

Therefore, the objective of the present research study is to open a window into the lives of students and to understand them. The research seeks to clarify and reveal the thinking of opinions of adolescent students about the tracking and classifications they experienced in the period of their studies in the school, about their exclusion and the inequality towards them, and how these influenced the way in which they perceive and address what was done and their future. Most of them were tracked already in the elementary schools and in essence experienced tracking in additional ways already in their first years in the school. In addition, the research addresses the influences of tracking on their motivation and self-efficacy. A main argument is that the tracking excludes and harms the emotional regulation in efficacy and motivation and the self-value of the students – through social structuring that begins already at a young age and structures their view of the future, through the perception that this is the best for them (Lampert, 2013; Razer, Mittleberg, & Ayalon, 2017).

The “voice of the students” is a concept coined by researchers (Fielding,2007), who found how this concept helped better understand the thoughts of students at all ages. **GOOD** In their opinion, the investigation of what acts on the students’ hearts and minds will yield unique information, since generally the student’s side is not represented in the system and is not found in research but is examined in frameworks of effective questions about

achievements and learning skills. Schultz (2008) extended the research on the students' voice, teaching teachers to ask their students questions that are not related to the academic field, questions on their emotions and thoughts. As a researcher, I believe that the students' voice, thinking, and feelings are a main instrument in the work and in the building of knowledge for educators who are interested in forming a perception of education and ways of teaching in their work in the school. It is important to teach the way in which students express their thinking, needs, and difficulties. Hearing their voice is even more critical when addressing children at-risk who are not at all accustomed to conversation and are not accustomed to being active about themselves.

The topic indicates difficult data, imprecisions, contradictions, and gaps. It includes the tension between the individual and society. Hence, there is the importance of the investigation of relevant knowledge, to see and hear the students who are behind the phenomena and the data. Their statements will tell the story of the school, the story of the system, and the reflection of it. Through them it is possible to learn about the school perception and the social perception assimilated in the topic of tracking, exclusion, and inequality. The assumption is that the perception is assimilated and heard through them. It is expressed in statements said, in actions undertaken or not undertaken on them and from them. Their voice reflects the story of the school system as it operates towards the students. The present research study aspires to learn about these students' unique experiences, from their perspective. Social science aspires to reach the actual human experiences, and these constitute the full social reality that is active under the formal organization of the social institutions (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003).

The appropriate research method is the qualitative research method. The rationale for the selection was the desire to examine the reality as it is reflected in the participants' view and according to their subjective outlook. Human experience is a complex research field. This choice is linked to the epistemological framework about youths who are at-risk and are excluded and to its existence in research and everyday discourse. The need for transparency and the voice of this population may be provided by this research study, which presents a description of the research participant's world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The research departs from the field, from the individual, from the student, and seeks to learn

about the phenomenon and the reality from the context of the social phenomena related to the reality of exclusion and social inequality. The research seeks to achieve insights about the meanings that the students give their world and to interpret the reality in its varieties and structures.

Tracking is the representation of social isolation. It is segregation and separation in the guise of integration, exclusion instead of a window of social opportunities, through the education system. It reproduces social constructs instead of compensating for them. The literature, research, and theory indicate a high correlation between constructs of inequality and exclusion in society and exclusionary structures in education in the guise of separations, removals of weak population, ignoring of this population's distresses and needs, with reliance on social and economic logic (Resh & Yechezkel, 2011; Sabirsky, 2004).

The State declares equality as a social and educational value and posits this requirement for the education system but financial aspects motivate exclusionary work patterns (Dahan & Yonah, 2005; Nir, 2012). But the equality in terms of access to education or choice of who learns what, where, and why derives from social implications (Ayalon, 2009).

There are research studies on the topic of tracking that examine the perceptions of the teachers. It is known that there are no research studies that address the perceptions and emotions of the students towards the system in which they learn. This research study addresses the approaches that support the tracking and that create inequality and exclusion, so that they focus on the problem on the student. At the center is the student who has experienced tracking and exclusion in the education system. The research seeks to present a picture of the reality as the interviewees experience it, to notice the implications and the necessity for tracking and its expressions, and to pay attention to the students' conceptualization, to the expressions in language, and to what they tell about themselves. The research seeks to examine the fit between the theoretical system of concepts and the system of concepts deriving from the interviews. The hearing of the students' voices will enable their perspective to be brought, and the qualitative methodology is the most suited.

The research method appropriate for the purpose of the research related to the field of the social sciences is the qualitative research method that is based on an interpretative method that enables to refer to the student, the research participant, as the subject, to understand him regarding equality, exclusion, and tracking – expressions that characterize Israeli society. Qualitative research strives to understand subjective meanings of the individual's life in social contexts, from the recognition that there is no one reality that the research addresses. There are many realities that are social structures (Bar Shalom, 2011). The objective of this research study, which is qualitative, is the documentation and the attempt to understand the unique and subjective world of the research respondent. This is a research intended to describe and document a given situation without intervening in it.

In qualitative research the researcher's role is to research the phenomenon through the penetration into the everyday world of the research participants, to find meaning, or to interpret the phenomena in terms that people use (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The basic assumption of the qualitative paradigm holds that social reality is a product of interpretative processes influenced by personal and personality constructs and by social constructs, such as gender, class, and nationality, by in-depth constructs of language, and by cultural constructs. The research addresses the exposure of meanings and interpretation given to the reality by people regarding these constructs. Qualitative researchers themselves are interpreters of the reality, and their interpretations are derived from the different contexts in which they operate. Hence, the research addresses the subjective encounter between the different realities of the people participating in the research, the researcher and the research respondents (Hazan, 2001).

Qualitative research is more open and flexible. It is subject all the time to changes, until the researcher feels that the research question has been answered. The methodological choice is an intelligent choice (Kassan & Krumer-Nevo, 2010). Qualitative research is the research of people, and as such it addresses human experiences and entails sensitive and intimate situations that it is necessary to be aware of and to take into account. The research approach, which is interested in presenting the participants' voice, must focus the emotions towards them and the researcher's boundaries of responsibility towards his research participants (Josselson, 2004). The social context has considerable importance, and the

interpretation of the qualitative data must be performed in this context by a researcher who knows the society and culture upon which the research is performed.

The qualitative paradigm presents the reality as the participants' subjective perception. Qualitative research examines in a holistic manner the researched phenomenon. It investigates the phenomenon in its entirety and in its context. It attributes importance to the personal meaning of the things said by the research participants and searches for the interpretation that they give to their experiences (Patton, 1990).

4.1 Research Question

The research question is the declaration that identifies the researched phenomenon and addresses what the research seeks to focus on (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The research question is as follows:

- How does the tracking influence the academic lives, motivation, efficacy, and belonging of youths at-risk?
- What is the significance of the tracking and exclusion for them?

This question attempts to answer the gap in knowledge and research between the requirement for social equality and the reality that includes exclusion and equality towards students in the education system as it is correct to research, from a global perspective that includes social constructs and sociological aspects of the individual, the student. In addition, the question attempts to focus on the understanding of the importance of hearing the students' voice and the desire to learn about the way in which they perceive the track of their learning and its influence on their life in the future. The main questions examine the fields of equality towards students in the school, the perception of students of tracking from their first year in the school, and its reasons according to their perception and how the system facilitates and justifies its constructs. The questions also examine the perceptions and emotions of the students who are tracking about their studies and their future. The education system is a microcosm of wider society. Every educational institution is a natural arena of the system of life in which there exists a world rich in occurrences. This is a system that structures a unique local culture that includes values, division of roles, patterns of learning and behavior, and so on. To understand better the conditions required

for the optimal existence of any education system, it is important to research and learn it according to its culture and unique characteristics, especially since the education system does not act as an independent organization disconnected from the environment (Karnieli, 2008).

4.2 Research Design

The method that was chosen to work on the research objective and research question is the method of the qualitative ethnographic research. Qualitative research engages in society and in the people in society. Its main point and importance are the revelation of the understanding of life from the individual's perspective in the value-oriented and social context. Qualitative research aspires to understand the viewpoint of the audience and the field he researches. The goal is to understand the subjective and personal meanings of people of different phenomena. In qualitative research the approach is inductive; the conclusion is from the individual to the general. The theory is built from the individuals. The idea is to approach the researched field and understand processes in depth in the reality in which they occur.

Qualitative research relies on the collection of empirical knowledge, but it does not strive to prediction and control but to understanding and explanation. It includes diverse research methods, when each type has specific goals, ways of action, limitations, and even tools of assessment. Denzin and Lincoln, (2000) lists types of empirical qualitative research that all have an interpretative emphasis that intends to learn about the researched topic in its natural environment through meanings that the people themselves ascribe to their experiences. In this research, the researcher does not come with an orderly and binding theoretical perspective but with prior theoretical perceptions that constitute a conceptual network that contributes to the empirical outlook. These are not research hypotheses in the accepted sense, but more research assumptions. The research assumptions are phrased in an open and dynamic manner and invite change and focus in all the research stages (Shkedi, 2004).

The social reference is perceived as a product of the ongoing interaction between the individual awareness and the social reality. The human personality is the basis for the

explanation and understanding of the social occurrences. In the analysis of the individual's experiences and references, we reach data and fact that can be used for determining the laws of social formation. We depict our materials for sociological educational analysis from living records of concrete people. The social institution can be understood only if we act to analyze the way in which the organization appears in the personal experience of individuals in a group and in the influence that the organization has on their life (Bar Shalom, 2011).

Ethnography learns from people. This is the attempt to document and understand society. Ethnographic research helps understand complex social phenomenon in different fields. Researchers have begun to use ethnographic instruments for criticism of consumerist Western society that produces frustration and alienation. Peacock (1996) maintains that the main tenet is description and interpretation, learning from people from their experiences and emotions. The subject person's inner world assumes meaning. One of the meaningful changes that occurred in the ethnographic discourse is the focus on the criticism of consumerist Western society that produces frustration and alienation and less social cohesion. Researchers use ethnographic instruments to show in a convincing manner mechanisms of exclusion and reproduction of social power relations in Western society (Bar Shalom, 2011; Karnieli, 2004). The researcher Ogbu (2002) is prominent in this field in his studies of the school. This researcher identified in the schools young people who created for themselves a group, a subculture, which has negative influence over its members. The very belonging to the group detrimentally influenced the motivation and the academic achievements. In Israel, Karnieli (2004) identified a similar phenomenon of unestablished young people who create a subculture against the "established" people who are perceived as not wanting to be in their company and against the school establishment that is identified as not wanting them within its walls. Like Ogbu (2002), Karnieli (2004) concludes that the main failure is that of the education system that is not wise enough to create for those children a sense of belonging and a feeling that the school is "also their place."

Wexler (1992) describes in a research he conducted in three schools how the schools and the children who learn in them create each one according to social positioning

an identity that is commensurate with the belonging to the “caste” and expectations of the low class, the middle class, and the upper class. The researcher found and called this “distinct symbolic economies” in each one of the three schools. These economies are spaces of conversation in which the identities are learned and conveyed by the participants in it.

Ethnography is a research approach according to which it is necessary to write and analyze the social life that has roots both in the sciences and in the humanities. The ethnographic work is based on realistic pragmatic principles of truth, reality, and relevance to activity. A research based on these principles studies the reality of “how things work” in organizations. It reflects a perception that expresses the researcher’s attitude and his research object (Watson, 2011).

The ideological approach in ethnography is the desire to understand the other from unmediated closeness, attention, and slow observation, the entry into the field, the creation of a relationship with people, the choice of informants, the in-depth conversations, and the mapping of the relationships. Ethnography addresses knowing what influences social structures in aspects of policy, ideology, economy, and economic needs through the consideration of the context. The researcher knows the research field and is exposed to what happens in it (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2000).

The researchers (Gille & Oriain, 2002) clarify that as ethnographers we must look at the way in which we cope with global forces. Global forces are the product of social processes, and therefore the focus of the ethnography is these forces, which are examined as products of the flow of people and ideas.

Pole and Morrison (2003) determined that in ethnographic research the focus is on specific impressions for the understanding of the occurrences in specific events. In addition, ethnographic research seeks broad reference, with emphasis on social behavior. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) add the need for an accurate presentation of the musings and interpretation of the respondents and the use of inductive thinking for the purpose of the building of a cultural theory. Ethnographic research is suitable when the interest is to learn about the behavior of a group with a shared culture. The researcher must use

ethnographic instruments with reference to their behavior and the behavior of the participants in the events described in the research. The researcher emphasizes the subjective interpretation that people give the social/cultural reality in which they are found (Shalom, Diab, & Rousseau, 2008).

Contemporary ethnographic research makes use of bricolage. The concept describes the researcher's ability to build the research through tools available in the specific field. One of the instruments is the researcher's personal narrative as another instrument meaningful for the understanding of his perspective when he interprets the occurrences and narratives of the respondents (Bar Shalom, 2011). Bricolage encourages the researcher not to be bound by rigid approaches but rather to use what is found and effective and to maintain the seriousness and the depth of the research (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004).

Ethnographic research is a scientific method that enables the researcher to understand human phenomena that occur in reality from the participants' perspective, giving a voice to the respondents. The instruments of qualitative ethnographic research are the stories and words that build the reality. Educational ethnographic research is a methodology aimed at the in-depth learning in a comprehensive and authentic holistic approach about different phenomena among students in the class, the school, the education system, and the environment, all according to the place, time, and culture unique to the characteristic patterns of activity (Karnieli, 2004).

This research method of ethnographic research best serves the research question and the researcher's transparency as ethnographer is required, to undertake the collection of information and the learning of phenomena so as to understand them. The researcher must be curious and interested in learning (Bar Shalom, 2011).

The main research instrument is the researcher himself, and therefore qualitative research is subjective research. The interest of this approach is not what happens but the way in which the teller of the story experiences, explains, and interprets what happened. The data obtained are not a representation of the reality but rhetoric of reality. Therefore, this is interpretation created at a given moment, through the interaction between the storyteller and the interviewer (Creswell, 1998). This perception says that the world is

complex, the human experiences build reality. The researcher cannot reveal a truth since there is no truth. Reality is complex and in the eyes of the observer. The researcher himself sees the reality through certain glasses, and he even influences reality the moment he researches it and cannot avoid it. Hence, what can be done through research is to express and reflect the complexity, a type of human complexity, a type of deliberation, a type of richness in terms of what can be said, which also includes doubts and deliberations.

The research paradigm includes the ontological question and the epistemological question. The epistemological question addresses assumptions about the researcher's ability to understand the researched world. The question addresses the entire system of assumptions the researcher holds regarding the status of his knowledge (Yoad & Levin, 2007). The question is about the place of the researcher in the research story. The valid knowledge depends on the ability to create a relationship with the researched phenomenon. The researcher is not an outside observer, and he influences the knowledge. The research is interpretation of an interpretation. In terms of the epistemological question, it is not possible to separate between the researcher and the research participant since there is interaction between them. The perception is that there is no ability to know the knowledge with certainty. There is no ability to separate between the knower and the knowledge. All knowledge is interpretative. The researcher is a research instrument. The decisions, considerations, and choice of the method are very important in the process of my research. The researcher does not attempt to direct the research but rather to understand what is done around it.

Qualitative research holds that we understand our world through interpretation and the giving of meaning. The narratives of the respondents are told in the social, economic, and cultural contexts and events that occurred in their lives. The stories are influenced by the place, time, gender, and so on. The way in which the person develops these perceptions enable him to build his understandings on the world (Hofer, 2002). Epistemological belief can influence the decisions that the students make during their learning or about thinking that they implement during their studies in the school (Smith et al., 2000). The epistemological thinking is contextual in the sense that it is influenced by the nature of the educational environment in which the students learn (Yoad & Levin, 2007).

The ontological question addresses the question of the nature of the researched world and what can be known about it in the nature of the reality. This is a philosophy that holds that there is no one factual reality but many realities related also to the researcher himself. The researcher thinks what he can know about the world and reality (Elder, 2002). From an ontological perspective, qualitative research maintains that the reality is as we tell about it to ourselves. There is no one truth but rather subjectivity and relativity. Personal stories, give us the subjective viewpoint on what is done, with the context that forms it.

The theory upon which this research study relies is the scientific paradigm, which is that the person is an intelligent creature and knows what happens around him. The ontological dimension relies on the perception that the (social) world is structured in a way that will be perceived as “natural”. Every phenomenon has a number of versions, different viewpoints. Social situations can be understood, but they require context to be understood.

The interpretative approach clarifies and takes into account that the interviewer – the researcher has a status of a main instrument in the collection and primarily the analysis of the data. The use of the researcher’s experience is a type of asset. The researcher has influence of some sort on the interviews and on their analysis, so that the researcher becomes part of the process. This approach maintains that the researcher needs to present his attitudes and values on the researched topics and to present the places and ways in which his personal positioning influenced the collection of the data. The researcher is a subject, a person with background, outlook, previous attitudes. All these he brings to the research field, and all he has also influences the research field. In other words, he is never a fly on the wall, and the way in which people respond to him is always an inseparable part of the research, and therefore it is necessary to tell this and to report. The researcher’s interpretation is added to the respondents’ interpretation and exists as an inseparable part of the research (Bar Shalom, 2011). The researcher must have a holistic perspective and pay attention to details. He must know to act in situations of ambiguity. His traits need to include curiosity and the desire to effect a change and to understand the research field. Hence, my attitudes and perceptions as a researcher require the clarification of the situation. I must be aware of my influence as the researcher on the research respondents and on the course of the interview.

The relations between the researcher and the research participant must be dynamic and reciprocal – dialogue-based. The researcher needs to understand the narrative (experiences through which we connect with others and through which we create the meaning of our life) (Josselson, 2015). The researcher must be aware of the boundaries of the interaction between him and the participants.

The considerable personal involvement of the researcher and the writing that includes a detailed description of the research field also bring up methodical and ethical dilemmas that obligate the researcher to examine his decisions in a thorough manner (Gille & Oriain, 2002). The scope of the research material is greatly dependent on the context of the place and time, and the emphasis is on the complexity and richness of the stories.

4.3 Research Population

The objective of the present research study is to achieve an in-depth understanding in the group of students in the context of tracking, exclusion, and inequality. Therefore, the goal of the identification of the research participants is to reach the participants who will enable the examined phenomenon to be understood. The criteria for the choice of the interviewees were their age, the access to them, their dispersion in the different residential communities, and the prior knowledge that they all learn in high schools in tracked classes.

I chose to focus on students who are found at the end of their studies or near the end of their studies (ages seventeen to nineteen). I assumed that at this age and in the chosen situation it is possible to clarify the perception and the thought about all the years of studies and the school and to examine with them what was undertaken in a perspective that is simultaneously close and distant. I attributed considerable importance to the exposure of the opinions and thoughts as they perceive or address the school, the teachers, the tracking, and themselves, while they were students or near the end of their studies. My choice derived from the thought that it is proper to hear their voice and to study in-depth their thinking when it is still from the students' perspective. I wanted to hear their voice. I assumed that as adult people their thinking would change and would assume another perspective and angle. The choice of the respondents' age is also related to the education

system and its limitations. The age was chosen at which the students are independent, during their last year in school or near the end of this year.

The research participants are students who study in regular high schools, who study in separate classes. These classes belong to another department, which is separate in the Ministry of Education, the Department for Classes and Programs of the Education and Welfare Services¹⁷. The department is committed to building a path of success suited for students in situations of risk of covert and overt dropping out who learn in the regular normative system. The agenda of this department is to raise the percentage of students who receive the high school matriculation certificate among weak populations, through the increase of resources, cultivation, welfare, rehabilitation, and regular attendance. The reduction of the dropping out from the educational institutions is built on the perception that to help these students it is necessary to separate them and to create a framework of education that will enable the fulfillment of the student's potential and preventative-assistive intervention in the schools that will enable every student to complete the academic-educational track. The agenda is based on the fact that there is the exclusion of students and on the acceptance of the phenomenon of overt and covert dropping out and looks for a solution that will stop the continuation of the dropping out (Ministry of Education Website, 2018).

Another factor in the choice of the interviewees' age and academic status is related to the research of memory. I attributed importance to the access to the memory of the experiences and events near or in the period of the studies. Researchers (Brawn & Kulik, 1977) maintain that the effective recall of experiences and events that left a strong impression has constant and detailed representation in the memory and the retrieval is expressed verbally.

The respondents are speakers of the Hebrew language and residents of different communities who come from a low, intermediate, and high socioeconomic background.

¹⁷ This department addresses all the population of the Secondary Education Department, with special emphasis on the students who live in disadvantaged neighborhoods and attend schools not included in welfare programs or projects of rehabilitation and students from low socioeconomic background.

This profile was determined so as to examine reference and change to the socioeconomic background of the students as a part of the typology.

The interviewees are from a number of residential communities, from the north to the center of the country. The distribution of the students into a number of communities and schools was planned ahead of time, so as to obtain a broad picture that does not focus on one school or one community and to include to the greatest possible extent variety in the communities and a broad geographic range.

The population of the respondents includes 25 interviewees. The number of research participants constituted part of the considerations related to the research objective. I planned the number of interviews that will enable interaction and as long and in-depth interview as possible and the number of interviews from which it will be possible to learn about the participants. It is important to note that after 25 interviews it appeared that I saw the main points and the topics relevant to the research, a principle called a feeling of saturation. Saturation is defined as the point at which new information or new themes do not arise and researchers even assert that the decisive majority of the themes are found in the first ten interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Jonson, 2006). The chosen age group was seventeen to nineteen. All during the last year are in the high school and the year after. The relevant characteristics and background variables are about their age, place of residence, place in the family, background in the topic of education of their siblings and their parents, and areas of occupation of the parents. These background data are relevant to the research in the field of the understanding of the family background of the students and the socioeconomic environmental influence on the students' decisions and the reference of the schools to them. In addition, these data, which are primarily the student's sociological background, are important to the understanding of social phenomena related to tracking, exclusion, and social inequality.

It is important to note that the sample size makes it difficult to generalize the findings to the entire population of students who learn in these classes. The goal of the choice of the research population is to reveal and illuminate the voice of the students, with the preservation of the authenticity of their experiences and emotions.

As a researcher, I am committed to preserve the confidentiality and complete anonymity of the interviewees' details. Therefore, all names were removed in this research study, as well as the names of the schools.

Table Number 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Research Participants

Name/Code	Age	Sex	Residence	Place in Family	No. of Siblings	Siblings in Tracking	Father Education	Mother Education	Father Employment	Mother Employment
1. Dasha	19	Female	Tiberias	Youngest	1	MABAR	Master – Electrical Engineering	12 years	Worker in a plant	Tourism
2. Daniel	19	Male	Kedarim	Oldest	3	Elementary school	Doesn't know	Doesn't know	Technician in a corporation	Unemployed
3. Shir	19	Female	Ein Gev	Youngest	3	2 LEV, MABAR 1 regular matriculation	12 years	12 years	Fisherman	Tourism in a kibbutz
4. Shiloh	18.5	Male	Safed	Oldest	3	Elementary school	Did not finish high school	Degree in medicine	Winemaker at the Adar winery	In the medical faculty in Safed
5. Shai	19	Female	Ein Gev	Oldest	1	Brother in MABAR	did not finish high school	12 years	Agriculture on a kibbutz	Deceased
6. Naomi	19	Female	Beit Zera	Oldest	3	1 brother in MABAR 2 in elementary school	12 years	Master. human resources	Treatment stable	Human resources on a kibbutz
7. Ilanit	17.5	Female	Safed	Oldest	1	Elementary school	(Separated) does not know	does not know	Does not know	Cleaning lady
8. Liam	17.5	Male	Safed	Middle	3	1 in OMETZ	12 years	12 years	Does not know	Technical secretary in the municipality
9. Orel	18	Male	Safed	Oldest	3	1 in OMETZ	Doesn't know	Doesn't know	Vered HaGalil factory	Proctor for high school matriculation examinations
10. Roni	18	Female	Safed	Oldest	2	Elementary school	Full matriculation certificate	12 years	Bus driver	Beautician
11. Twito	17.5	Male	Safed	Foster family	-	-	-	-	-	-
12. Batel	18	Female	Or Akiva	Youngest	2	1 in MABAR	12 years	12 years	Renovations	Dental assistant

13. Rotem	18	Female	Or Akiva	Youngest	2	Finished with matriculation certificate	12 years	12 years	Renovations	Cook
14. Yaniv	17.5	Male	Safed	Youngest	2	1 MABAR, 1 OMETZ	12 years	12 years	Deputy department director at hospital	Housewife
15. Galit	18	Female	Haifa	Oldest	2	Elementary and middle school	12 years, no matriculation certificate	12 years, no matriculation certificate	Truck driver	House work
16. Elad	18.5	Male	Haifa	Youngest	4	All siblings without matriculation certificate	did not study 12 years	Did not finish 12 years	Kashrut inspector	Cook at a Yeshiva
17. Ayalon	18.5	Male	Pardes Hana	Oldest	3	Elementary school	Doesn't know	Doesn't know	Policeman	Science teacher
18. Amit	18	Male	Pardes Hana	Middle	2	Older brother in MABAR, younger brother in elementary	Finished high school	kindergarten teacher	No regular work	Kindergarten teacher
19. Oriyah	18	Female	Pardes Hana	Oldest	1	Special education 11th grade	did not finish high school	Did not finish 12 years	Musician, music teacher	Does not work
20. Karin	18	Female	Haifa	Youngest	2	Regular education with matriculation certificate	Finished high school with matriculation certificate	Finished without matriculation certificate	Security officer	Does not work
21. Chen	18	Female	Haifa	Youngest	1	Regular education with matriculation certificate	Finished high school	12 years		Does not work
22. Naama	18	Female	Tiberias	Middle	2	Older sister in vocational school, sister in elementary	Did not study	Did not study	Hospital orderly	Police
23. Sophie	18	Female	Tiberias	Youngest	1	Older brother, MABAR	Dead	Did not study	--	Does not work
24. Aviraz	19	Male	Tiberias	Oldest	2	Younger sister by a year and a sister in 6 th grade	Finished high school with matriculation certificate	B.A.	Police	Children garden

25.Shai	19	Female	Tiberias	Youngest	2	Two older sisters who studied for a regular matriculation certificate	did not finish high school	B.A.	No work	Nurse
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Background Data of the Interviewees

The informants are ages seventeen to nineteen. They live in six different communities in Israel, including kibbutzim, small cities, and large cities, from the north of the country to the center. Nine boys and thirteen girls participated in the research. The gender was not examined; there was no gender preference. The choice of the interviewees was made by their teachers, without direction on the gender.

For the question on their place in the family, it was found that nine interviewees are the young ones in the family. About ten are the oldest in the family, and two are the middle in the family.

The informants who are the oldest in their family have brothers and sisters who study in the elementary and middle schools. The informants who are the middle or the youngest in their family reported the learning situation of their older siblings. Of 24 older siblings, about 15 learn in MABAR and OMETZ classes, 3 finished school without a matriculation certificate, and 6 finished their high school studies with a matriculation certificate.

For the question on the father's education, it was found that one had a master degree, four did not know their father's education, nine fathers completed high school, four fathers did not complete high school, and two fathers have a matriculation certificate.

For the question on the mother's education, it was found that two mothers have a bachelor degree, one has a master degree, twelve finished high school, two did not finish high school, and five did not the mother's education.

For the question on the father's employment, it was reported that two do not know anything about the father's work. One father is unemployed and sixteen fathers work in manufacturing and services (driver, technician, fisherman, farmer, renovations contractor, etc.).

For the question on the mother's employment, it was reported that five mothers do not work, two work in education, three work in the areas of medicine and human resources, and most, fifteen, work in manufacturing and services (cook, household, secretary, etc.)

(As of now, I have transcribed 23 of 25 interviews. The data will be updated in the continuation.)

Typology of the Informants

Weber (1968) in his book *Economy and Society* written in 1918 speaks about the social arrangement that controls everything. Weber notes that in society there are ideal prototypes, and thus he contributed to social research the concept of "prototype". He maintains that this is a tool that helps us better understand the social order (1984). In this context, the research seeks to emphasize the typology, the prototypes of adolescents and of adolescents at-risk.

The role of this research study is not to search for laws and rules but to reconstruct and bring into the awareness of processes related to social structuring and personal development. The concept of "type" is important for this purpose, and it is necessary to characterize ideal types when their characterization is only formal and relies on the relations between the individual and his social environment. We must assume that not only attitudes, values, and basic facts present similarity between people. The researcher addresses the data like the mood, organization, and life as concepts that indicate the beginning of the research of the individual's personality, and they constitute important points for the definition of the character and the organization of life. Hunger and desire, social economic attitudes, intellectual hedonism, curiosity, and fear – they all constitute a part of the character of social development and therefore it is important to address them.

In social life, it is known that the control that exerted by a group is more negative than positive and tends to destroy. The widespread case is when a person lacks the approach that the social scheme requires. For instance, on the topic of education of youths, it appears that frequently society will encourage in the individual a process to adjust rapidly to the social framework and so that difficulties will not be created. There are social norms and

values that we attempt to subordinate to them without consideration of the individual and the type so as to subordinate them to society. A social group has regular structures, and therefore it tends to adjust the person perfectly to the existing organization and to adjust him to it with the greatest possible speed. This nature must also be stable so that there will be no surprises from his expected future, so that every member of the group will understand this always and can present a perfect group. The aim of the requirements for the nature of the group is to stop the individual and to limit the complexity of every personality so that it suits the group and the interests it needs to hold, so as to reduce personal differences to a minimum that suits the social division of classes and professions. The tendency of society to create such figures among its members is effective when the social environment is a group with closed activity (class, school). The personal interests are subordinate to the dominant social interest, since all the values – hedonist, economic, intellectual, aesthetic – are found within the reach of the individual and are included in the inventory of his main group and its control (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1958).

Today it is known that the identity can be developed and advanced, with help and support in the process of self-discovery in an open, aware manner. The identity is defined in the research as the essential and continuous self of the person, the inner, subjective perception of the self as an individual. It is the constellation of components through which the person defines himself (Berger, 1996).

Marcia (1980) proposed a typology of four situations of identity based on two variables:

- Identity achievement. The individual who experienced a crisis solved it and created commitment to the engagement, system of beliefs, values, etc.
- Moratorium. The individual is found in the midst of an identity crisis and in the active search for his identity but still is not obligated to more than temporary commitments.
- Foreclosure. The individual still has not experienced a crisis of identity but has already assumed upon himself commitments that are not a result of the personal search and self-examination but were submitted to him ready by others.

- Identity diffusion. An individual who is not interested in identity topics, who still has not experienced a crisis of identity and still is not obligated to beliefs or engagements (Muss, 1988).

This typology is a necessary background for the understanding of the respondents' perceptions and emotions regarding the experiences, difficulties, and reference of the school system to them and the thinking that developed among them as a part of the group of learners. In addition, the structuring of the identity is related to the respondents' perceptions regarding tracking, exclusion, and inequality and their influence on their perception of their future. Identity dimensions develop and are built during processes, interventions, and decisions of the school and the family in the student's life and of the student himself. The formation and shaping of the identity is advanced through emotional maturation, increase of the self-esteem, achievement of a sense of security, and building of a positive and stable identity (Marcia, 1980).

The education system addresses students who learn in these separate classes as students at-risk, and hence, the importance of the typology of adolescents at-risk. The typology of adolescents at-risk addresses three main situations:

1. Students in processes of risk and disconnection on the background of experience of stressful continuous academic failure, which may derive from poorness or alienation on a cultural background, low academic potential, or learning disabilities.
2. Students in processes of risk and disconnection on the background of existential emotional distress, which may derive from existential problems that take over the student's life and are related to him or close figures and that harm his availability to learn and fulfill himself, serious family difficulties, crises, and traumatic experiences that harm the life energies and fulfilment and lead to the loss of hope about the future. Lacks in the field of the relationships with the past and present create the student's difficulty to rely on adults.
3. Students in processes of risk and disconnection on the background of lack of internalization of authority, boundaries, and morality that leads antisocial behavior patterns may derive from calling for help from the environment that will provide

the student with a protective framework that cultivates development. Calling for help of people who are “strong” and “durable” and trustworthy. A home that does not give enough, the presence of a protective adult, directs and guides the external and internal reality. This presence at the basis of the sense of security and stability, at the basis of the internalization of authority, boundaries, and morality (Moore & Mandelson, 2006).

Moore (2011) emphasizes that the education systems also can be defined according to educational prototypes. The researcher developed the typology of the systemic orientation of the school for the inclusion of the individual and found that there is a need for a systemic model that forms the directions of growth of the education system towards integrative orientation¹⁸ for the inclusion of the individual in light of the complexity of the profile of the population of challenging students. She maintains that the inclusion approach, which is integrative, necessitates transformative¹⁹ processes of change on the level of the perceptions, the constructs, the ways of behavior, the objectives, and the vision of the entire system and primarily the in-depth personal and interpersonal development of its people.

Identification and Recruitment of Participants

The process of the identification and recruitment of the participants relevant to the research is a challenge that requires considerable time. The preparation of the conditions, the creation of the initial relationships before the interviews, and in the beginning my preparation and personal resources as a researcher were required. I assumed that the search of the interviewees will be a task that is not easy since I am not accessible to this group. In the beginning, I attempted to reach myself the students but I did not succeed. Following this, I changed the way of identification and I turned to teachers, on the basis of personal acquaintanceship, which will help me identify students for the research needs. I explained

¹⁸ An integrative orientation is the position in which there is the striving for the comprehensive inclusion that addresses all the parts and not only some of them, which expresses everything in its entirety.

¹⁹ Transformation is the comprehensive improvement of the abilities of the teaching staff in the relationships; this is an outcome of the change from education and teaching focused on academic material and its measurement to the requirement in a meeting.

to the teachers about the research and I even read to them a document that I composed for this purpose (appendix number 3).

The chosen method has a prominent advantage for the purposes of this research study. This method for the identification of interviewees proposed by Patton (1990) is, as aforementioned, the “snowball” method in which interviewees recommend colleagues that they know and believe are suited to the research. Since the snowball was performed between the teachers and students, I succeeded in avoiding the difficulty recognized in this method, according to which the students I interviewed do not know one another and their level of confidentiality and anonymity is high. However, the teachers are the ones who chose the students and therefore the confidentiality between the teacher and the students was not maintained. Conversely, after the initial conversation of the teacher with the student to obtain consent to participate in the research study, the teachers did not know whether the interview was indeed performed.

Teachers responded affirmatively to my request. Every teacher linked me to two-three students. The teachers gave me the students’ telephone numbers. I contacted the first of the interviewees on the telephone. In the conversation I presented myself and I explained to them the objective of the research and the interview, after the teachers already created for me the initial explanation. I set the interviews at their request and convenience, for the most part in the afternoon hours, in their homes. My request was always met affirmatively. The preparation of the teachers paved my way to the interviewees. I did not encounter objection or lack of consent to be interviewed. If the students were under the age of eighteen, the teachers turned to the parents and requested their permission to conduct the interview. The teachers explained to the participants that the researcher would contact them. This process created an infrastructure appropriate to the holding of the interviews. The process and thinking about the recruitment of the participants in their last year of studies or at the end of their studies were important in the course of the interviews. Most of them gave their agreement themselves, their age and adulthood were an advantage, as was their adjacency to experiences and emotions.

Teachers expressed their concern about the preservation of the students' anonymity. For this purpose, I authored a document that was presented orally and in writing (appendix number 3.). The teachers were explained that the students' identity and all identifying details are anonymous. The researcher's responsibility for the credibility of the information in the qualitative research depends on the researcher's honesty and integrity (Polkinghorne, 2005). For this purpose, I will present a description of the interview process.

The snowball method has a disadvantage that derives from the teachers' familiarity with their students. Conversely, the teachers' assistance in the identification and recruitment helped overcome the difficulties with the identification of interviewees across the different residential communities and schools. In addition, the teachers' help enabled the relevant group of participants for the research needs and objectives to be reached. This method created a reality in which I did not know the respondents, aside from one.

For students who were under the age of eighteen, their parents signed the consent form to interview their son/daughter (appendix number 2). I explained in the presence of the parents about the research study and the aim of the interview. After the goal of the interview was explained in writing and orally, it was clarified that they do not have any commitment to me and their participation is solely on a voluntary basis. Then I asked to remain with the interviewee to create the quiet and conditions for the interview. At the start of the interview I again asked the interviewee's consent to participate and I asked to sign for confidentiality and commitment to preserve their privacy (appendix number 1). This agreement is a means to protect the autonomy of the participant in the research (Sheffler, 2007).

It was important to conduct the interviews in a place familiar to the interviewees, where they will feel comfortable to be interviewed. Therefore, the interviews were conducted in the interviewees' home, with the coordination of the date and the arrival for the interview itself. The interviewees chose the place in the home, generally their bedroom or the family room. I could not anticipate ahead of time the conditions for the interview. The interviews were held in the home, when there is no previous acquaintanceship, aside from the telephone conversation with the participant. I did not have information about the

family and the conditions under which the interview would be held. The choice of the conditions for the interview was undertaken together with the interviewee, the choice of a quiet place (also to record the interview) in the home, for about two hours. The choice of these conditions created openness, convenience, and transparency that contributed to the course of the interview.

I chose not to ask the respondents themselves to recommend additional students for the interview, so as to avoid the assumption that the interview of students from the same class may emphasize or identify phenomena dependent on a certain teacher or certain school. The participants are from different cities and communities from the north of the country to the center and from a number of high schools in every community. It is important to note that all the students I turned to consented to be interviewed, a fact that helped the research purposes. The interviews were held in the months of November 2017 to August 2018.

4.4 Research Instrument

The research method chosen is semi-structured in-depth interviews (IDI) with adolescent students. This instrument enables the researcher to stay in the researched field, to learn and investigate it, and to understand the occurrences in it through the collection of relevant material. In this method, in its broader sense, the questions are determined ahead of time – without having met the respondents.

IDI interviews enable the investigation of the events, the experiences, the perceptions, and the emotions of the participants. In addition, in-depth interviews enable the investigation of the relationship between the student and the school and society and their relationship with him from his perspective. These may indicate their ways of construction and the social reality (Shlasky & Allpert, 2013). The respondents experienced the researched experience in a personal manner in their everyday life and hence the importance of the choice of this instrument. The researched students may reflect the school system in the contexts of tracking, exclusion, and inequality and as they are expressed in the school and outside of it in social constructs.

The goal of the interviews is to clarify the students' perceptions and expectations of the education system. I would like to bring beliefs, attitudes, and evidence on what is done, as well as perceptions that explain how they understand and feel in their environment, in the school. The analysis will enable the focus on the meanings that this group attributes to its experiences, ways of self-construction, and the school reality for them (Riessman, 2008). The in-depth interview means an in-depth level of knowledge and understanding of the researched phenomena. On the level of the interviewees, this is the exposure of the meaning of things and the clear perception of the manners of perspective view and the meanings given to events, experiences, and people (Johnson, 2002).

The importance of in-depth interviews is that they constitute an initial source of information, which enables the interviewee to explain and interpret his world from his perspective. Therefore, this method can help me understand the students' perspective and in the continuation also interpret it.

An in-depth interview is a conversation in which the interviewer asks the interviewee questions with the goal of collecting data while documenting the answers. In the composition of the questionnaire, the open questions are those that the respondents answer in words. I attributed importance to holding the interviews in a face-to-face manner while also ascribing importance to the interaction created in them. In-depth interviews are composed of an ordered system of questions, which is subject to changes according to the dynamics created with the interviewee. The goal of the interview is to attempt to understand the interviewee's system of norms, beliefs, and motives (Dominick, 2000). In-depth interviews give the researcher the right to raise additional topics during the interview (while he is faithful to the structure and order of the questions) (Moyser & Wagstaffe, 1987). This openness creates new insights and supplies a complex system of data, some of which can be used and can support hypotheses or disconfirm them (Munck, 2004, p. 16).

The course of the interview integrates questions on topics that the research study wants to clarify and that rely on the theoretical part of the research. The interviewees were asked questions on personal and social issues, alongside questions on value-oriented ideological issues. The interviewees, the students, were asked about their first years in the

school, their teachers, patterns of action and behavior, and difficulties that accompanied them. The questions addressed the clarification of the tracking experiences, their emotions, and their exclusion. In addition, questions were asked that examine their social perceptions of equality towards students. It is important to note that most of the interviewees did not ask to maintain anonymity.

An in-depth interview is a conversation between two. The interview has a structure but is not necessarily structured. The aim is to understand the interviewee's experience and the meaning he attributes to it. Such an interview is characterized by open questions, by a semi-structured or unstructured format, by broad documentation, notation, listening on the part of the interviewer, clarity, and understanding throughout the interview. In addition, it is important that the interviewer be certain that he understands the respondent's personal experience (Johnson, 2002).

The in-depth interview is defined as a shared product of the interviewer and interviewee. Therefore, I will address the personal positioning as a researcher in the researched field. This instrument obligates the active interaction between the researcher and the participants, which influences the research. The goal of the interview is to discover what the other person thinks, to know and to understand him in the context of what is researched. The researcher interviews regarding thoughts, emotions, and perceptions of things that cannot be expected in an unmediated manner. He receives impressions of feelings, expressions, movements of the face and body. The respondents can express emotions and experiences and personal narratives. In essence, an in-depth interview enables shared work of interpretations. Generally the interview is conducted between strangers who seek to reach a situation of closeness and it is a shared product of the verbal and nonverbal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, the interviewee as he experiences events and tells about them and the researcher as he analyzes in the attempt to understand explicit and implicit topics. An important principle in qualitative research is that the researcher must have real interest in people and in their stories, and therefore the researcher's behavior, knowledge, and perceptions and their influence on the interview and its process are very important (Boyce, 2006).

The interview is a type of negotiations on the definition of the reality between the interviewee and the interviewer, and during it the interviewee undergoes reflective thinking, re-thinking, which builds his reality through criticism and thinking back and forth. The advantage of the method of the semi-structured questionnaires enables the openness in the repertoire of answers and flexibility and addition of what is missing in the questions, according to what happens in interaction and consideration of the interviewer researcher.

The advantages of such an interview are that it enables uniformity in the collection of the information from the respondents, lasts a reasonable amount of time, and for the most part does not require skilled personnel to conduct it. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewee follows a questionnaire that includes a number of defined questions, but he can change the order of the questions and add to them according to the developments. The interviewer determines the order of the questions and their formulation according to the situation and his judgment (Josselson, 2015).

The interview guide is a tool that aids the interviewer and is built according to the needs and characteristics of the research. The guide has three parts. In the first part, the relevant sociodemographic details, the interview details such as date, place, time and any exceptional circumstances of the interview will be noted. The second part will include the interview questions and the continuation questions with a place to note comments and thoughts. This enables the topics of the interview to be maintained and the phrasing of the questions to be standardized. In the third part feelings, interpretations, and other remarks will be noted.

The course of the interview obligated concomitant tools, documents, and apparatus. The informed consent form (appendix number 3) includes the research details and the framework in which it is held. There is the obligation to confidentiality and preservation of anonymity, as well as the clarification that the interviewee can end his participation in the interview at any time. The interview guide (appendix number 4) contains the questions I planned to ask. The page of questions constituted an aid during the interview. I wrote down comments on the facial and body expressions and emotions I discerned during the

interview. In addition, recording equipment was used to record the interview after I received the research participant's permission.

4.5 Interview Process

The in-depth interview has a number of basic rules that I was careful to maintain: the interviewer researcher must be clear in his questions, learn about the topics he asks, but should not convey excessive professionalism. He must take into account the interviewees and create conditions suited to the interview. He must give the interviewee the opportunity to express himself as he sees fit but also direct him to the topics of interest. He should not be pressured by the silences and lack of confidence and should not rush. He should ask as necessary for explanation or repetition of statements to ascertain understanding. There must be a comfortable and intimate atmosphere, in which confidentiality is maintained. The interviewer must have the ability to listen and to allow the interviewee to speak most of the time.

Preparation before the interview is essential so as to prepare for my place as a researcher facing the interviewee. The first stage is the preparation of the interview guide that includes a page of details, questions, and notations. The questions were prepared ahead of time according to the relationship to the topic. During the interview, questions were added according to the interviewee's situation, the cooperation, and the development of the interaction in the conversation. I recorded all the interviews and transcribed them myself. The accuracy in the transcription was very important. I added in writing the facial expressions and emotions I noticed, as well as situations of silence, rapid speaking, and so on. These are important and significant and even tell the interviewees' story. During the transcription of the recorded interviews, I also paid attention to characteristics such as the tone of voice, the cessations in the speech, and the characteristics of rhetoric in the speech. It is important to write all that is said, including reference to the body language and at the end of the interview to add general data such as place, time, and relevant remarks.

I conducted two interviews as a pilot (interviews 1 and 2), and then I made a number of changes. I added a number of questions relating to the area of equality towards students in the school and I changed the order of questions in the interview. Already in the first

interviews I saw the difficulty of the students with telling about and expounding on their experiences. Their ability to tell or speak about themselves is limited. Often their responses were one word: yes, no. They needed considerable encouragement to talk. The automatic responses were I do not remember, I do not know. I understood that I had to ask detailed and secondary questions and to mediate so that they could tell and expound and this is what I did in the continuation. The guide was used primarily at the start, and in the later interviews I used it less and instead I gave more space to the natural development of the conversation, on the basis of the research topic and the relevant questions. In the first interviews I adhered to the page of questions and slowly the interviews developed with preservation of the topics and their order of importance. The respondents saw in the interview the possibility of sharing and telling about their experiences and feelings.

So that the listening during the interview would be active, it is important to be careful about the re-phrasing of the respondent's answers (to use sentences such as "I understood from you that ..." or "what you in essence are saying is that ..."), as well as flexibility, patience, and examples and recording.

The second stage is the creation of the written text of the interview, transcription, and integration of additional notations of the researcher interviewer, with the notice and addition of nonverbal messages such as tone of speech and body language.

The third stage is the search for the themes (topics, categories), similarity, and patterns, so as to provide meaning to the information, while maintaining the reliability of the analysis. At the end of this process, there is the stage of the publication of the findings.

At the start of the interview, the researcher presents himself and the research to the interviewee. The interview began with questions on a number of personal details that constitute the respondents' sociological background: age, residence, parent work, parent education, number of siblings and their education. The background questions create an implicit contract that entails a relationship and familiarity with the interviewee, which contribute to mutual trust. The researcher's empathy is necessary for the creation of a personal relationship during the interview and facilitates the analysis of the sociology and

the family structures in the context of the family, its relationship with the school, and the social relationships while aspiring not to be judgmental.

The interviewer has the responsibility of building an infrastructure of trust and enabling an empathetic atmosphere (Kupferberg, 2010), especially when the interviewees are not known to the researcher and he is not known to them. The interviewees explained that they were recruited to the interview because of the relationship and request of their teachers and because of their respect for their teachers. Most of them felt comfortable and displayed interest in the interview. Empathetic and interesting listening created a feeling that developed during the interview among the respondents that they are interested in the interview. As a researcher, I was careful to listen and to express interest that is not intervention. A framework was created in which the participants could answer in a relaxed, direct, and sharing way. I adjusted myself to their convenience and times.

During the interviews as a researcher, I ascribed considerable importance to the skills of active listening: eye contact, head nodding, echoing, questions of clarification, summary, reflection. I recorded the interviews to be available for the interviewee. To ask questions, to also record implicit indications such as expressions of the body and face and emotions. These skills make the researcher active and intervening. The involvement was expressed in the empathetic listening and asking questions of clarification, questions for in-depth study, or request to add examples. At the end of the interview, I noted my impression from the interview, my thoughts and my feelings. I put these into words as well so I could use them as a part of the database.

The interviews that were recorded and transcribed enable the researcher's reference and interpretative analysis of the text content and its structure, in addition to the emotions and atmosphere that accompany the interview. The goal is to achieve a version of reality as presented by the interviewee. The statements are not disconnected but are perceived as a constellation and are analyzed in this way.

The process of the collection of the data is focused on in-depth interviews. The researcher collects information from the respondents who experienced the experienced personally, when he aspires to research the meaning in their everyday life. The small

samples are small, and therefore it is not possible to generalize findings on the relevant population or to achieve generalization. Qualitative researches are descriptive. The processing of the data is undertaken using the analysis of the content collected.

The protocols of the interview were transcribed as close to the interview dates as possible, in the attempt to maintain the authenticity in the interviewees' voice and the notations of emotions and facial and body expressions that were performed during the interview.

The interviews were held at the time and place the interviewees chose, in their home. I explained to the interviewees ahead of time that the interview may last about two hours and I sought to conduct the interview in a quiet place. All the interviews were held in the interviewees' homes. When I came to the interviewees' homes, they were prepared for the interview. They freed their time and instructed other family members not to disturb them. I presented myself and the field of research and I told that the interview was being conducted in the framework of a doctorate on the topic of the narratives of youths who learn in tracked classes. In this stage, the interviewee was presented an informed consent form. We read the form together, and I clarified that they had to sign it. For the interviewees who were aged seventeen-eighteen, their parents were explained about the field of research and the goal of the interview and they were asked to sign an informed consent form that confirms the participation of their son/daughter in the interview.

It was explained to the interviewees that they are requested to tell their experiences and emotions to bring stories and examples. It was promised to them that their statements would appear and be used only for the purposes of the research, under a pseudonym and with the blurring of identifying details. I asked their permission to record their statements. The interviewees agreed to be recorded and in most cases did not address the device during the interview. I explained that after the interview the content of the recording would be transcribed by me. As a researcher, I attributed great importance to the transcription of the interviews by myself. The importance of authenticity, my impressions of the researcher's experiences, the memory of the researcher's and participants' feelings are all important material for the purpose of the research and its goal.

The researcher's intuitions, feelings, and understandings are a key instrument in the research activity. The idea is for the researcher in this type of research to read between the lines, to feel the "implicit knowledge", or in other words, to feel what people are saying without speaking about it, without saying something explicitly.

4.6 Methods of Content Analysis

Appropriate research coverage of social events obligates methodical content analysis. In social research, the method chosen is the extraction of data and the production of data from the interviews. The data reconstruct the way in which the social reality is represented by a social group. Therefore, the categorization of the present and sometimes the prediction of future trends are the goal of the journey of the search of the social research (Bauer & Gaskell, 2011). The perception of these researchers is that there is no one good way to conduct a social research and a holistic view of the process of social research is necessary. The qualitative research methods were intended to serve first the need of the researcher to understand people's subjective meaning around key events in their life. The content analysis accepted in qualitative research studies in sociology and education addresses interpretation and what it brings up.

In the interpretative content analysis of the text content and its structure, the analysis unit is the system of relations between the researcher and the participants in the research and between the research participants and the society in which they live (power relations). The analysis of the interviews was performed according to the method of the analysis of the content of the conversation, with reference also to social economic processes from the desire to present as broad a picture as possible of the respondents (Spector-Mersel, 2011).

The process of the analysis of the data from the interviews is a process of the arrangement and structuring of the information collected and the understanding of the meanings through the disassembly of the data and their reassembly into categories and themes. The first stage is the creation of categories through the search for similarity, difference, and a relationship between different parts (Shkedi, 2004). In this stage, the preservation of the protocols and the initial process of division will be the basis for the

examination of the validity and reliability in the continuation. The next stage is the mapping of the possible relationships between the categories mapped and the creation of the relationships between the categories. Thus the “tree of categories” was created, and a process of the analysis of the relationships between the different parts began to create themes (Shkedi, 2004). The upholding of the protocols and the process of the division into themes, the maintaining of separation between a factual description and reflection, and my honesty as an author will help create validity and reliability. The same is true for the reference to the cross-checking of the information (Spector-Mersel, 2011) on the basis of the interviews with the students and the basing on literary sources on the topic of tracking, exclusion, social constructs, and economic contexts. The goal of content analysis is to present a picture of the reality as it is reflected in the students’ eyes. In the first stage I analyzed the interviews according to main topics, and a map of categories of the research was built. The manner of the presentation of the data, the choice of the main themes, the division of the themes into categories and subcategories, the reduction and the expansion of the categories, the choice of the categories, and the giving of meaning to some of them – are the fruits of the researcher’s work and judgment, while he is helped in the literature and in the relevant research knowledge presented in the theoretical chapter (Riessman, 2008).

The main question in the analysis of the content of the conversation is what is the place of the researcher and the research respondents in the process of the conversation, does their place reflect their social position, and what is the meaning of the positioning in the system of relations created between the researcher and his research participants (Manor Binyamini, 2010).

In the analysis of the data in qualitative research we need to cope with very large masses of material. The researcher classifies, cuts the materials when he must preserve the material’s vitality and originality. In qualitative research the authenticity of things is very important. The content analysis obligates the analysis of things said explicitly. In essence, the researcher presents explicit content: how people describe the event in their words, how they explain what they do in their words, and the implicit dimension that addresses things that the respondents did not say or what is implied implicitly from what they say. What the

respondents leave out of the story is important, as are the things they address and those they do not address.

In the first stage, there is work with the written text, the initial shaping of the themes and the categories for analysis. There is the collection of topics into main themes, the use of different colors to mark the themes, and then the concentration of every color/theme into a table. This stage is undertaken with the repeated reading of the interviews. The goal of the main themes is to present the problems and the researcher's assumptions. In human behavior there are patterns that can be identified, and from among them it is necessary to identify a main theme that will help in the supply of broad explanations about students who were tracked and their exclusion.

This is a process called in the literature micro-analysis, with the goal of achieving inductive understanding in every theme. The thinking about the building of themes is undertaken while taking into account the topics in the interview; these are the topics that the research wants to examine. The identification of the themes enables the follow-up after their development.

Then there is the stage of the disassembly of the text into units of content analysis, the search for main topics, interesting ones, which repeat themselves, and the collection into themes. Then there are thoughts on what is said explicitly, about what is said, and about what is the researcher's thinking about what is said.

The process of analysis begins immediately with the beginning of the collection of the data. The researcher needs to attempt to identify prominent and important topics that recur again and again in the data. These topics will be defined as themes for analysis. The themes are chosen according to the research question (etic) and/or primarily according to prominent topics that exist in the theoretical material in a meaningful manner (emic).

The themes for the analysis need to reflect the research goal. They are built from unequivocal definitions. The units of analysis are the smallest units into which the material will be disassembled, and they are determined from the nature and goals of the research.

The second stage is the enhancement of the themes and categories in parallel to the classification of all the data in our materials into categories. This process ends when we have reached saturation, and at the end a system of themes and categories is obtained, between which there are different types of relations that express references to problems and topics that the research addresses.

The third stage is the creation of a hierarchy between the categories and the identification of the core categories. It is necessary to attempt to connect the entire system of categories, to attempt to create one conceptual model that indicates a relationship between the categories, and to attempt to reach core categories that are the main categories. The considerations and work method of the researcher will be expressed in the creation of a hierarchy between the categories and in the way for the creation of the presented model.

The fourth stage is the creation of a theoretical structure and the linkage to the literature. There is the description of the findings and the conclusions in the more general space with the use of theoretical terms from the field of research relevant to us. In parallel to the analysis of the explicit content stated in the interview, an attempt was made to follow up after the implicit content in the conversation because of its importance. Josselson (2004) addressed the implicit content and posted a significant question for interpretative research regarding the acceptance of the interviewees' statements as they are or whether it is necessary to understand and be helped also by nonverbal messages, from beneath the surface. In my opinion, the implicit content in the interview may be understood through the explicit content. The pauses in the speech, the raising of the voice, whispering, stuttering, sharp movement – all indicate emotional processes occurring during the interview. The integration of techniques that strive for the understanding of the implicit content with the analysis of the explicit content gives this research significant depth. The text and the subtext are central primarily in the context of social structures and exclusion. Among these students the subtext is important. They are not aware often of the situations of risk and exclusion or the meanings of the tracking and their expressions in their lives. Therefore, examples, silences, incomplete descriptions, repetition, or brevity of the interviewee's response, lack of detail, or skipping over an answer – all these are important and significant. It can be assumed that the interviewee did not understand, did not want to

tell, whether consciously or unconsciously. My assumption on this topic is based on knowledge about the ability of the students at-risk to conduct a conversation about themselves or to share their experiences and thus the value of the implicit information. However, I limited this experience to cases in which I assumed that the understanding of the implicit part is meaningful to the understanding of other parts in the interview.

The content analysis addresses the aesthetic components that also indicate intentions, such as, for example, how much the story of the respondents is segmented, how much it jumps from issue to issue, how they define their teachers, friends, and other figures, what the direction of the story is – pessimistic or optimistic, the pace of the story, the use of examples or metaphors. The importance of these and the reference to them will facilitate the understanding of the respondents' reality and will contribute to the research analysis.

The content analysis performed addresses words, descriptions of the interviewees, as reflecting their emotions, thoughts, experiences, and perceptions and focusing on the content of the interviewees' statements and on the way they express themselves. The analysis of the interviews began very close to the interviews. The protocols of the interviews were transcribed by me as close as possible to the interview date, with the attempt to maintain the authenticity in the interviewees' voice. The transcription of the interviews was read many times carefully, with the goal of identifying main themes that arose in the interview. The main themes were indicated and concentrated into a separate document with the goal of differentiating and thinking about the classification and the choice. In this stage, an attempt was made to find a relationship between themes so that some of them were defined anew and new themes were built. The collection of the themes was undertaken according to the context of the research question and with the help of the relevant literature. The resultant created "constructs" are the categories that compose the theory. During the building of the categories, there was a process of movement forwards and backwards from the raw data, the texts of the interviews, to the themes and categories and back again. This process occurred throughout the entire research study.

The research is obligated to maintain the participants' anonymity. To maintain the participants' anonymity, identifying details such as the school names were eliminated. In the chapter of the findings, the interviewees' names are replaced with numbers.

4.7 Research Limitations

Qualitative research and the interpretative method have rules and limitations. These influence the research, the researcher, and the research participants. The importance of the recognition of the research limitations will help the researcher to cope with and take into consideration their influence on the research process and in certain cases to find relevant solutions. Sociological concepts are abstract and subject to different interpretations and definitions by different researchers. Sociological concepts are different from their everyday use, such as social construct.

Social research is based on social data, data on the social world. We are interested in the way in which people express themselves spontaneously and speak about what is important to them and in a way in which they think about their actions. It is important to pay attention to how well the interviewees say what they think and to what extent does the researcher influence them (Bauer, 2011).

The interviewees. Every researched phenomenon has a number of versions like the number of interviewees. People address the reality from different perspectives, remember in different forms, and choose to tell in different ways, even when they were supposedly partners in the same occurrence. This is not a flaw. From the different narratives a complex whole is obtained, which is a description of the phenomenon (Josselson, 2015).

The participants are not verbal. They are not accustomed to talking about themselves. They need mediation and well-structured questions. Even when the question is concrete and structured, they answer briefly. Most of the answers begin with "I don't know", "I don't remember", and then there is a pause, followed by a few sentences. The experience in the work with children at-risk caused me to understand that I need to wait and be silent. In addition, they need encouragement to speak. This encouragement is through asking questions in another way, sometimes indirectly as opposed to directly.

Another way is to ascribe importance to the things that will be said, “The information that you bring is very important.”

The participants in this research study are young people. The age and status of the participants as students constitute a point with meaning in the contexts of goals of mentality and language. For this purpose, it is important to explain well the manner in which the interview is held and to obtain their oral and written consent. The generational gap obligates me as a researcher to listen to the data and to be hesitant regarding the way in which I build things (Shkedi, 2004). This attention along with the creation of an enabling atmosphere for conversation will allow us to get to the bottom of things.

The processes that occurred as opposed to the students’ ability to express them are complex. The participants in the research are young and lack experience in lengthy conversation. It was important to explain to the interviewees the manner of performance of the interview and the research. The generational gap obligated me as a researcher to listen and to create an atmosphere that enables a conversation to reach the depths of the matter.

Another limitation is connected to the method of the choice of the interviewees, the snowball method I used. In this method, I used teachers who helped me locate the relevant participants and in retrospect it seemed that the method suited the research. The interviewees responded to the researcher’s request to participate in the interview.

The researcher. The involvement of the researcher in the interviews, in the analysis of them, and in the presentation of the findings has many implications, such as, for instance, the inability to generalize the findings to an entire population. However, this is not the main point of qualitative research. It does not aspire to attain generalizations on populations. The researcher sees the research participant in a subjective manner. The approach is inductive, from the individual to the general. The theory is constructed from the individuals.

The uniqueness of ethnography lies in that it enables the researcher to cope with difficulties and to illuminate additional points. During the interview, for example, I encountered the difficulty with asking questions with a number of interviewees. I found that the ranking of questions helped me not to create withdrawal on the part of the

interviewee. Or when the participants did not understand the question, they answered the question how they understood it. Sometimes this was an advantage, since when they did not understand they told about what was in their heart.

To establish trustworthiness and reliability, I acted out of awareness of my attitudes and assumptions that might have biased the interview. During the interviews I adopted an empathetic viewpoint and acted to create relations of trust and openness, with the use of comprehensible language and the expression of interest in them and in the research object.

This is how the research participants felt – that they could speak openly with a researcher who is a stranger to them and they cooperated in the interview. The researcher has values, knowledge, and attitudes that can influence the research study. The more the researcher is an expert in his field, the harder it is for him to disconnect. To create objectivity, the researcher must report the findings precisely. A large number of questions is another way, since this allows more data to be gathered on the same topic.

The research process. The research is interested in examining how different factors in the school influenced the student's perception of himself and how they shaped his way of thinking. It appears that of all the factors that influenced the student and his way of thinking, it is difficult to differentiate between financial and social forces and constructs or to identify relations of cause and effect.

To cope with the constellation of methodological difficulties presented and to minimize the gap, it is important to avoid judgment and analyses that are not relevant to the research and to maintain objectivity. Complete objectivity is not possible. There is no escape from the researcher's perspective, with his subjective tendencies and values. We must not see these as weakness. This approach was legitimized by Alboim-Dror (1999), when she said that it is necessary to recognize the objective limitations. The disconnection from a personal and unique perspective will lead to a perspective of nowhere. Subjectivity cannot be eliminated and should not be eliminated – but should be expressed. The aspiration to attain complete objectivity is illusion. People cannot fully achieve objectivity but rather can only aspire to it. The awareness of this is part of the solution.

4.8 Research Strengths

This research study is the creation of a monograph, a summative and comprehensive research on a clear and worrisome topic. This monograph will serve those who are not experts and who are interested in studying the topic in-depth. The research study includes 25 interviews. This number is not enough to draw conclusions for all the students, but its importance is that it reveals and presents the trends and the gaps and the questions that the reality and the student interviewees present, so that it is possible to continue to study the topic in further depth.

The research study focuses on the “voice of the students”. It reveals their thoughts, perceptions, and emotions. This type of research is new. Few researches have been performed in education in which the participants are students. In this research study, the students are at the end of their track of studies, a place that allows them reference to their academic past and a view of the system.

In past decades, few academic research studies were performed in the field of tracking that examine the students. This was the motivation and the challenge of the present research – but it is also a difficulty. As a researcher, the approach is to display curiosity and skepticism and the desire to research arguments of researchers and research studies, and to attain findings that will suit the situations of as many students as possible.

In the case of this research study, it addresses educational frameworks in which the populations of students are tracked, and it is supposed to help the reader use the conclusions that arise from the research study in a similar context.

The research may inspire the need for change in the lives of students who are at-risk and excluded in the education systems that are responsible for him. From a global perspective and sociological aspects on the individual, the student, hearing their voice is critical for children at-risk who experience exclusion. The research study may emphasize the window of opportunities and the role of the education system that is supposed to compensate, in my perception.

4.9 Ethical Issues

The ethnographic qualitative research study aspires to understand and to interpret researched meanings, experiences, and phenomena. In this research study, there is no intention to reveal an objective “scientific truth” that can be statistically generalized (Shlasky & Allpert, 2007). Qualitative research does not strive towards generalizations but towards the basic knowledge that can be used by other researchers who will be interested in it, thus enabling additional researches in the field. Therefore, it is necessary to attribute considerable importance to the degree to which research deserves trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and hence it offers techniques to establish this trust.

In the stage of the collection of the data, an orderly and uniform method was adopted (Patton, 1990). I was careful to behave uniformly before and during the interviews. An interview guide was used, and the agreement to maintain the respondents’ confidentiality and anonymity and the details that might identify them, such as school name, town name, was signed. Confidentiality was promised orally and in writing to the teachers who recruited the interviewees. (See the appendices.)

Great effort was invested in the transcription of the interviews, which I chose to do, according to a uniform method. The collection of the data was documented in an orderly process, as was the process of the location of the interviewees, a process that was spread out over the course of a year.

In the stage of the writing, the findings were put into writing, with the use of a description that includes many quotes from the interviewees’ statements that enable the reader to judge for himself the likelihood of the proposed interpretation (Creswell, 1998). These make the process of the production of the findings transparent for the readers and researchers. In addition, the researcher clarifies to the readers about his place in the research study and his qualities and his influences in the research field (Creswell, 1998).

The research study is committed to the scientific ethics that is expressed in the trustworthiness of the research. It is committed to the preservation of the rules of ethics relative to the interviewees. It is committed to confidentiality. The researcher must behave

with sensitivity and see to the research participants' needs (Polkinghorne, 2005). For this purpose, a number of steps were undertaken.

The respondents were given an explanation about the goal of the research study and the use of a pseudonym, the blurring of their identifying details. They were assured that the recordings would remain only with me. The participants signed an informed consent form. During the interview, the participants received an explanation about their right to end the recording or the interview itself at any time they chose.

The quality of the research depends on its credibility – the degree of trust that can be accorded to the research findings. Since I do not have any relationship with the research subjects, their trust in me was an advantage. I am not identified with their school or their residential community or the environment where they live. I do not belong to their environs or surroundings. The trust was built from the first phone call when I called them until the saying of thank you and the departure from their home. Some respondents suggested interviewing their classmates or students in their grade, but because of the decision to maintain a uniform method of the recruitment of the research participants by their teachers and so as not to create closeness between the interviewees, I did not agree and thus I preserved credibility and objectivity. However, this research study is not interested in the examination of the credibility of the participants' answers. Its goal and importance lies in that it seeks to hear their inner voice, the thoughts, emotions, and perceptions as they find it correct to present in their statements.

The research study is based on interviews that have ethical and interpersonal complexity (Spector-Mersel, 2011). For this purpose, it is correct to address a number of points. First, ethics relative to the respondents, because of their young age: the respondents signed an informed consent form that addresses the goals and the preservation of confidentiality. The interview begins with a number of words about the research and me as a researcher. It should be noted that the interview is recorded (Shkedi, 2004) and that the information will be solely for the purposes of the research and the participants' names will be changed. It was correct to explain at the beginning of the interview, as a part of the research, the nature of the research and the nature of my role as a researcher.

Qualitative research does not believe in uniform instruments of measurement, and therefore I did not aspire to uniformity but to depth in the explicit and implicit details that enable the understanding of the reality to be achieved by the researcher. It is important that the interview be performed in a good, empathetic, and sensitive manner by the researcher.

The researcher is committed to be aware of the reliability and validity of the findings. The triangulation of the interpretative processes can strengthen the validity of the findings. The data and the interviewees' statements are cross-referenced to prevent the drawing of hasty conclusions (Spector-Mersel, 2011). The cross-referencing of the information between the interviews, as this researcher recommends, is necessary and a number of sources (cross-referencing of data), accurate and complete notation, and quotes from the participants' statements should be used. These help the researcher's interpretative processes and the creation of trust in the research process.

The researcher is required to perform reflective processes on the transcription of the interviews, on the creation of the themes and categories, and on the writing of the findings. Repeated reading of the interviews, the bringing up of insights and interpretations of the researcher, and transparency in the manner of work strengthen the validity of the findings. The researcher is also required to be aware of the weakness of the research and the ethical issues that must be revealed to the reader.

During the writing, I attempted to provide a broad basis of data. A broad basis of data allows other researchers to identify populations that in their opinion are similar to the participants of the present research and to examine whether the topics that the research addresses are relevant to additional populations of students who were or are tracked.

The specific context has considerable importance. When we attempt to clarify questions of the construction of a personal and collective identity, the structuring of the subjective verbalization is at the center of our attention and we have less need to search for the non-told stories behind the words (Jackson, 2002).

My familiarity with the topic and the research and the knowledge of the topic of tracking created closeness to the students' world and simultaneously distance, since I did

not know the interviewees before the research study (with the exception of one person). This contradiction empowered the understanding of the existence of the gap between knowledge about students at-risk and the authenticity and interaction in the encounter with them and the importance embodied in these sessions. The contradiction and the gap between being inside or outside, being involved, displaying empathy, and looking curiously at their perspective accompanied the research process. These required of me as a researcher a high level of attention, empathy, and lack of intervention. Throughout the interviews I felt responsibility for and caring towards the interviewees, and I attempted to behave towards them in a fair and ethical manner. I appreciated that they met with me, and I thanked them for it. The trustworthiness of the information in the qualitative research depends on the researcher's honesty and integrity (Polkinghorne, 2005). Therefore, I acted and presented in this research study at-length all the details relevant to the methodology and research method.

Chapter 5. Research Findings

The chapter of the research findings addresses the research question and is based on the interviews that were conducted. The aim is to hear the voice of the interviewees, who are students, and to emphasize its importance in the issues of tracking, exclusion, and inequality during their years in the school. The research literature emphasizes that listening and responding to the students' voices improve significantly the learning, the relations between teachers and students, and other areas essential in the school experience (Cook-Sather, 2006).

The findings attempt to describe and reveal the students' emotional and cognitive world during their years in the school and their coping and difficulties. The chapter of the findings will review how the tracking and exclusion influence the learners' lives, their motivation, efficacy, and belonging, as well as the meaning of their being tracked and excluded in the school and the perception of their future.

The findings position the interviewees on the axis of exclusion and inequality versus inclusion and equality. Ben Peretz (2009) describes in the context of inequality that the education that declares the building of an equal society has become education that empowers competition and grades, separation, and social exclusion that are broadening in scope and dimensions – all under the conceptual justification that you must see to yourself using abilities and personal effort.

This chapter addresses the intriguing questions about experiences of perceptions, stories, and events from the years of learning in the school. The findings present segments of reality and the world of tracked students, through their words, their voice, and their emotions. The researcher's impressions and thoughts are added to these.

The arrangement of the findings attempts to preserve the statements of the participants, the students, as they were expressed during the interviews. Their statements are authentic and are presented as they were said. The participants expressed themselves with the simplicity and the authenticity that characterize them and their personal mode of expression. It was important to the students that their voice be heard and that they bring

themselves, even when the experiences and memories are not easy for them. The students understood the value of the research study and the importance that I as a researcher attributed to the listening to their words and to the fact that this is their personal viewpoint as students.

This is the researcher's bricolage, the researcher's understandings and interpretations of the world and the phenomenon addressed by the researcher through the description of short pictures, stories of events, and participant quotes. The descriptions are faithful to the reality, as presented by the students. The bricolage is built from the researcher's judgments and perspectives. The emphasis on authenticity derived from the perception that a research that deals with the presentation of the participants' statements without analysis and interpretation is very important. It is necessary to emphasize their voice, statements, thoughts, and emotions, as they arose in the interviews, as close as possible to the source and to the course of the interview. The words, the segmented sentences, the silences, the looks are all an inseparable part of the way of the presentation of the findings and the stories that need to be read.

The findings are presented in four main categories. The basis of the division into categories is the periods in the schools in which the students learned. The guiding thought is to reveal and learn about what is done in every period and about the influences of the first period, the elementary school, on what is done in the middle school and afterwards in the high school in the context of tracking, exclusion, and inequality. The relationship between the different periods is critical to the understanding of how the students' perceptual and emotional world is built since the first grade and how it influences the continuation of their conduct, choices, and decisions in the middle school and the high school. The first two categories, which engage in the period of the elementary school and the middle school, are past periods for the participants. The descriptions for the most part are memory and experience. The third category, the period of the studies in the high school, is the present period for the participants. The fourth category examines their reference to the perceptions that formed in them on the topic of exclusion and inequality and for their future. Sub-categories recur in each period. Their role is to examine the practices and social

structures and their ways of appearance at all ages in the schools. Every subchapter begins with the characterization of the questions that address it.

The categories address the periods of studies in the schools according to the age divisions customary in Israel: the elementary school, the middle school, and the high school. The purpose of this division is to examine the existence of tracking structures as they are represented in the elementary schools and their expressions in the middle school and the high school. The research study seeks to examine the tracking and excluding structures in the education system. The findings attempt to find contexts and influences of the different periods on the building of the participants' perception. The findings seek to describe how these structures are produced and influence the students' identity and personality in aspects of motivation, efficacy, and self-worth. The main idea of the fourth category is to examine and learn how these structures influence the students' future perception in the context of mobility and social equality as well as value and education.

The students' statements, descriptions, cases, and examples were written at length, so that it will be possible to "hear the voice" and enable the reader to learn from them and about them. The research participants in the chapter of the findings are students. It is important to emphasize that the participants are students in their studies and near the end of the studies.

The research study ascribes considerable importance to the preservation of authenticity, through the conveying of the feelings, tone of speech, facial expressions, silences, and wonderings that accompanied the interviews. These are important in the understanding of the text and the relationship in which their statements were said.

The students' words are characterized by sparse language and distortions in the context of person usage (first, second, third) and male-female language forms. The girls spoke in the masculine language, and the opposite was true. Frequently they speak about themselves in third person, as if they are speaking about another person.

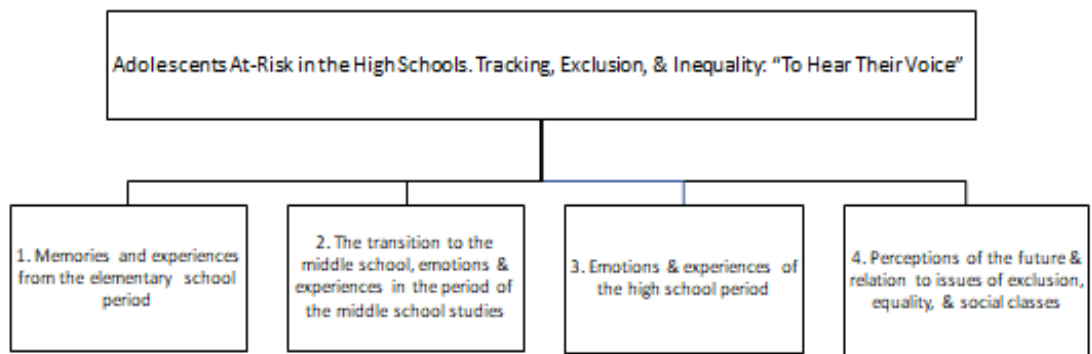
A number of rules were set for the preparation of the findings. These enabled the division of the sub-categories into a number of main themes and the creation of a

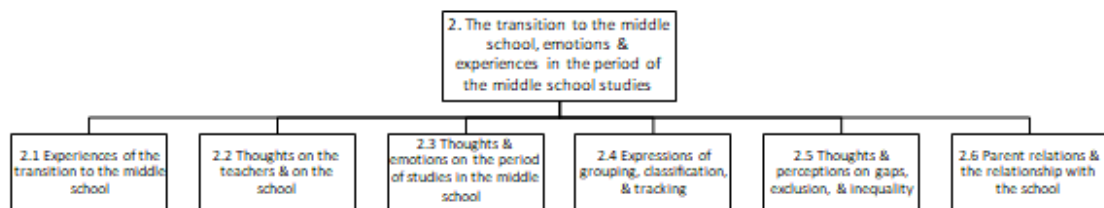
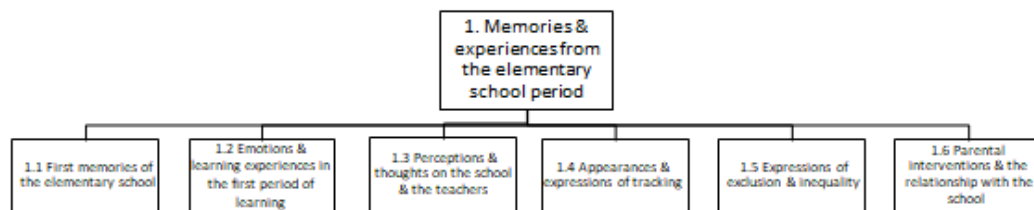
descriptive and story-oriented continuum that prevents the excessive disassembly of the participants' statements.

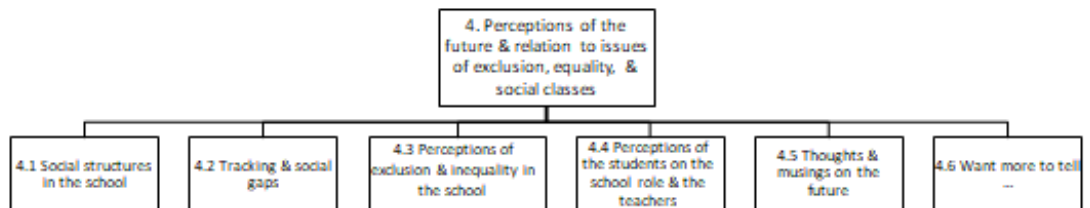
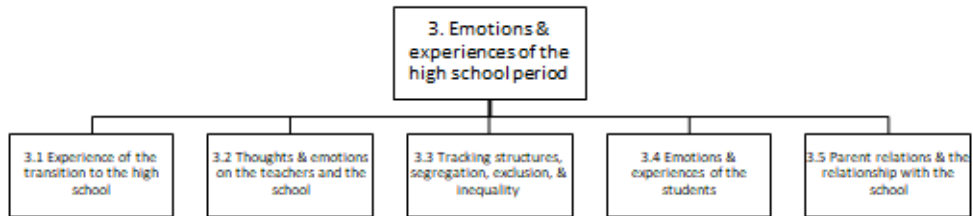
1. Parentheses. Description of the interviewees' emotions, facial expressions, silences. Dots in the parentheses illustrate the length of the silence (...) (.....)
2. Square brackets. Completion of the missing information by the researcher. The purpose is to facilitate the understanding of what the interviewee said [].
3. Names: schools, communities, teachers, principals were changed for a general word.
4. Quotes of the interviewees in their statements were noted with single quote marks. For example: I was told 'leave the classroom'.

These rules enabled the division of sub-categories into a number of main topics and the creation of a descriptive and story-oriented continuum, without creating the excessive disassembly of the participants' statements.

Map of the Categories into the Analysis of the Findings

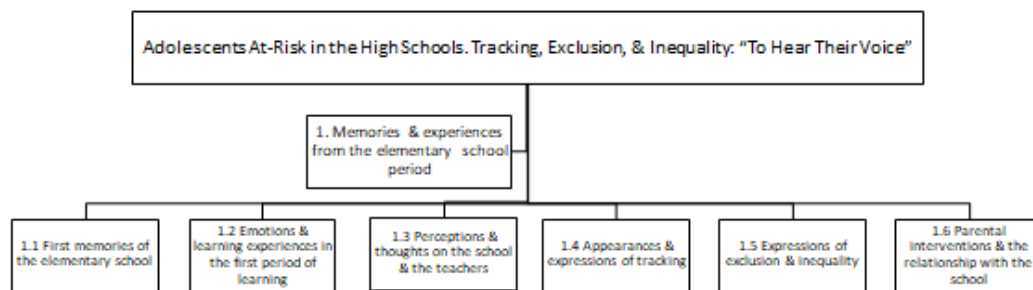






5.1 The Voice of the Students – The Elementary School Period

The first category tells the memories and experiences of the research participants in the period of the studies in the elementary school. The participants were asked to tell about themselves and their studies. They describe the responses of the teachers and the system and the references to the difficulties that arise. The students were asked about instances such as classification, separation, and groups as expressions of tracking and exclusion and the array of the accompanying decisions and solutions.



In the first category there are six sub-categories. The first sub-category addresses the memory and experiences that arise as a first memory from the period of studies in the elementary school, from thinking that the first experiences build perception and influence the continuation of the learning and the self-perception of the students in the first period of studies. The participants' initial reference to their first period of studies tells about the reality as they perceive it.

The second sub-category presents the participants' references and thoughts on themselves as students and on the learning experiences and the period. The third sub-category describes their relations with the teachers, the learning practices, and the school

life. The fourth sub-category presents expressions and instances of tracking in the first classes, as described by the interviewees. The fifth sub-category tells about exclusion and inequality in the school as described by the participants. The sixth sub-category tells about the parental interventions and the system of relations of the parents with the school in the context of their children.

5.1.1 First Memories from the Elementary School

The interviewees were asked to tell about a memory or first experience from their first period of studies. Importance is ascribed to the bringing up of this memory and to the manner of reference to it. Emotions flood the students when they are asked to tell about their first period.

The first memory tells about a good period and a good learning experience. In the elementary school the experience is familial and intimate.

“From the first grade to the sixth grade I was an excellent student. My mother keeps all my report cards and tests. I had it wonderful in the elementary school.” (SA, female)

“The elementary school was fun. I was a good student, everything was fine. This was a small school with a family atmosphere. The teachers and the students are like family. I have a good experience.” (SL, male)

They prefer to declare that they do not have memories. They find it difficult to speak about the period.

“I do not really remember this period. The entire elementary time, a cool kid, you know, perhaps once a year a letter to the parents, that’s all, until the sixth grade regular. (He is quiet thinking) I do not have many memories.” (AZ, male)

In the elementary school it was usual (she is quiet) Well, I do not really remember the elementary school, only the high school.” (NA, female)

The student brings up a difficult memory already in the first grade. “I do not have anything to say. It was awful. I prefer not to remember. Terrible, I did not listen, I was not

interested in the studies, I did not think this was important to life. It was not a good time. Bad memories. I do not learn. I do not want to go to school already from the first grade. It is hard for me to read, to write. I feel bad.” (IL, female)

There are memories that bring up difficulties that are divided into a number of aspects. There are learning difficulties that the students find it hard to explain.

“In the elementary school [state religious] I had difficulties in Hebrew. In mathematics I was good. I always came to the school, I was never absent. I loved the routine of the elementary school.” (GA, female)

“It was hard for me in the subjects of mathematics and Hebrew. I had difficulties in the elementary school. I do not know, I remember with difficulty (she is silent), lots of difficulties.” (CH, female).

“In the elementary school I was a good student. I invested. It was important to me. From the third grade I had difficulties with mathematics. I did not finish, I did not understand.” (YV, male)

Functional difficulties such as lack of concentration, attention difficulties, and laziness lead to lack of success. The students find it hard to explain. The sentences are short and are accompanied by silences.

“(The student coughs, takes a deep breath) I mainly remember that I did not succeed in anything. I did not succeed in learning. I did not understand what they are saying to me. From the first grade I was not focused. I do not listen. I did not succeed (she stops and is silent).” (DA, female)

“I always had learning difficulties. I do not know (she is silent), I always had difficulties. I tried to work as necessary but I was rather lazy, without motivation to learn. It did not come well to me.” (OH, female)

“I was good in terms of behavior. I learn (she takes a deep breath), less. I sit quietly and do not disrupt, but I did not learn. Already in the young classes I remember

that it was hard for me. I did not listen and I did not understand what they are saying. I tried (she is silent, lowers her gaze). It didn't work for me.” (RO, female)

Behavioral difficulties: the students attribute behavior difficulties to themselves. In their statements it is possible to see the teachers' conceptualizations.

“I was wild from the fourth or fifth grade, since I was fat and Russian and they would attack me especially for being fat and this and this (she is silent she lowers her gaze).” (SP, female)

“I was rather lazy. In principle I would not really learn. Until the ninth grade this was how it was. I do not really do homework. In the first to sixth grades I already did not learn. I was lazy, I always was lazy.” (DN, male)

The first memory is of exclusion and tracking. From the first grade they leave the classroom to receive help. They feel pain and lack of belonging.

“I was with help from the first grade. I would leave the lessons to get help. I left for many lessons. I already did not feel a part of the class. Until the fifth grade I do not remember much, only that I would go for individualized lessons. Let's say for arithmetic for a tutorial lesson.” (SH, female).

“From the third grade they moved me to another class. I did not understand why. I did not know how to read and write. I was suspended all the time. I make airplanes and fly them during the lessons, I did not know how to read and not to write. This is what I remember.” (TW, male)

“It rather hurts what I went through. I will go back, they told me: ‘You are retarded, you cannot sit (silence ...)’ . They always made certain to remind me that I am less good than everyone.” (AM, male)

To summarize, the students' first memory is associated with difficulties – learning difficulties and attention and behavior difficulties. The participants characterize themselves as students who were undisciplined unfocused, lazy. The descriptions of the

initial experiences are accompanied by silence and embarrassment they feel pain, and short sentences are said.

5.1.2 Emotions and Experiences in the First Period of Learning

The students shared the thoughts and emotions in the first period of the studies. Their stories indicate the school's reference to them and the difficulties they experience. The contribution of the statements is to the understanding of the students and the understanding of the practices customary in the school. It is possible to learn about the perception that the students develop in the first years of themselves as students.

The students report difficulties already in the first classes in the school. The learning is perceived as a difficult experience of lack of efficacy. The experiences that arise stifle the conversation, and the pain is visible. They persist in saying that they do not remember the period.

“Already from the second grade all my report cards are ‘not satisfactory, not satisfactory’. All the time they told me that you have potential and you do not learn (she lowers her gaze, is silent ...).” (SP, female)

“It was hard for me in the subjects of mathematics and Hebrew. I had difficulties in the elementary school (she is silent), I do not know. I remember barely. Many difficulties and many private teachers. Really a lot. From the second grade, about, private lessons and this (she is silent). I did not feel that this helps me since they taught in different methods and this was my difficulty. So it is not enough that it was hard for me in the class, it was hard for me with the private teachers, really a nightmare in this period (her gaze is lowered, she is silent).” (CH, female)

“From about the eighth grade I began to have difficulties in mathematics and English. I did not understand. In most of the lessons I felt a great load. All the time I looked at the other children and I did not understand why I am like this, everything is hard for me. How am I different from them, I did not understand. What I understood was according to the grades and comments of the teachers. All the time I heard, ‘you do not learn’ (silence).” (OR, male)

Learning difficulties from the first grade: The students do not know how to explain the difficulties and their feeling is lack of efficacy for learning.

“I always had learning difficulties, I do not know (she is silent), I always had difficulties. I tried to work as necessary, but I was rather lazy, without motivation to learn. It did not come well to me. My difficulties, you ask, I am not attentive, I dream, I stare into space. If participated once in a while, this was ok, but it was necessary to attract me to participate”. (OH, female)

“I could not address myself as a student. It was hard for me to sit in the class and concentrate. I did not feel I was learning. From when is this? From the start, from the first grade. Difficulty with sitting (he is silent). He continues, “I do not sit. I want all the time to get up and go out. Something inside explodes every moment and I must go out. Then I would go out and leave the classroom.” (LM, male)

“It was hard for me to understand the learned material, in all the lessons. I thought I was one who does not understand since I saw around me children with their hands up and answering the questions and I am not participating, I do not know anything (sad look, lowered). Even when I listened I did not understand and the most difficult thing was that this was in all the lessons. Some have it hard in mathematics or English or Bible, for me the feeling was in all the lessons (lowered gaze ...).” (RO, female)

The learning is described as a negative experience. The frustration and lack of success are apparent. The students attribute to themselves laziness, boredom, and attention and concentration problems. The main reason is the large class.

“Ah ... I think that ... (she hesitates, does not find the words). Perhaps I gave up on myself, it may be that I less put forth effort and less tried since I knew ahead of time that this does not interest me. These subjects I did not care about. I thought that I do not want to learn them and I do not need them.” (CH, female)

“(She coughs, take a deep breath ...) and says: I mainly remember I did not succeed in anything. I did not succeed in learning. I did not understand what they are telling me. From the first grade I was not focused. I do not listen. I did not succeed. (She stops, is

silent ...).” Researcher: “Tell more.” “I did not succeed, this was difficult. It was a large class, 30 students in the class is a lot, I could not focus this way (she is quiet ... she coughs ...). I did not understand what she is teaching, what she is saying to me. I simply went outside. I only I felt I do not succeed and I do not understand what they are telling me. Today I know to tell myself a large class is impossible, I do not succeed in a large class.” (DA, female)

“Like I said already, bad, difficult. I was ashamed. At night I would think if only morning will not come. I thought that I do not want to learn. Mainly I though how this will end and how to change the school (silence). I hated going to school, I really hated the school. I did not like the teachers. The classes of the elementary school were a nightmare for me (he is silent). I do not know. I simply did not understand anything. I try to listen, try to be like everyone. I do not succeed.” (EL, male)

A student attempts to explain the difficulties. He adopts the teachers’ words and these build his perception of efficacy for learning.

“All the time I looked at other children and I did not understand why I am like this, everything is hard for me. How I am different from them I did not understand. What I understood was according to the grades and comments of the teachers. All the time I heard from them ‘You do not learn’.” (OR, male)

The responses of the system address the requirement for learning. A perception is built among the students that the role of the school is learning. Personal and family difficulties do not belong to the school.

“In the fifth grade there was a student in the class who really harassed me. He would insult me. I have no idea why. He would mock me. For instance, once I wanted to tell a joke, this was at the end of the studies on the way home. We would go together in a group of children to the same neighborhood where we lived. I wanted to be nice so I told a joke, and then he laughed at me and pulled everyone to laugh at me that the joke is stupid. I remember that I was insulted and thus situation lasted some time.” Researcher: “Did you tell this?” “No”. Researcher: “Why didn’t you tell?” “Since it did not belong to the studies.

This child would humiliate me. Often during the breaks I would go into the classroom and start to cry so that they would not see that I am crying. And nobody ever knew about this. I also did not tell anybody since I was ashamed.” (DN, male)

“I do not remember that I learned. My mother died when I was in the kindergarten. Since I went to school I have not succeeded in learning. I always was with the feeling that they do not understand me. I fled a lot from school to home, I was all the time frustrated, mainly with what happened at home (she is silent) and nobody was interested in this. I do not remember the elementary school.” (SK, female)

Feelings of frustration, lack of efficacy to succeed, and rejection are the main experience.

“I was suspended all the time. I make airplanes and fly them during the lessons. I did not know how to read and not to write. This is what I remember (he is silent). What is the difficulty? A problem of nerves that I do not control. I did not write, I did not know to read, I failed tests all the time.” (TW, male)

“(She thinks she coughs). What I felt, that I am less good than everyone. I do not succeed. Yes, you do not succeed and you see that this succeeds and this succeeds and you do not. You do not understand why it is this way. What to continue if I do not understand. I remember really well in the fourth grade in the Bible lessons I did not want to remain there. I did not understand anything. I would get up and leave. I did not succeed in communicating with the teacher. She did not speak to me at all. I get up and leave, I do not remain in the class. I thought that I am less good. That I do not have a chance to succeed this way. They push me into a corner, in essence. I did not understand what she is teaching, what she is speaking to me. I simply went outside.” (DA, female)

“Today I know to say that I felt bad, awful. I did not want to go to school. This is what I about remember already from such young grades, I do not want to go to school. I did not listen to the teachers who tried to speak to me. They spoke a lot to me that I come late. From the first grade until the sixth grade only these were the conversations, Frequently they involved my mother. But there were times that mother said that she no

longer has the strength for teachers who complain and she needs to go to work. Then she also would be angry at me.” (IL, female)

A student describes the conversation that runs through her head. She describes frustration, loneliness, and abandonment. “The thought about that you do not succeed in the studies are really disappointing. They told me: ‘You have difficulties in the studies.’ I did not understand what this means. Why is it hard for me in contrast to others? What do I have, how am I different? I did not understand this. I also did not have many thoughts since I had to invest fully in this. I lost confidence. I felt that they do not care about me. They gave up on me. I thought that they would send me to a special school, for children with attention disorders. When I remember this, it was really hard. I prefer to forget already. The thoughts about the studies did not interest me. I did not want to learn. They did not give me individualized hours, they did not take me to a conversation, and they did not want to know what happens with me truly. All the time I thought how to end the day and to go home. What do I have to do there. The homeroom teacher liked me, kisses and hugs, but she did not care that I am absent, not coming to the lessons, not preparing homework. I said to myself that if they give up on me, then I do not care that they suspend me. They suspended me about twice a week. I was a lot suspended, at home. At school they did not investigate till the end, they did not dedicate time to understand what is happening to me, what is hard for me, they did not have the responsibility for my future, that I would succeed. It all is me and me and me. The school nothing. A machine for kids. And then they moved me a class. I did not think too much. I was insulted, I was agitated. I do not have anybody to talk to. I am with the label of attention disorder and that’s it.” (RT, female)

Frustration and low self-image are products of unexplained difficulties. “I felt that I am not understanding why I am like this. I tried to be alright. This simply did not work. You are all the time feeling that you do not understand things and you see children understanding and this is further upsetting.” (GA, female)

“(She is silent) bad, really bad. I would think why am I one who does not understand, I did not know (she seems sad). It thought that this is hard and I will never

succeed in overcoming (she is silent). and then you begin to think that the stuies are not for you.” (RO, female)

To summarize, the first years in the school exhibit the coping with the learning difficulties. The students feel frustration, distress, and abandonment. The conversation is characterized by short sentences, fragmented, in the attempt to end the conversation. Statements of “I do not know” and “I do not remember” characterize the accompanying frustration and powerlessness. The students’ explanations are situational and lack an adult’s mediation. The statements they heard from their teachers include laziness, attention disorder, a large class is not suitable.

5.1.3 Perceptions and Thoughts on the School and the Teachers

The students describe their relationships with their teachers. They tell about the teachers’ behaviors and responses. They describe the practices that helped them versus the patterns and constellation of responses that led to tracking and exclusion. The students are aware of the construction of the self-perception regarding the efficacy and learning that derive from it.

The patterns of behavior and the constellation of responses of the teachers make the learning difficult and ignore the students’ difficulties. They are distanced and removed from the class without explanation.

“All the time they said to me you have potential and you do not learn. But they took me out a lot. They told me: ‘you cannot be in the classroom, you are disturbing.’ This is what I remember. Where did they take me out to? They took me out, like this: Get out of the classroom! Already from the second grade I remember: ‘Go to the principal! And such. (lowered gaze).” (SP, female)

“In the second grade teachers would tell me: ‘Get out of the classroom”, when I spoke. They said I disrupted. I did not succeed in communicating with the teacher. She did not speak to me at all, I got up and go out, I do not remain in the classroom. I did not understand what she is teaching, what she is telling me. I simply went out. When I finally dared to ask, they answer you but do not really answer you, they answer to continue

onwards and they want to finish the material, to advance forwards, to hasten this.” (DA, female)

The statements are humiliating and harmful and ignore the difficulties that create frustration in the student.

“A kid who is being insulted becomes aggressive. Teachers would yell at me from the first grade. I would attack. And in the elementary school they already expelled me. And I was a problematic girl. I attempted to show that they would not mess with me. From the first grade it was hard for me. We had a hard time at home. Father would drink. And no teacher referred to me.” (SP, female)

“The teachers notice that it is hard for me. A teacher of English in the third grade tells me that I am asking individualized from her and she says to me ‘No, you cannot. It is necessary to give others’. And this was to cultivate those who are leading in learning. Teachers to me: “You are weak.” To close the gap, so good, here is an individualized hour. They checked it off, since I was on their case, and this is it.” (AM, male)

Responses and behaviors of teachers tell of punishment, humiliation, yelling, and mainly the abandonment of the student. Their statements are characterized by silence.

“They did not tell me and they did not share anything. About the teachers, I prefer not to speak about this (he is silent a tear appears in his eye, he lowers his head). Look, I did not think about them, I thought about me (he looks down and is silent). I am not interested in sharing (he is silent).” He continues: “I did not address what was told to me (he again is silent, lowers his head). What they told me and did to me I do not want to talk about this. In general, much humiliation and go outside and you are nothing and such (he is choked, he is silent). And also: ‘How many times I told you not to leave in the middle of the lesson! And ... why don’t you do this! And far more (his gaze is lowered, there is sadness in his eyes, the memory is hard for him)” (LM, male)

“They did not tell, they only yelled at me: ‘Listen, learn (he is silent Sad. He appears ashamed, he is silent ...).” He says: “All the time like this. I was angry at them

since they reported all the time to my parents. They treated me as if I am lazy and do not want to learn.” (EL, male)

There is the repeated requirement on the part of the teachers for learning while ignoring the students’ difficulties. A response that recurred is: “The teachers, they did not tell and address anything (silence).” (CH, female) “They did not talk to me about my difficulties. All the time they focus on the attention disorder and go get assessed and you need Ritalin and then you can learn. Everything is me and me and me. The school nothing. A machine for kids.” (RT, female)

“They did not tell me anything. I did not think they understand that I have difficulties. I thought that only I feel this. They did not talk to me about anything. But this is how it was with everyone so I did not expect anything else. They did not share with me about my difficulties as I said to you. They did not involve anyone. This was not something that was just with me. This is how it was. But it is clear that they praised successful students and to me they often said, ‘learn, what is happening with you, invest.’ (OR, male)

“I do not remember (silence). When it was hard for me, they did not help me. Only in the first and second grades did they help me a bit. Then nothing. Ah (quiet) I do not remember, it does not seem to me that they said anything to me. They helped me a little, they let me do tests alone with a teacher who supervised me. Or something like that. I do not remember that they spoke with me. I do not remember that they spoke to my parents. I do not remember that they helped or explained to me what my problem is. I do not remember.” (DN, male)

“At first I did not like them at all. And then I did not let them teach. I was in a war with them. All the time I was in a war. I blamed them for everything. From the third grade they moved me to another class, I did not understand why. I did not know to read and to write. All the time they told me: if you do not control yourself you will ruin for yourself everything and that I needed to control myself. This is the only sentence I heard for years. And then I think what is the nonsense they are telling me. This would make me more agitated. What is this, control?! I can control and do not want? I cannot control and this is

stronger than me. You have problems, where to take them (silence). You understand, but then I could not tell them this.” (TW, male)

There were responses of punishment, humiliation, and harm related to the students’ families.

“They (the teachers) ask why I changed. I did not have an answer for this. And then you hear a homeroom teacher who says: ‘The wheel is turning back’. Since my sister was the same thing (she lowers her head).” (NM, female)

“It was very hard for me. There were many days that I was late to the school. They would be angry at me, even punish me. There was nobody to talk to about this. This was what I heard all the time: ‘Concentrate, you are not concentrating, you are not listening, you are tired, why aren’t you working!’ The homeroom teacher, she also knew what is happening in my home. She always told me; ‘You must learn, this is for you, what do you want, to be a cleaner like your mother’.” (IL, female)

There was not a single teacher there for them.

“There was not a single teacher for me, not one, not one.” (RT, female) “There was no such teacher.” (GA, female)

The teachers’ responses and the ignoring of the students’ difficulties structure the perception of self-efficacy.

“Most of the time I thought it was superfluous [to learn]. Why do I need this in life. This is not important, what will this help me in life.” (IL, female)

“I thought that I want to be a student but I did not understand what is happening to me, why I am like this. This is really hard. I did not share with anybody. But the teachers always told my parents in the parents’ meetings that I am not succeeding and that it is hard for me and they also do not know why I do not understand.” (RO, female)

“I thought that I am a wild student. When they took me to conversations, I ignored them. All the time they took me to conversations so that I will stop and will begin to learn

and if I learn then they will help me. I would try, truly, really, but I had nerves and I exploded.” (TW, male) “I do not know (he is silent) The only thing that came to me is that I did not know what to do. I did not have how to change something. All that I attempted did not work for me.” (YV, male)

A helpful practice is a teacher who sees the student and his difficulties.

“There were teachers who helped more in terms of learning then I liked them more and I was more focused on their lessons. They would take me to the individualized lesson and explain to me and then this helped me somehow. And there were teachers who less invested in individualized and then it was harder for me in their lessons. This depended on the teacher. There is a teacher who sees you and speaks to you, there is a teacher who does not see you.” (RO, female)

To summarize, the students describe academic and emotional difficulties and explain that the teachers are not there for them. They are not aware of their difficulties or ignore them. The students report the harm, humiliation, and punishment accompanied by difficult feelings. The requirement of teachers for learning also ignores their difficulties. The experience is that they are not visible.

5.1.4 Instances and Expressions of Tracking

The students address the classification, grouping, transfer to classes, or removal from classes – expressions of tracking they experienced in the school. The students displayed difficulty addressing these aspects and even attempted to ignore the question that addresses the topic.

One student maintains that she does not remember. “I do not remember, I do not know, I was not into things.” (KA, female) Another student describes the groupings and prefers to say that she does not remember. “I remember groups in mathematics and Hebrew (she is silent) I do not really remember.” (CH, female)

From the first grade, classifications and divisions into groups according to achievements are performed. A perception is adopted that this is the solution of the system and it is best for them.

“Officially not. But always you knew whether you are strong or weak. They would take you out to get help in small groups. And there were those in the class who would raise their hand and answer every questions. The division who you are and where you are is clear and transparent.” (AM, male)

“Yes, certainly. From the first grade children in groups. All sorts of groups. According to subjects, according to grades. But this is the best, no?” (OH, female)

“Classifications (silence) sure, all the time from the first grade (silence) mainly in arithmetic and language, then in English, from the first grade you feel different. And they give you help in other lessons and other lessons and you do not have the strength for this either. Certainly they classify, and it is clear that you understand from the beginning that you are in a weak group. And in the class you hear the teacher say to the children: ‘It is hard for you, you do no work, move to this group.’ This is how it was. In reality, the teachers do not have it in them to deal with you.” (SP, female)

Tracking is determined according to achievements and grades in the core subjects. The teachers decide about the classification, the division into groups, and even the removal to a small class. These are done without the involvement of or direction for the students.

“There was a division into groups in English and mathematics. In English I was in the highest group, in mathematics in the middle ... they divided us according to tests. They collected everyone and told each one the group he is going to and I did not really care. I accepted what they told me.” (DN, male)

“I left many lessons to learn in a small group. In the mathematics lessons and in other lessons that were hard for me. My teacher decided this. They did not ask me, they simply tell you: you are going to learn with this and this teacher in the arithmetic lessons. She will help you.” (DA, female)

Another expression of tracking is the learning assistance provided outside of the classroom. The students describe going out of the classroom as an experience of disconnection and lack of belonging.

“The class, I remember, was big for me. I always was disconnected from the entire class. All the time you are with aids and go out of the lessons to receive help and make up material. This causes a disconnection certainly. Let’s say there is something social in the class, I am disconnected. You also feel not like everybody. And you know that you are less than everybody.” (SH, female)

“They would take me out of the classroom a lot, to a teacher who will help me. I remember in a small room I sat with her and also there it was hard for me.” (IL, female)

A student summarizes, “In retrospect, on the one hand it is good to receive help and on the other hand you feel bad with everybody else.” (SH, female)

The solution of learning assistance outside of the classroom does not help and even is excluding. However, this perception is adopted since this is the solution that enables learning.

“Until the sixth grade they did not move me to groups. I did not have such a situation. I was always in the classroom but I remember that I left a lot. If I am not mistaken, this is what I remember. For instance, I went to learn in a small group in mathematics lessons and in other lessons that were hard for me. My teacher decided this, they did not ask me, they simply tell you: ‘You are going to learn with this and this teacher in the arithmetic lessons. She will help you.’ It is clear that you think that in a small group it is better for you. You understand more and they help you. But to tell you that this advanced me, not really. All the time I was behind and with difficulties but I preferred to receive this help. Why? Since in the class it was really bad for you.” (DA, female)

“It is clear that this is how it is also in the elementary school. I already in the elementary school was in a small class in mathematics and in English. We were a group of six students with a teacher separately outside of the classroom. It is clear that they classified us and divided into groups. Even in the first grade I remember in reading we had groups.”

Researcher: “How did this feel?” “I do not know, we did not think about this, we thought about this that only in this way we can learn and we must leave the classroom since in the classroom we did not succeed in learning. The most important thing was to feel good in the small group. I did not have thoughts why I am not with everyone. Since you are certain that you cannot since you have attention disorder and you do not understand and this is how it is.” (NA, female)

Tracking to special education: the classifications and separations continue in special education. Here too the practice is homogenous learning groups.

“I moved to a school of special education in the fifth grade. There are two classes in every grade there. There is one class where they are really backwards in the material and they always need support and they are slow, and one class of children who get it quickly and advance and can work together with us. All of us there are the same thing, the same level. We are all with attention disorder, we all cannot sit, we all are the same. There too in the lessons there was lots of mess.” (GA, female)

Difficult emotions accompany the tracking to special education. There is the lack of the preparation of the student and recognition of the accompanying emotions.

“When they referred me to the special education school, my mother insisted that I go to the regular school. And then I thought that if my mother is insisting for me, then perhaps there is something in this. Perhaps something will yet come of me. My mother tried and really did not give in. But they also fought her. ‘Your daughter does not have anything to do here, she will not learn and she will not succeed’. One day they simply put me in another class and said: ‘manage.’ And this was terrible. I did not understand why decided for me which class to be in. This was in the fifth grade. They do not talk to you. They simply decide for you.” Researcher: “Who decided?” “The teachers. They did not explain to me but it seems to me because of the grades. What can be.” Researcher: “What did you think, feel?” I did not think too much. I was insulted, I was agitated. You do not have anybody to talk to. I am with the label of attention disorder and this is it.” (RT, female)

“They did not tell and did not share anything. One day in the fifth grade they considered moving me to a small class (special education. I am not interested in sharing (he is silent lowers his head). All the time they insulted me and I told myself as long as they insulted me I will show them. I am worthy and they are nothing. My big brother always helped me and told me don’t pay attention to the teachers, they will not do anything for you, prove to them that you are not zero.” (LM, male)

To summarize, the tracking exists from the first grade. Students describe the expressions of the tracking: leaving the classroom, classification into groups, and transfer to a small class or to a special education school. The students report that they do not receive accompaniment or explanation, and they explain the lack of belonging to the homeroom class and the insult and pain that accompany these transitions. The teachers’ requirements for learning ignore the students’ difficulties and build a perception that the tracking solutions are a good alternative for them.

5.1.5 Expressions of Exclusion and Inequality

The proposed array of responses and solutions of the teachers and the school, the tracking and their expressions bring up descriptions and expressions of exclusion and inequality experienced by students in the elementary school.

The teachers ignore them and display an excluding attitude: they do not see the students, and they do not understand their difficulties. The students believe that they have nobody they can talk to.

“(She sighs, breathes slowly) In the elementary school nobody addressed this topic (lack of concentration), they simply did not address me at all (she is silent). I was of less interest, they less looked at me. They do not see you and the classes are large, the teacher does not see you. You raise your hand and they do not address you. They did not know me so that they could help me. They told me that I need Ritalin. They took me out a lot. ‘You cannot be in the classroom, you are disrupting!’ This is what I remember (she is silent ...). They took out, like this: ‘Get out of the classroom!’ Already from the second grade I remember: ‘Go to the principal!’ Like that.” (SP, female)

“They mainly did not address me, I left the classroom, and the teachers did not care. There is nobody to talk to. They do not give me what I really need, a good explanation. When I finally dared to ask, they answer you but do not really answer you, they answer to continue onwards and they want to finish the material, to advance forwards, to hasten this.” (DA, female)

Another expression of the exclusion and unequal attitude is the lack of attitude and ignoring of the personal, academic, and social needs. Teachers prefer the leading students in the classroom.

“They told me you are retarded, you cannot sit. They told me older brother the same thing (silence embarrassment). The teachers note that it is hard for me, a teacher of English in third grade says to me that I am asking individualized and she says to me ‘No, you cannot. It is necessary to give others’. And this was to cultivate those who are leading in learning. Teachers to me: “You are weak.” To close the debt, so good, here is an individualized hour. They checked it off, since I was on their case, and this is it.” (AM, male)

“There was a child who would humiliate me. Often during the breaks I would go into the classroom and start to cry so that they would not see that I am crying. And nobody ever knew about this. I also did not tell anybody since I was ashamed. When it was hard for me they did not help me. Only in the first and second grades did they help me a bit. In the lower grades they help you here and there. Then nothing. Ah (quiet) I do not remember that they spoke with me. I do not remember that they told my parents. I do not remember (it is hard for him, he lowers his gaze).” (DN, male)

Exclusion is being ignored, being given up on, and being abandoned. The school does not take responsibility for the student’s situation.

“I always am disconnected from the entire class and the track. This causes disconnection certainly. Let’s say there is something social in the classroom, I am disconnected. You also feel not like everyone. And you know you are less than everyone.” (SH, female)

“I felt that they don’t care about me. They gave up on me. I thought they would send me to a special education school, for children with attention disorders. When I recall this, it is really difficult, I prefer already to forget (she is silent ...). They did not give us individualized hours, they did not take me to a conversation, and they did not want to know what is happening with me truly. The homeroom teacher loved me, kisses and hugs, but she did not care that I am absent, not coming to the lessons, not preparing homework. I said to myself that if they give up on me, then I do not care that they suspend me. They suspended me about twice a week. I was a lot suspended, at home. At school they did not investigate till the end, they did not dedicate time to understand what is happening to me, what is hard for me, they did not have the responsibility for my future, that I would succeed.” (RT, female)

A student describes his exclusion. The system addresses him in a hurry. “From the third grade they transferred me to another class, I did not understand why. In the fifth grade they transferred me to a small class and then I had it easier. They did not tell me anything about this, they do not prepare you. Only the parents all the time they told me to learn but I did not succeed. My difficulties drove me crazy.” (TW, male)

To summarize, expressions of exclusion and inequality create a feeling of lack of belonging and alienation, beginning from the initial classes in the school. Students share their experiences of ignoring, punishment, removal from the classroom, giving up, and abandonment. These are mechanisms that exclude and discriminate against the students. The system accuses the students that they are not learning or putting forth effort. The exclusion and inequality are described from the first grade. These have influence on the students’ self-worth, motivation, and efficacy.

5.1.6 Parental Interventions and the Relationship with the School

The students tell about the parental interventions with the school and the school interventions in the family. The students describe that the school complains, accuses, and deploys the parents against their children. The school turns with complaints to the parents about their children’s behavioral and academic difficulties.

“They only call mother, what will be with your daughter.” (CH, female)

“Teachers turned to my parents and would say to them what they always told me: ‘She is dreaming, she does not listen, why doesn’t she take Ritalin.’ The parents did not tell me too much since they both were such dreamers then they understood me.” (OH, female)

The students express the parental powerlessness directed to them because of the school pressure.

“Many times they ambushed mother. But there were times that mother said that she does not have strength already for the teachers who complain, and she needs to go to work. And then she would be angry at me. ‘Why do you not wake up, what is happening to you’.” (IL, female)

“I would come home and argue a lot with the parents. They did not know what to do with me. Among us (the religious) the teachers tell everything to the parents. All the time they said to my parents that I do not learn. Among us this really shames the parents if their child does not learn. They were angry at me a lot. I had many thoughts that I wanted my parents to be proud of me but this did not work for me.” (EL, male)

The school creates feelings of guilt among the parents. These are expressed in angers and arguments with their children. The parental frustration is directed towards the children.

“I come home, get the report card and a disappointed look from the parents. Teachers all the time say you can do more and more than I am and even when I engage in nonsense. I had great disappointment and many arguments with the parents. Generally they did not tell me a lot (the parents), but I felt their disappointment.” (AN, female)

“All my report cards are ‘not satisfactory, not satisfactory’. Already from the second grade. All the time they said to me you have potential and you do not learn. Mother did not understand why I am like this and this is terrible frustration. Mother would cry all the time and I was even more aggressive because of this, from the lower grades. And

mother goes crazy. What will she do?? You ask how this feels, bad, hard. I remember pressure all the time and mainly I am going crazy with what is happening to mother. As is, it is not good at home. And they call her (mother) from the school: ‘your daughter is disrupting, your daughter is not learning’.” (SP, female)

“The teachers always told my parents in the parents’ meeting that I am not succeeding and that it is hard for me and that they do not know why I do not understand. The parents did not know what to say. Learn, put forth effort, what is happening to you?! And such.” (RO, female)

The students maintain that their parents are fighting for them and attempt to create solutions. The students are proud of their parents.

“When they referred me to the special education school, my mother insisted that I go to the regular school. And then I thought that if my mother is insisting for me, then perhaps there is something in this. Perhaps something will yet come of me. My mother tried and really did not give in. But they (the school) also fought her (my mother). ‘Your daughter does not have anything to do here, she will not learn and she will not succeed’.” (RT, female)

“My mother noticed that I am having difficulties in the studies. She thought that the best solution is private teachers. Truly, my mother spent an ocean of money on this.” (CH, female)

“The parents preferred that I not take pills and I got along somehow without pills. The teachers pressure for me to do an assessment, the parents took me but when it was decided that I need Ritalin the parents did not agree and I listened to them. I also did not want.” (OH, female)

To summarize, the school refers the student’s difficulties to his parents. The school demands of the parents to take responsibility and to create a change in the student. The school system weakens the parents in the children’s eyes. The parents fight for their children and attempt to find appropriate solutions for their learning.

5.1.7 Summary of the First Category

This category reviewed the memories, experiences, and feelings of the interviewees in the period of studies of the elementary school. The description of the first memories brought up difficult emotions, and the students expressed the desire to go talk about a different period. They describe difficulties with learning, attention, functioning, and behavior. The research participants attribute to themselves laziness and lack of attention as main factors of their failure. Already in their first years, the students tell about the tracking and tracking practices. They mention the relationship between tracking and exclusion and inequality. These are expressed in emotions of alienation, loneliness, humiliation, and lack of belonging and vulnerability of the self.

Regarding the school and the school teachers, there are experiences of alienation on the teachers' part, humiliating statements, punishments, and removals as an array of responses towards the students' difficulties – or ignoring and abandonment. The school directs the students' difficulties to the parents. The school assigns to them the responsibility or the requirement for learning. The students' perception is that the school cannot address their difficulties, and a perception is built that the solutions proposed to them, which are tracking to a smaller group, help outside of the classroom, or referral to smaller classes or special education, are the good solutions for them.

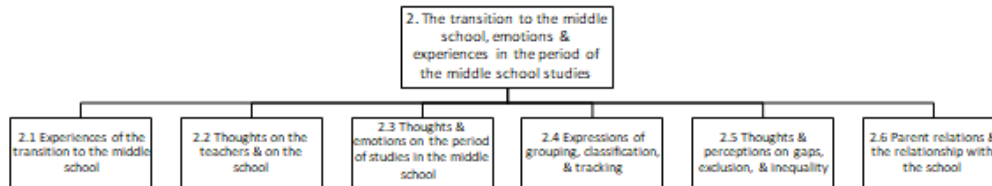
It is clear that also after the tracking the practices of separations, classifications, and divisions are structural in the system. The tracking is performed without involving or preparing the student. For the most part, this is announced to the student and his parents. These strengthen the alienation of the student from his class.

5.2 The Voice of the Students – The Middle School Period

The second category tells about the transition from the elementary school and the period of studies in the middle school. The category addresses the thoughts, the musings, and stories, as well as the emotions, of the students in the transition and in the period of studies in the middle school and the influence of the events, experiences, and emotions from the period of the elementary school, the experience of exclusion and inequality and their influence on the period of the studies in the middle school.

The students addressed their relationships with the teachers and with the school, the tracking practices, and the expressions of exclusion and inequality in the middle school. The transition to the middle school and the period of studies in it are a difficult transition for most students. The meaning for students who experience tracking and exclusion is more significant. The contribution of the statements will be examined by the students for the understanding of their difficulties and their coping with learning and with the building of their perception.

In this category there are six sub-categories. The first sub-category will describe the experience of the transition to the middle school and the accompanying feelings. The second sub-category will describe the students' thoughts about the teachers and the constellation of the responses and relations with them and with the school. The third sub-category will expound on the thoughts, perceptions, and influences of the students on the learning. The fourth sub-category will reveal the expressions of tracking in the middle school. The fifth sub-category will address the gaps, exclusion, and inequality in the middle school, and the sixth sub-category will present the relations between the parents and the school as perceived by the students.



5.2.1 The Experience of the Transition to the Middle School

This section focuses on the experience of the transition from the elementary school to the middle school and the students’ feelings and thoughts that accompany this transition. The middle school is perceived as a large school in which the difficulties from the elementary school are intensified. The students express their anxiety and frustration.

“All that was in the elementary school was also in these schools. Only that the level rises and it becomes very hard for me. Most of the houses I am in help outside of the classroom.” (DA, female)

“The transition was hard for me, terribly terribly. It was a shock. Every week I would flee to Shachaf (the elementary school). Since there it was a greenhouse, like a family. Suddenly the middle school is a huge place and you become a point.” (SH, female)

“The transition to the middle school was serious, rigid. This is no longer a big family. I felt pressure. It became very hard.” (SL, male)

There was no preparation towards the transition to the middle school. The students describe the fear and the emotional turbulence that accompanies them.

“No preparation: you know it was hard for you in the elementary school then it is clear that you think how it will be in the middle school. Nobody speaks to you about this.” (KA, female)

“What is preparation, who at all counts your or speaks with you. They are happy they are rid of you. With this feeling you finish the school, go now begin a new school, bigger and more frightening.” (AZ, male)

“You do not interest anyone. You wait in the vacation to see where they will put you. In the meantime you are under frightening pressure.” (EL, male)

“You finish sixth grade and this is very pressuring. What is pressuring? What will be onwards in the middle school. One nightmare finishes and another starts. You wait before the seventh grade that they will send you a letter, as if where you belong. I received what I did not want – a regular class. Why didn’t I want, since it is hard for me. I didn’t want this and already this is making a mess from the beginning.” (SP, female)

“You ask if they prepare you for the transition. The teachers prepare you (he mocks). There would always be such preparations: ‘Go down a class, go down a grouping, and ... this is most suited for you.’ Without explanation.” (AM, male)

The transition is described as a difficult experience. The large school inspires serious fears. They get lost. The difficulties with the elementary school are exacerbated.

“The transition is hard really. From a small school to a large school, you are really lost. Everything is difficult. He does not listen at all, you already do not try even, in the ninth grade I remember that I had a period that I no longer wanted to learn, it did not interest me anymore.” (YV, male)

“It is really hard for me to remember the transition. In essence many new children join in the seventh grade. More classes more people to satisfy and many thoughts about what will be with me.” (SA, female)

A student emphasizes that the difficulties from the elementary school move with him to the middle school. The same wars continue in the transition to the middle school.

“All the time they wanted to move me from the regular class to a small class. I did not agree, it was hard for me to make the decision. From the sixth grade towards the middle school they began more to pressure the topic. Only they attempt to bring me down a group to a small class and I refuse. I fought them all the time since they do not understand me. They think I am an imbecile, I know in me that I am not like this. All the time I say: I will show them. This is what kept me. Who are they to decide that I am not worth it.” (LM, male)

To summarize, the students describe the transition to the middle school as a transition that is accompanied by fears. The difficulties that accompany them from the elementary school strengthen the uncertainty and the feeling of frustration and anxiety regarding the school that is larger. There is no preparation for the transition.

5.2.2 Thoughts on the Teachers and on the School

The students focused on the relations and on the constellation of the teachers’ responses to them. They relate and quote teacher statements about them and about their difficulties and needs.

The teachers ignore the students’ difficulties and pressure them to learn. Harmful relations are described, a war that is accompanied by mutual accusations. The teachers’ responses are engraved in their memory and experiences.

“At first I did not like them at all. And then I did not let them teach. I was in a war with them. All the time I was in a war. I blamed them for everything. All the time they told me: if you do not control yourself you will ruin for yourself everything and that I needed to control myself. This is the only sentence I heard for years. And then I think what is the nonsense they are telling me. This would make me more agitated. What is this, control?! I can control and do not want? I cannot control and this is stronger than me. You have problems, where to take them.” (TW, male)

“The teachers prepare you. The preparations always were: ‘Go down a class’ ... ‘Go down a grouping’ ... and also: ‘this is the most suitable for you’.” (AM, male)

“They only yelled at me: ‘Listen ... learn’ (he is silent sad, ashamed) and says: ‘All the time like this’.” (EL, male)

“The homeroom teacher did not get along with me. Every morning there are arguments. One time (he stops) I have a story I will never forget. I got a haircut and the teacher did not like it. I went according to the fashion. He yelled at me in front of the entire class: ‘You look like a German soldier.’ This was humiliation, so what do you want, all I wanted was to get back at him, and I did intentionally, I did not come to the lessons. You want only to get back and to do it for spite.” (AZ, male)

It was a humiliating experience. The student internalizes the expectations of the system.

“We had a principal who comes every morning and goes over all ‘those’ children (he looks at me), you know those who take a pill and asks: ‘Did you take a candy this morning?’ as if not to insult us, but it is clear that everybody understood what this is. And he gives you a pill. Forces you. As if he is drugging you. There are parents who did not know about his, I also did not think that I need to tell. Look, a child does not always know, he relies on the adults. A principal, what will you think.” (AZ, male)

The teachers’ requirement for learning is uniform and ignores difficulties. There is one pace in the classroom that the students need to meet.

“The teachers tried, tried. They yelled at you to be at the pace of the entire class. I did not turn to the teachers and they did not turn to me.” (OH, female)

“I reached in the ninth grade the middle school, it was a regular class and again it was hard for me and I did not learn. They took all the children who found it hard to learn since there were huge classes and the feeling was that they are only running with the material. They do not see you. They race with the material and if you ask a question you feel that this just passes by them. They do not truly want to even answer you. You feel that you have disrupted the teacher in advancing. Again a large class, not for me.” (DA, male)

The teachers' responses are characterized by ignoring to the point of disconnection from the student. These create in the students a feeling of powerlessness and anger towards the teachers. A perception of lack of efficacy is created in the student.

“When they tell you that you go down a grouping, this is an announcement. They did not tell me anything. Simply I knew myself that it is hard for me and I do not have appropriate scores so this is obvious that you will go down. And then you convince yourself: ‘I am not interested in mathematics’. And every time this is a good feeling. I would speak a lot with my mother, and you do not have somebody to speak (she is quiet).” She raised her voice and continued with an angry tone: “On this basis what do you decide for me. Perhaps they will bring help. Perhaps I can more.’ They automatically put you, they set for you ahead of time the class. This was the situation that I felt (she inhales breathes ...) they do not know what happens to you, what you feel. They announce this and this is it.” (KA, female)

“They (the teachers) wanted a psycho-didactic assessment, they sent me to assessments. Every time another assessment, there are all sorts of types. It seems to me that I went through everything.” Researcher: “What did the teachers explain to you?” “No teacher is there for you. Nobody wants to see you. You get into problems. All the time mess in the school, as if the school only complicates life for you also at home. The teachers in the religious middle school will not care about me.” (AZ, male)

A student describes harm and pain, an experience that she is an object. Another student describes how suspension from the school creates pain and frustration.

“In the eighth grade there is a new homeroom teacher. I did not come (silence). I did not come at all to the school and this did not interest the teacher. The counselor asked the teacher: ‘You know me?’ And she answered: ‘no.’ And this did not interest her. What a feeling for a student, what do you think?! (she is silent). There was another day I came, they assigned me a regular attendance officer and decided for me to come to school. They told me: ‘Release tension and go at least one day (to the school).’ In a few times that you decide to come to school you go crazy. Take another example. One day the literature teacher looked at me in the lesson and she says: ‘Go out of the classroom’ since she thought

I had talked. I tell her I did not do anything. In any event, you do not really learn, noise and mess in the classroom, and me they kick out. Often they tell me: 'NM go out.' Then I hear the teacher muttering to herself: 'From the start she is bothering me, she can sit outside.' They do not fight, they give up on you easily. I suffered from the teachers greatly (she is silent). Teachers, they do not care if you do not come. I (the teacher) in any event get a salary. They would kick me out for nothing, since I bothered their eyes (she is silent)." (NM, female)

"Suspensions help? No way. It does not help to suspend. This freely insults. Children see that suspension and conversation do not solve anything. So you are at home, a child at home does not learn a lesson. The opposite; this disappoints your parents even more." (SA, female)

There are practices that help and an adjusted constellation of responses of teachers. One is a personal relationship with a significant adult.

"I primarily had a teaching assistant from the sixth grade to the eighth grade who was amazing. I received from her many values, what is respect, caring. She is everything, and I remained with her in contact all the time. Like a supportive mother. She brings everything, all the heart and soul. She was amazing." (SH, female)

There is lack of judgment as well as interest in the student. There is the strengthening of the efficacy and motivation, while promising a connection and help. The teacher is calm and stable.

Researcher: "Tell what the teacher did." "Certainly. (He thinks). She stopped judging me and began to speak to me and be interested in me. She stopped telling me to calm down and to stop with the behavior. She took me for motivation conversations. She said to me: 'You can' and also 'I will help you.' She was calm. All the teachers who would speak to me were more agitated than I was. This was a war. Either them or me. With this teacher, for the first time I was not at war. And then I begin to learn." (TW, male)

The teacher's care and caring create motivation and a feeling of success, which leads to the structuring of the identity and an experience of personal efficacy.

“I learned that she cared about me. I even bought a calculator! You understand (she turns to me), I bought a calculator! She said to me: ‘You only need to practice’. The teacher gave me pages that suit me, and told me that if I have a question I should call her. Suddenly, ‘voila’, I learn. I began to enter this. The teacher calmed me before the test. I received 90 from zero. I began with nothing. Then I told myself that I must learn. That truly they want to advance me.” (SP, female)

“In English I had a teacher who knew that I have potential, she gave me assignments and I succeeded. I was an expert only because she believed in me. What do I mean? She understood that I know English and understood that I cannot sit and listen all the time, then she gives me assignments and I advanced alone. I began to succeed and I became very good. I understood that she believes in me. English, she simply loved me. I felt that she turns to me, she speaks to me, lets me listen on the headset. She explains to me and believes in you. She addressed everyone. In the lesson she goes one by one, asks how you are, addresses each one, and teaches in an interesting manner.” (RT, female)

To summarize, there is a relationship between the teachers’ attitude and constellation of the school responses and the students’ constellation of defensive responses. The students identify the relationship. Teachers ignore the students’ difficulties and give up on them. The conversation with the students is humiliating. The students phrase well the painful and harmful practices and the practices suited to their difficulties and needs; these help them learn.

5.2.3 Thoughts and Emotions on the Period of the Studies in the Middle School

The students shared their thoughts and emotions. They emphasized their ways of coping with the school and the experiences with their difficulties. The comparison to the period of the elementary school and the raising of the memories help them tell about and describe the coping in the middle school and the start of the perception built about the school and about them as learners in it.

“There were many like me, this is not drastic, I knew that I work according to what suits me. This does not surprise you, you get what you deserve according to what you work.” (OH, female)

Lacking a connection with and the mediation of responsible adults, the students build a perception that they are lazy, not focused, incapable of learning. The large class is not a place to learn in.

“I was rather lazy. In principle I did not really learn. Until the ninth grade it was like this. I did not really do homework.” (DN, male)

“It is clear that in a small group it is better for you. You understand more and they help you. But to tell you that this advanced me, not really. All the time I was behind and with difficulties but I preferred to receive this help.” (DA, female)

“In the elementary school there it did not bother me, now I see this. In the elementary school I did not have problems and it was wonderful for me, then 30 students in the class did not bother me. In the seventh grade, because it was hard for me at home, I was not capable of being in such a class. There was one day that I came to the school and I did not enter the class. I had a bad morning. I had come out of sorts. They began to search for me in all the school and only from that day did they begin to address me. They arranged conversations with a counselor, regular meetings like this. Look, this is not something that I could put aside and focus on the studies.” Researcher: “Tell me what happened with the counselor?” “The truth is I do not remember (silence ...). I remember that I am talking about the situation at home and she tells me a lot: ‘You might learn, put this to the side, and focus.’ But I lost the desire. I did not want to at all.” (SA, female)

That the teachers ignore their difficulties brings up emotions of despair and powerlessness. These create behaviors such as violence, disruptions, and prolonged absences. The school is a war arena. The students feel like an object.

“The classes are huge and the feeling is that they are only running with the material. They do not see you. They race with the material and if you ask a question you feel that this just passes by them (the teachers). They do not truly want to even answer you. You

feel that you have disrupted the teacher in advancing. Again a large class, not for me.”
(DA, male)

“I fought them all the time since they do not understand me. They think I am an imbecile, I know in me that I am not like this. All the time I say: I will show them (he is silent ...). This is what kept me. Who are they to decide that I am not worth it. Not easy at all, I give up many times. As much as possible to fight. I was already on principle with the teachers. I was not interested in learning, I was interested that they didn’t count me. A feeling of who are you at all.” (LM, male)

“They dropped me to the third grouping. I felt bad, the change was not good. This brought me down. What do I have to do already in the third grouping. I also felt that I did not deserve this. You know what children sit there? The disruptive, insolent, badly behaved (he is silent he lowers his head). This only brought me down even further. I did not learn at all. It does not matter already in what grouping I was in.” (BA, female)

Experiences of aggression and harm from the teachers create harm to the self-worth and great pain.

“In the eighth grade a teacher once slapped me and then denied it. And nothing was done to her, they told me it was as if as a joke that she did this. And they made me out as screwed up.” (SP, female)

“At first, I thought that I was a wild student, and when they took me for conversations I ignored what they told me. The teachers all the time took me to conversations so that I will stop disrupting and will begin to learn and if I learn then they will help me. I would try sometimes not to disrupt but I had nerves and I exploded.” (TW, male)

“In the eighth grade I was a girl in the class (she stops, is silent ...), sure there is much discrimination (she is silent) she argued with me and slapped me and they did nothing to her and me they threw out. They would take me out for nothing, since I bothered their eyes. I tell her I did not do anything. In any event, you do not really learn, noise and mess in the classroom. Me they kick out. Often they tell me: ‘NM go out.’ Ahead of time

a teacher says 'she bothers me she will sit outside'. They do not fight, they give up on you easily. How does this feel you ask, I less attributed to myself, I did not talk with myself. I am a happy type. Only not to come to the school. I had thoughts, I hate the school, I want to vomit because of them. They released me. I am registered there since this is money from the municipality and therefore they told me: "Do not come to school but stay registered since this is money for the school'. Who said? The principal and the teachers." (NM, female)

Loneliness and alienation, frustration and powerlessness to the point of the disconnection from the school: the students lack an explanation about what is done towards them. A perception develops that the student is the cause of the disruption to the normal course of the learning.

"This is no longer a family, this is big. I felt pressured. In the ninth grade it became really difficult. I would skip. I would not come to school. Since I could not be there for long days. I in general think that the seventh to ninth grades are grades that can be skipped. Great stress and nothing happens. But I would not come a lot. I had many absences. They would call me and comment to me but it ended there." (SA, female)

"They knew that I want to move to a regular middle school. They (the teachers) did not accept this and I felt that they are angry at me all the time. So I on purpose did not learn. Nobody cared that I did not learn. I would sit for hours and not do anything. In this way I spent the whole year. I had a great gap with the rest of the class since a whole year I barely learned. I felt very difficult in the regular class, they did not try to help me. I did not understand how I am supposed to make up all the gaps and learn regularly. I had many difficulties although I tried. I truly tried since I wanted to fit in there and to prove that I did not make a mistake in my choice. But I was alone. I did not receive help in anything. In all the subjects it was awful. I do not understand anything. My thoughts all the time were that everyone wants to prove to me that I made a mistake. Even my parents (a sad look and silence ...) but I try to fight with all my strength and this does not really work. A very stressful period." (GA, female)

“I did not reach the school at all and this did not interest the teacher. Describe for yourself that one day I hear the counselor who asked the teacher ‘you know her’ and she answered: ‘no’. And this did not interest the teacher. What a feeling this is for a student (she is silent). What do you think (she looks at me). The homeroom teacher did not come to the conversations with the counselor. Your teacher does not at all know you, delusional. Teachers do not do what the child expects of them. What did I expect, you ask, I expect to feel a part and belonging and you never feel like this. There is no chemistry in any place where you are many hours.” (NM, female)

A story of being abandoned, given up on, and ignored: the student feels that she is not wanted in the school.

“The seventh grade you are engaged in the outside appearance. I tried to learn, it was hard that they do not look at me [the teachers]. And a student does not need to say it is hard for them to look at him. And they did not look at me. In the eighth grade I fell [in the studies]. I did not come to the school. I come at 8 and leave at 10. I did not have the strength to learn, I do not want to. I am in the class, nobody sees me. I come, I do not come, nobody sees. I flee and the homeroom teacher calls me: ‘why did you go, this is not alright, come tomorrow for a conversation with the principal.’ I come to the principal and hear from her: ‘You will be alright and you will come, you have potential.’ Again I do not come and they no longer call. The principal sees you only as money. They do not tell you but in the subtext you understand. They tell you: ‘come to the school, do not learn, sit in a kiosk, but come to school.’ On the other hand, not a single question on why you do not come, what is happening with you. I would tell them my grandmother does not feel good I am going and they would say to me bye. Without approval I would also flee.” (SP, female)

To summarize, the students describe the giving up and ignoring of the teachers and other educators in the system, such as the counselor or principal. Statements such as “I deserve this” or “I am to blame” express the feeling of exclusion reflected in their thoughts. The feelings that arise are injury, powerlessness, and alienation, which express their pain and sense of being an object. Lacking the connection and mediation of responsible adults,

the students develop a perception that they disrupt the course of the learning in the classroom. These create a non-adjusted constellation of responses among the students.

5.2.4 Expressions of Groupings, Classifications, and Tracking

In the middle school, there is tracking, which has been legitimized and encouraged systemically. In this perception, this is the best alternative for the students. The classifications, the groupings, and the separations are undertaken through test scores. The researchers Bowels and Gintis (2008) hold that the curricula teach students to take upon themselves roles and that through practices and pedagogies they become disciplined, obedient children who avoid expressing opinions and independence. The representations of this in the school are the division into different levels of learning and types of training (tracking). On the low levels of learning values and skills that emphasize the obedience of the rules and the carrying out of limited and routine activities are emphasized.

Students described the arrangements, the practices, and the processes related to tracking. They describe classifications, separations, and groupings as an integral part known to them in the period of studies in the middle school.

“From the seventh grade there are groupings. According to tests and scores, perhaps, and it appears to me (she delays ...), it is hard for me to remember (she is silent ...). I always was average or last. I was never above. Always in 3 units (she is silent ...) I do not know. Look, then I thought that this is the best for me. Today I know that it could have been different.” (SA, female)

“In the seventh grade the classifications have not yet begun, but in the eighth grade. I was in a group of 4 and 5 together in English. 3 were separate (silence ...). After seventh grade freedom. Then you come to the school there is a schedule you see classes and groupings. There is nobody who updates you. This is according to the scores of the last year. Even if you want something, there is nobody to talk to about this.” (KA, female)

“The division is known ahead of time by the children. I received (the low grouping) and I felt that I am not realizing myself. But I accepted what happened. And I continued without pressure. From the eighth grade there are separations. There is a class of

excellence. In ORT²⁰ there is CNC²¹ and a Technion²² class and we are in 3 units. What determines the units? Tests and results.” (SP, female)

The groupings and classifications are performed according to the students’ achievements in the elementary school. The placement of the students in the groupings is described as a technical process known ahead of time.

“I remember they divided us into groupings in mathematics and English already in the seventh grade. There were A, B, and C groupings. They put me in the C grouping in both of them, I felt like an idiot. I thought that this is not good, I wanted to go up a grouping. This division brought me down even more in the feeling. They do not explain anything to you. They divide according to your scores and read the list where each one is. I wanted to move a group but I did not have anybody to talk to. They do not listen to you, they tell you it is according to your grades. This is the decision of the teachers.” (BA, female)

“There were always tests that examined ability and then this says who you are and they know where to put you. But in the seventh grade there were separations in mathematics and English. This mainly is according to your grades in the tests.” (OH, female)

Going down to a weaker group or moving to a small class is done without explanation or preparation. This is a technical announcement. Students describe pain and feeling of lack of worth described as “objectification”. They describe the internalization of the tracking as a sole alternative, the teachers’ decision.

“I began to go from group B to group C and ... D. You understand! I came in the seventh grade in grouping A and I only go down. What does this say?! Nobody cares. And then I moved after the eighth grade to a huge school, boys and girls, and it became a mess. They put me in A (grouping), I don’t know and didn’t understand why, and then they bring

²⁰ ORT is the largest educational network in Israel for science and technology education. It operates over 200 educational institutions including engineering colleges, middle and high schools, and one elementary school, in over 55 local authorities throughout the country. Its students come from all sectors and populations in Israeli society.

²¹ CNC is a machinist class that does not study towards the achievement of the high school matriculation certificate but is vocational in nature.

²² The Technion class is a class of excellent students who are being prepared to study in the Technion, the Israel Institute of Technology.

you down to C and then to D.” Researcher: “Tell what is D.” “This is a group of 5 children who are retarded in their head, who do not do anything. With a screwed up mind. They have no chance in anything.” (AZ, male)

“All the time they wanted to move me from the regular class to a small class. I did not agree. It was hard for me to accept the decision. From the sixth grade towards the middle school the pressure on me increased. Only they attempt to bring me down to a group, to a small class, and I refuse. The school management decided to move me to a small class. I did not know about this at all, this was in the eighth grade.” Researcher: “Describe what you felt and how the transfer was made.” “I did not agree. But I did not have a choice. I did not learn barely anything in the regular class so I accepted the change.” (LM, male)

“There were levels, clearly. Strong groups in mathematics and English. I always was in the weak groups, but I did not care. They help you a lot there. You learn in a group with students like you. This did not interest me then. It is clear that this small group is preferred for you, but to tell you that this advanced me really not. All the time I was behind and with difficulties. And then they moved me to special education. And then we all are at the same level and advancing together. We all are there the same thing the same level. We all have ADHD, we all cannot sit, we all are the same (she is silent she breathes out). In the lessons there was much mess.” (DA, female)

To summarize, expressions of tracking, groupings, and classifications in the middle school are known mechanisms familiar to the students in the middle school. The students’ descriptions tell about the objectification towards them, a fate that cannot be eliminated and the internal understanding that they were given up on. The students adopt a perception that they are disruptive and problematic. They indicate the understanding that their tracking into the low groupings was intended to enable effective learning in the high groupings. There is the internalization of the perception that the tracking is the best alternative for them for learning.

5.2.5 Thoughts and Perceptions on Gaps, Exclusion, and Inequality

The education system in Israel is competitive, aimed at achievements and abilities. The students' achievements are determined according to their talent and effort. The perception is that success or failure – the student chooses. Educational meritocracy holds that he who wants succeeds. This is a perception that places the cultivation of the excellent and talented students at the head of the priorities. This perception does not negate equality in education but in the end it seeks to train “excellent” people for positions of influence, decision making, and leadership. According to this perception, education in the school and then in the academia brings to the finish line the most capable (Lampert, 2013).

This sub-category describes the references of the students to the tracking and to the gaps between the groupings and between the classes and the exclusion that accompanies them. The contribution of what was said by the students enables learning on the school perspective and on exclusionary mechanisms and practices and their relationship to the inequality structured in the system.

The gaps are large. There is the structuring of the perception that the gap is the student's problem.

“I came in the eighth grade to the middle school and I greatly loved the middle school but immediately the difficulties began. I was in a large gap from the entire class since a whole year I barely learned. I felt very difficult in the regular class and they did not succeed, they did not try to help me, I did not understand how I am supposed to make up all the gaps and learn regularly. I had many difficulties although I tried. Truly I tried since I wanted to integrate there and to prove that I did not make a mistake in my choice. But I was alone. I did not receive help in anything. In all the subjects, language, literature, Bible, it was terrible for me. I do not understand anything. My thoughts all the time were that everyone wants to prove to me that I made a mistake [in the choice of the regular class] but I am trying to fight with all the strength and this is not really working. A very stressful period.” (GA, female)

Gaps and different practices are described between the high grouping and the low grouping, in the learned material, in the attitude to the students, and in the accommodations.

“How do you feel in the low group, this feels different, there is another tone that they address. Because I was in English in the high level and in mathematics in the low level, I felt these differences. They adjusted for us according to the material, the main thing is that we will work. The adjustment is according to what you work and get in your scores. I prefer to call this low and not C.” (OH, female)

The events describe the exclusion. There are experiences of humiliation and painful injury. There is the adoption that they are not worth it.

“I got a haircut and the teacher did not like it. I went according to the fashion. He [the teacher] yelled at me in front of the entire class: ‘You look like a German soldier.’ This was humiliation, so what do you want?! (silence a lowered gaze). Then all I wanted was to get back at him, and I did intentionally and I did not come to the lessons. You want only to get back and to do it for spite.” (AZ, male)

“We had a principal who comes every morning and goes over all those children (he looks at me with a profound gaze), you know those who take a pill [Ritalin] and asks in front of everyone: ‘Did you take a candy this morning?’ as if not to insult us, but it is clear that everybody understood what this is. And he gives you a pill, forces you. As if he is drugging you.” (YV, male)

“Towards the end of the eighth grade they presented the MABAR²³ class in a positive light. The school management mainly emphasizes to you: ‘A MABAR class is a gift of a class for children like you.’ What is this, like me? Like me, disruptive, not quiet in the class. Then they bring me a present, a MABAR class (he is silent lowered gaze sad). In the eighth grade I took initial tests. Already we were in the groupings in the seventh grade. I was in the B grouping and then the teacher only brings me lower and

²³ MABAR is a Hebrew acronym meaning regular matriculation track. This is a program in the tenth to twelfth grades in high schools in Israel in which students are reinforced emotionally, cognitively, and academically to help prepare them for the high school matriculation examinations, so that they can continue later on to higher education.

lower [in the meaning of feeling and experience]. For instance, a teacher tells you: ‘All the class advances and you do not, then we will shorten the test for you.’ At first you tell yourself what do I care, it’s fun for me, a short test. But inside this is contempt, as if they are rewarding you but you understand you are less worthy.” (AM, male)

There are punishments and suspensions, and an experience of harm and exclusion.

“I was in a bad situation. I could not deal with their creating more pressure for me. Everybody pressured me. They suspended me since I did not go into the lessons, they suspended me since I smoked and they caught me.” Researcher: “What is your opinion on the suspensions?” “No way. It does not help to suspend. This freely insults. Children see that suspension and conversation do not solve anything. The teachers also know that this does not solve anything. So you are at home, a child at home does not learn a lesson. The opposite; this disappoints your parents even more.” (SA, female)

To summarize, the students describe the school reality in the middle school in which gaps, expressions of exclusion and inequality are the prevalent and familiar perception. The descriptions indicate a harmful attitude, exclusionary and unequal on the part of the adults and on structural practices of bringing down a group or removing to another class determined according to achievements. The inequality and the gaps are explained by the adults. The students adopt the opinion that the tracking is the better alternative for them while repressing their emotions and exclusion.

5.2.6 Parent Relations and the Connection with the School

This sub-category addresses the constellation of relations between the school and the students’ parents in light of their ongoing difficulties, their tracking, their exclusion, and the complex learning reality that they describe.

The school directs repeated complaints and the requirement for learning to the parents.

“At the end of the seventh grade I moved to the regular middle school since the parents were despairing of me and gave in to me. This was a great struggle. My thoughts

all the time were that everyone wants to prove to me that I made a mistake. Even my parents.” (GA, female)

“I grew angry at them since they reported all the time to my parents. They treated me as if I am lazy and do not want to learn.’ (EL, male)

The parents help and support their children and have their backs.

“The parents, they say do what is good for you, but learn. It does not matter to them in what class.” (NA, female)

“I would talk a lot with my mother since I do not have anybody to talk to. I did not think that I need help. If I needed, the parents helped me.” (KA, female)

“The counselor fought against me and met with mother. I refused to meet the counselor. Mother would go to meet the counselor instead of me and would fight for me.’ (NM, female)

The student attempts to save his parents from the school complaints and to hide what is happening. The parents feel like their child that the school is harmful.

“In this period most of the time I was alone at home. Mother is working. They already do not call you even (she is silent ...) Mother does not know at all. We would sit in some yard, a number of friends together, all of us in the same situation. Nobody looks for us. And then we return home. Mother is sure I am in school. Teachers call me, I would tell them do not bother mother. God forbid, not to call mother. All the time I invented that mother and grandmother are sick. I did not want mother to be disappointed in me.” (SP, female)

The parents experience frustration and alienation with the school system. They indicate the great difficulty in the relationship with the school.

“There was a principal who comes every morning, goes over all those children [disruptive] and he gives you a pill [Ritalin]. He forces you, As if he is drugging you. There are parents who did not know about his, I also did not think that I need to tell. Look, a child

does not always know, he relies on the adults. A principal, what will you think. My mother found out and intervened in this. And I stopped drinking this. And the principal, there were problems with this, but my mother intervened and said; “I am taking my child out of here.’ Your parents try to help and you feel only in a mess. All the time mess in the school, as if the school only complicates the life also at home. My mother decided that I am moving schools. She saw that they were abusing me.” (AZ, male)

A student describes the cycle of exclusion between the school and her parents. The school directs the complaints to the parents. The parents increase the pressure on the child and cause the intensification of the struggle in the home. As a result, the student directs anger and frustration at the school. The student’s anxiety increases. The parents are disappointed with the student because of the school complaints.

“I was in a bad situation. I could not deal with their creating more pressure for me. Mother pressured me. Everybody pressured me. Now I do not want to disappoint the parents since as is the situation is difficult. Then the teachers call them a lot that I am not coming. I began to hate the school. I was afraid that my parents come for conversation, parents’ days are fear, I hated really. You only hear: ‘she is not this and this’. Mother would leave disappointed with her daughter. The teacher tells her this indifferently: ‘History she received a 20, physical education, look, she does not participate, she has a 0.’ What is mother supposed to feel and do with this? She comes home angry.” (SA, female)

To summarize, the students describe a complicated system of relations between the school and their parents around the issue of their learning and difficulties. In most cases, the descriptions say that the school complains and brings the difficult to the home arena. The school is responsible for the exacerbation of the struggle between the child and his parents. The students are anxious about their parents in their facing the system. The parents display powerlessness against the demands of the school. The parents are the factor of protection for their children against the school system

5.2.7 Summary of the Second Category

The transition from the elementary school to the middle school and the period of studies in the middle school reveals that the students have opinions, thoughts, and emotions that address the teachers and the school system and also themselves. It is possible to notice that in the period of the elementary school they describe experiences and events or bring up memories. The descriptions of the period of studies in the middle school express a critical opinion and reveal the perception.

In the elementary school the students refer to themselves and their difficulties, while in the middle school they indicate systemic practices and structures in the context of tracking and exclusion and their ways of coping and those of the school system. In the transition to the middle school it is apparent that the students do not receive preparation or mediation and the pressure in the transition increases. In the elementary school they dealt with a small and familial system, and now they must deal with a large and alienated system. In the middle school the awareness and perception are created that the responsibility for the learning and the responsibility for their difficulties are assigned to them and to their family. The school is described as a war zone in which they must survive.

The students formulate tracking processes, exclusionary practices, and inequality focusing primarily between them and achieving and leading students. The main criterion is the grades. The gaps are known and even receive rational and reasoned explanations on the part of the system. Tracking structures are homogeneous groups, groupings, and separate classes. The students adopt the opinion that they are a factor disrupting the normal process of learning. The groupings and help outside of the classroom are appropriate alternatives for them.

The personal and academic difficulties they come with from the elementary school intensify in the middle school. The alienation increases, the harm and pain become routine. The system ignores them, gives up on them, and abandons them and these intensify the lack of self-worth, the lack of efficacy, and the avoidance of learning.

The tracked students are experts in the practices and ways of intervention that help them. The main ones focus on the adults' attitude, visibility in the place, ignoring, and the experience of a meaningful helpful relationship.

The school is perceived as responsible for the system of relations of the students with their parents. The parents experience the school as harming and weakening the family. The parents are a protective factor in this complexity.

5.3 The Voice of the Students – The High School Period

The third category describes the students' thoughts and emotions that accompany their transition to the high school and the period of studies in the high school. The participants are students who are found in their last year of studies in the high school or at its end. The period of the high school is the period in which the students displayed interest in the interview and in the questions. This category addresses what is happening in the present.

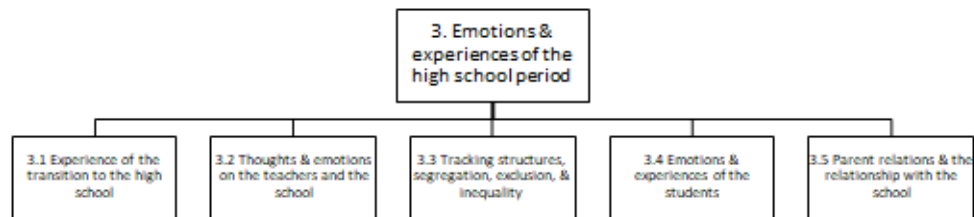
The students extended, shared, and displayed the desire to tell about and describe what is happening. They are near the end of their studies and their optimism because of the end of the school enabled them to tell about, describe, and extend on and to address the questions that refer to them in the school, the teachers, the tracking, and so on. Their arrival in the high school is accompanied by perceptions, thoughts, and emotions that became based in them in the elementary school and in the middle school and these influence their functioning and their perceptions in the period of high school studies. In this period, the students can examine the past experiences and their influence on this period. When they were asked to tell about the period of the studies in the high school, they frequently compared it to the previous periods in the elementary school and in the middle school. The conversation with the students in this stage was more continuous. The silences and the embarrassment that characterized the conversation on the previous periods are less significant.

The period of the high school was the period that the students wanted to talk about. This is the current period, the present time, for them (at the end of the studies), and they

address the end of their personal story. In this period, they are experiencing academic successes. To illustrate their success, they use skills of comparison to the regular framework or to their academic past. One student summarizes the skills in one sentence.

“I don’t remember much in elementary school. I remember the middle school and the high school.” (OH, female)

In this category, there are five sub-categories. The first sub-category addresses the experiences of the transition to the high school. The students describe the transition and the thoughts and emotions that accompany this transition. The second sub-category will broaden the thoughts and emotions on the teachers and the school. The third sub-category will describe the students’ reference to the tracked classes in which they learned. They describe the learning in these classes, the accompanying feelings, the gaps as opposed to the regular classes. The fourth sub-category addresses the students’ emotions and thoughts on them, the coping, the difficulties, the gaps they experienced and coped with, the perceptions and distinctions built and forming in them. The fifth sub-category will extend about the relations of the parents with the school and the teachers during this period.



5.3.1 The Experience of the Transition to the High School

In the transition to the high school, all the students in Israel choose the program that they want to study and the subjects in which they want to broaden their studies. Students at-risk have low scores, and they are aware of the fact that the choices they have are very limited. Research studies maintain that youths at-risk find it more difficult than others to adjust to the school and to display willingness to accept upon themselves the learning requirements (Harel, Allenbogen-Frankovitz, Molcho, Abu-Asba, & Haviv, 2002). The students remember the transition to the middle school and the memories from the period of studies in the elementary school. They are aware of the fact that the period of the high school is the most difficult and significant. They must learn for the high school matriculation examinations.

The students described the transition to the high school and the emotions and thoughts in this period. They move to tracked classes or to the school for children at-risk. For some, the transition to a tracked class is a good experience suited to their needs.

“The transition in the tenth grade to the OMETZ²⁴ class was good. In essence, I moved with students from the ninth grade who learned with me. And I discovered that things are good for me and I am succeeding.” (TW, male)

“In the ninth grade, before the move to the high school, they let me choose between a regular class and the MABAR class. The recommendation of the teachers was the MABAR class. I began to be interested, to ask teachers. When they told me that this is a regular high school matriculation examination track, I asked: ‘So why MABAR, how is this special?’ I understood that they help more, it’s more intensive. I trusted the teachers (in the middle school) since they brought me to success.” (RT, female)

²⁴ OMETZ is a Hebrew acronym meaning belief in the self. The goal of the program is to prevent the dropping out of students with difficulties and to lead them to the achievement of a full high school matriculation certificate. Students who have accumulated academic gaps and thus need a unique program to achieve success are placed in this class. This class has up to 25 students. The word means ‘courage’ in Hebrew.

Others describe an experience of fear that is accompanied by uncertainty and concern about the coming future.

“I do not remember what I felt. But I was concerned. I did not want to break. I did not want not to succeed. And I told myself that I have to have a high school matriculation certificate. I have no choice. All of ninth grade was very difficult.” (SH, female)

“The transition was truly difficult. I knew that I am going to the class with a basic high school matriculation examination path. They do not help you like I was accustomed. You feel more alone. When you need to deal with all the studies and you do not know whether this will work for you and what will be. The high school matriculation examinations are stressful. The children are not partners in the decisions, they cannot think about this. This is the committee and the parents. (GA, female)

“This is a shock, just a shock. Many students that you do not know. A huge school. You have no idea what happens with you. All the time I want to escape to home but I did not do this. I wanted to go to MABAR and I was stubborn about it. The teachers told me in the ninth grade that I do not need but I knew that I want a small class and to learn the minimum to achieve the high school matriculation certificate. I had good grades, I wanted it to be easy for me. I had a nightmare from the elementary school and I did not want to again experience difficulties.” (SK, female)

The students feel fear and frustration at the unexpected in the tracked class.

“It is going to be really difficult but good and challenging. I began to believe in myself. And this was correct for me.” (EL, male)

“I do not remember what I felt. But I was worried. I did not want to break. I did not want not to succeed. And I said to myself that I have to have a high school matriculation examination I have no choice. All of ninth grade it was very hard. Then wow, it was like another story.” (SH, female)

“This is a class of those who have difficulties in the studies, I do not know, I told myself that perhaps this was an excuse that they told me there is no place [in the regular

class] and this was disappointing, but I did not do anything with this and I did not say to anyone. And then I told myself that it would be easier there. This is fewer hours and less material.” (DN, male)

Students are sent to learn in tracked classes without explanation or conversation with the student. The placement is described as a technical and alienating process.

“Nothing [no explanation]. On the first day of the studies on September 1 they come to school. There are lists hung, everybody looks for his name. I saw my name in the MABAR class and I directly said to myself great. You ask why, since there they do a high school matriculation certificate and learn fewer hours.” (SL, male)

“I decided (on the placement of the class) and I yelled at the teachers: ‘I am tired of fighting, you will not tell me what suits me, I know what I want’ (she is upset ... restless).” (SP, female)

“I would choose this class. But it seems to me different when you choose a class or when it is chosen for you and they tell you one day. This feels different. If I had chosen, then it would be easier for me. This is a little humiliating in the beginning.” (RO, female)

The placement for the learning track is determined according to the grades in the middle school.

“In the tenth grade I was placed despite the grades and the difficulties in the regular class, I chose the study programs of chemistry and media. Nobody spoke to me. I chose the programs and I was very enthusiastic. I really wanted. I thought I would overcome. All the time I thought I would prove that I am alright. I did not know exactly what my difficulties are. Nobody spoke to me. After the first month of the start of the studies I gave up chemistry in favor of computers and then a month later I gave up on computers and remained with just media. I failed in all the subjects, I felt that nobody is truly helping me or understands. It is true that they let me choose what I want but in essence these were choices of failure.” (GA, female)

The decision on the move to the tracked class is performed with an announcement that is alienating for the student. The students are denied the possibility of choosing a track.

“(Embarrassed. He is silent He lowers his gaze. I wait.) A number of seconds later: I did not want to be there in the MABAR class but I received the answer that there is no room in the regular class and that’s all (he is silent). I do not know, they told me that there is no room in electronics and without explaining they put me in MABAR.” Researcher: “Who said, can you describe what was done?” “I do not know, one teacher collected everyone. I remember that they told me that I am in MABAR since there is no room in electronics and that’s it, we left there. I did not respond (silence embarrassment).”

“They moved me in the tenth grade to the OMETZ class. I did not care since in any event I did not learn.” Researcher: “Who is it that moved you? How was this?” “I do not know. The homeroom teacher told me: ‘Next year you are in the OMETZ class.’” Researcher: “What did you know about this class?” “Not exactly, I heard that it is easy there, and they do not require of you too much. In short, one teacher only told me what they decided. About the OMETZ class they really did not tell me. I knew that I would not be in a regular class since I did not learn. I came to the tenth grade with lack of confidence. But really. Since for years I did not learn.” (IL, female)

“The decision was of the teacher and the management.” Researcher: “Did they involve you?” “No. They told me after they decided. The teacher called me at the end of the year and said to me: ‘We decided that you are in a class like this and like this.’ Without explanations. And she also said: ‘Your mother knows about this.’” (OR, male)

The teachers are responsible for the perception built among the students that the big class is not for them. The teachers increase the pressure and direct the students to the tracking classes. The students are aware of the stigmas and lack of social belonging of the learners in the tracked class.

“There are stigmas and statements on the MABAR and I did not want to be included in them. You know what they would say about MABAR, MABAR is equal to retarded

people with desire²⁵, discipline problems not learners. The stigmas are among the students, not among the teachers. I don't know what is going on in their hearts. From a teacher I did not feel this, (she muses), less, (she thinks). Aside from one homeroom teacher in the ninth grade who would not believe me and pushed me to MABAR.” (KA, female)

“They asked me already in the middle of the year if I want to go to MABAR since they saw that I am not learning. All the time they asked me about MABAR and they convinced me that it would be good there for me to learn. The homeroom teacher in the ninth grade is the one who asked me: ‘Did you hear about MABAR? You want this?’ At first I said: ‘no’. I thought this is stigma and for those who are screwed up but slowly I understood that I should be there.” (NA, female)

A perception is built among the students that the tracking has the role of collecting the students with difficulties into separate classes. The explanation of the system is that they disrupt the course of the learning in the regular class and in any event they are suited for a small class.

“At the end of the ninth grade without tests they divide into new classes. They do not sit and explain to you anything. They simply told me you are in this class. They took all the children who found it difficult to learn, since there were huge classes and the feeling is that they are only running with the material. They do not see you. They race with the material and if you ask a question you feel that this just passes by them. They do not truly want to even answer you. You feel that you have disrupted the teacher in advancing. Again a large class, not for me. So they collected all these children and moved to the MABAR or LEV²⁶ classes. I came to the LEV class.” (DA, male)

To summarize, the experience of the transition to the middle school is well remembered by the students. The transition to the high school brings up the fears from the

²⁵ In Hebrew these words can also form the acronym MABAR.

²⁶ LEV is a Hebrew acronym meaning towards the high school matriculation certificate. This track enables a meaningful learning experience through joint effort and responsibility of the staff of teachers teaching the class and the students. Most of the mandatory subjects are taught in small learning groups (eight to twelve students). The class incorporates the educational and social activities of the grade, like any other classes. The word in Hebrew means heart.

past and the fears about their integration. They know that the placement and decision are according to their grades. They describe a process of the placement into tracked classes as a process that is alienating and technical; they are informed. They are denied the choice other students have. They know about the stigmas of the tracked classes.

5.3.2 Thoughts and Emotions on the Teachers and on the School

The students were asked about the conduct of the school and the teachers in the classes where they learned. They described their thoughts and perception regarding the learning, the teachers, and the school in the tracked classes. The students describe the practices of the teachers that facilitate the success and the learning.

The students' language is poor. They use a method of the comparison to the regular class or to the period of the studies in the elementary school and the middle school so as to broaden the description of their studies in the high school.

In the tracked class there is a familial atmosphere. The attitudes of teachers and students are what help the learning.

“In the class there are thirteen students, this is already good. An atmosphere of family and home. A place that is good for you. You find a home, a personal attitude for each one and equal. Every teacher there cares about all the students. Good morning to every student. There is no situation that a teacher passes by you and does not ask how you are. A different and open atmosphere. I can tell the teacher everything without fear, the approach is different (she is silent). If only the regular schools were to work like that. The teacher directs for each one his character on the basis that they know you. And truly they know you.” (SA, female)

“In the regular school they did not talk to me about me, they did not open my world. I remember that they did not try to understand me, but told me all the time the implications. The implications are what will happen if not. They do not attempt to know you, be a robot, you have no feelings. For instance, even in the elementary school when children harassed me, I told you I was fat, teachers do not see the harassment. This is not done in a concealed

manner, this is done openly, it is impossible not to see it. I do not know whether they do not see or whether they do not care.” (SP, female)

Comparison and formulation of the differences between the tracked school and the regular school help formulate practices that are unique and contribute to the sense of success and efficacy for learning.

“There is a tremendous difference. The difference that the child feels when the teacher is with him and when there is no relationship. There is even resentment (in the regular class).” (AZ, male)

“They do not humiliate, they do not let anybody laugh at somebody else, it does not exist. They lift up everyone. And most of all there are no punishments here.” (BA, female)

“Here [the tracked class] if I am outside they do not force and do not report to the parents. In the elementary school all the time I am afraid that they will catch me (she is silent) all the time with fear. In the high school I had the freedom of choice and did not need to be afraid. I would wait for the morning to come to school. Mother no longer needed to wake me up. A regular school, if you hide and run away, now go to the principal, and they frighten you. In this school [the tracked school], if you did something bad they come towards you and are not against you. And ‘go to the principal’, then you understand you are going to get help.” (SA, female)

“Suddenly you return home and you understand the material. Of course it depends on the teachers. Lots of support, good personal relationship. You do not understand, they repeat it, and the teacher cares. When I see that she cares, I do not want to disappoint her and this was important and I received excellent, this was something. In the regular class I never felt this way. They ask you whether you understood and who are you, and they repeat things. And there are reinforcement lessons. A regular class, a teacher comes in, a figure, yells or teaches. There is no connection. In MABAR they connect and it is fun, there is a personal attitude, they care about you. If you fail, then they will help you, will praise you, will sit with you many hours and give you and this raises your motivation very very much. This helps a lot, they care. That somebody cares of you works a lot.” (CH, female)

Helping practices that are related to the teacher: the teacher is meaningful, does not give up, fights for the student, sets for the student the requirement to learn, and helps the student achieve successes and is not judgmental.

“I don’t know what he did. He was serious and did not give up on me, it is hard for me to explain. He fought for me, more than I did.” (AN, male)

“The teacher is such that under any conditions he listens, he is a supporting person, who helped me learn everything about myself for three years. These are three challenging years. I came to a family, this is family, from the beginning. And despite the fears and thought: what do I have to do with the high school matriculation certificate, and certainly I will not survive there, and certainly the framework will not believe in me. But then the way opened for me, through the homeroom teacher who gave without boundary, hours and support, at any time and especially when I was angry and sad and crying and happy, he was there for me. And tells us to aspire more and shows successes and you feel worthwhile. A teacher who perseveres with you every morning on you coming to the school. He does not despair if you do not come, the reverse, he calls and asks and will also come to get you if needed. And he will not tell you it is not ok, why are you doing this. In other words, he will not accuse you in any way; rather the reverse, he will attempt to understand you.” (NM, female)

“The homeroom teacher did not give up. All the time she encourages me: ‘invest, invest, you will succeed.’ If I did not prepare homework, she would call me and say: take another day, what do you need? The main thing is for you to do it.’ In the regular class I do not have a place. I cannot listen in a large class. I do not understand anything. Now in most of the subjects I need individualized help. Without the individualized I do not learn. The teacher looks at you. Most of the lessons are in small groups. The teacher explains again and again. And then too if I did not understand, she says come to me to the teachers’ room or stay after school and then make it up. And this gives you the feeling that they do not give up on you and are willing to help you. So certainly you begin to invest.” (LM, male)

A connection and personal relationship with the teacher: the teacher believes in the student, persists with him, sees him. These actions help promote the student's sense of belonging and learning.

“Everything is because of one teacher. Without her I would not have reached where I reached. She would call me every morning, wake me up, and persist that I come. She tells me: ‘Today you are not skipping.’ When I would come, she would speak to me but she never was angry at me. She would insist in speaking to me and encouraging me. She would explain to me and not be angry. ‘come, this is important for you.’ She gave a lot of personal treatment. She also did not involve my parents. She would talk only to me all the time. The truth is until today I am in contact with her.” (SL, male)

“In the ETGAR²⁷ class I felt that they see me, the homeroom teacher is more than a mother for me, I can share with her my most personal things, she listens to everything and does not tell me that she does not have time for me. I felt like a star. In the class I began the strong student who helps others, friends come to me at home to learn for the tests. This is really fun. Suddenly I am learning and succeeding. In the ETGAR class the teachers are proud of me, believe in me, and I am successful. I get good grades and suddenly I discovered for the first time that I am learning. All the time I think what would have happened to me if I had not insisted in moving a class. Here it is best for me and perfect.” (GA, female)

“The teachers are wonderful. The teachers are very understanding, are good, invest. They invest in reinforcement. They answer things, they strengthen. If I do not finish, do not understand material, I turn to the teachers and then they sit with you one on one and help. They turn to the homeroom teacher and she is the solution. I felt belonging, great belonging.” (OH, female)

They note differences between a teacher who is meaningful and a teacher who is not meaningful. The differences are in the personality and are subjective. The students’

²⁷ ETGAR is an educational program that emphasizes the attendance of students in the tenth to twelfth grades so as to promote them academically and emotionally and help them achieve a high school matriculation certificate. The word in Hebrew means challenge.

perception is that the track is not the solution for them – but rather the teacher’s personality. They report exclusionary teachers in the tracking.

“Look, you have the teachers who do not believe in you. They only address what you are not alright in. For instance, the teacher I had in language. She would take me out and send me to the principal. She would always tell me: ‘You will not succeed, nothing will come of you’. I would tell her: ‘The fact that in the tests I get good grades.’ This would drive her crazy. She behaved to me badly. In the matriculation examination I received 85 and then she came to me and told me: ‘I have no idea how you did this.’”(SL, male)

“Everything depends on the teacher, not on the MABAR. A strict teacher without a personal attitude will not help you. When the teacher cares about you, it does something. The homeroom teacher would call me when I did not come and also the parents. And then you do not skip and you are not tardy.” (CH, female)

“These are the best teachers. Those who are patient and caring. Every student there is for the teacher truly like his child. The most investing in the world. The teacher wants only for you to succeed and not to give up. Even if you fall, the teacher will help you not to give up. There is no breaking. Truly it is most important the teacher you end up with. We ended up with the best teacher, it was important to her that we all succeed and she did not give up for even a moment. Even when we would break, she would bring us, she would give up on her lesson so that again we would have the lesson we did not understand.” (SH, female)

A student who is diagnosed as having ADHD describes the relationship with a teacher who helps her learn, give up on Ritalin, and perceive herself as successful.

“You know (she turns to me with a look), the school told mother when I was about 12: ‘Take your daughter to be assessed. There is no chance that she will learn without Ritalin.’ The teacher did not allow me to go into the classroom without Ritalin. The teacher would say beside everyone, ‘You do not drink, you do not enter the lesson.’ And then you say to yourself: ‘what am I different? (she is silent)’ This made me feel bad. I was most down. The teachers only want me to be calm. I was not yelling, I simply was not

concentrating. For them I must have Ritalin. How did I understand this? Because when I moved to the high school I began to learn and suddenly I did not need any Ritalin. I came in the middle of the tenth grade. I came with zero in everything. In the boarding school I did not learn anything. I also came in the middle of the year, this was a very scary. But they accepted me nicely and suddenly they are bringing me the materials and helping me, the teachers you see care about you, then I told myself: you are on a new page and you are getting the high school matriculation certificate.” (SA, female)

A student summarizes that that relationship with the teachers is critical. The teacher is encouraging, supporting, and believing in the student with persistence.

“Once we talked between us [the students] what came of us and one of the teachers said: ‘Don’t give up on yourself, invest, you are worth a lot’. And I wanted to cry. He tells me: ‘You will succeed, you will have a degree at high levels and what you want.’ All the time they tell you ‘You will succeed, you will be good.’ There is no teacher who does not believe in you and does not support you. It was like a family. A regular school is far from this.” (SP, female)

Practices that help learning and success that address the teaching and pedagogy in the classroom include repeated explanations, reinforcement²⁸ hours, reduction of the material, small groups, and slow pace.

“I felt that in LEV it is the best in the world. Every lesson you feel one on one. They explain to you until you understand. If you do not understand they do not move onward, even if the entire class is waiting, they explain to you again until you understand. There were two teachers in a class. We were fewer than 20. This suited me since this is small.” (DA, female)

“We learned in small groups, a learning framework that suits you. The high school passed for me in a nonchalant period and this is preferable to the academic classes. We had better conditions. Less load. I think that they teach you the same material in different doses,

²⁸ Reinforcement – the addition of learning hours with the goal of reinforcing the subject in which the student has difficulty.

a different pace. Small classes, small groups. They are divided into two groups, 12 students, and this is significant. A good attitude, lots of reinforcement. This is like this. This is what really helped.” (OH, female)

“Why this changed [she began to learn], since the studies in the class are far easier, since the learning is in small groups, it is easier to listen to a teacher with the ADHD I have, the teachers are persistent with the students, do not stop explaining, repeating until you understand, what does not happen in the regular class.” (GA, female)

The choice of the teachers and their training for work with students at-risk are critical and may prevent the tracking.

“Perhaps it is necessary to teach every teacher psychology and how to work with these situations. A teacher cannot be only one who teaches. He must be your friend, the one that when I finish school I will never forget.” (SA, female)

“Why shouldn’t the teachers in the regular system be like the teachers in this school [the tracked school]! If only it were like that. Lots of teachers said to me in the previous school, ‘Nothing will come out of you.’ Even when you have a head on your shoulders. Why do they need to tell you this (a sad look)?!” (NM, female)

To summarize, in the period of the studies in the high school, the students are experienced and experts in the understanding of their situation and needs. The students emphasize the teacher as key to the change in the learning. The student’s personality and individual differences are the main helping practice. The meaningful teacher is an empowering figure who restores to the student the personal efficacy and sense of belonging and the belief in his ability to success. The students phrase the practices for teaching and pedagogy that help them in the tracked class. The slow learning pace, the reduction of the learned material, help in the lesson and afterwards, and learning in a small group. These practices are built in the tracked classes.

5.3.3 Tracking Structures, Segregation, Exclusion, and Inequality

The topic of the social stratification has research and social significance, since the individual's degree of access to society's resources has far-reaching implications on his wellbeing in the different aspects of his life (Bowles & Gintis, 2003). Society is built from layers, when the broad base layer represents the low status while the upper layer represents a high social status (Sabag & Biberman-Shalev, 2014).

The tracking structure that exists in the school is a reasoned structure supported by the perception. The students are aware of the reasons and perceptions at the basis of the tracking and exclusionary structures and also of the practices and arguments at their basis. From the voice of the students and their reference to questions on these topics, it is possible to expose the mechanisms and the perception for their structuring and existence in the tracked classes. The students do not know the professional concepts, segregation, exclusion; they tell about and describe divisions, separations, removal.

The systemic perception for tracking and separation: students with high scores are placed in the regular class and have low grades and are tracked into separate classes. The language and conceptualization are the division to strong and weak. The weak students are separated and collected into a separate class. The description of the students reveals that the separation and segregated reference continues in the tracked classes.

“At the end of the middle school each one chooses his track. Everyone has according to the grades you have and what you want. And those who do not learn and who do not have grades move directly to the MABAR and OMETZ classes.” (OR, male)

In the tracked classes, the students are denied the partial integration in the regular classes. The possibility of returning to the regular class is blocked for them. Their desire and motivation are not sufficient. The tracking is structural and does not allow mobility.

“The MABAR class does not have this possibility. This is not in their track. There are a number of meaningful things that need to be changed there. For instance, in the programs we have fewer options for choice and this is irritating and it is not clear why. There we cannot choose like everyone.” (SL, male)

“In mathematics I wanted to go to 4 units instead of 3 units. They did not give me the possibility of integrating. Why? Since as the grade learns mathematics, we learn a theoretical subject, such as literature or Bible. And then if I go (to mathematics), I need to make up by myself. They said to me: ‘This is not good for you. You cannot close the gap with the entire class.’ So I remained in 3 units and I am disappointed at this. Why isn’t there the option? I insisted and it did not help me.” (SH, female)

“Look, there are things I wanted more and I couldn’t because of the ‘limits of the MABAR’, that’s how they tell you. For instance, in English I was in 4 units and I wanted 5 units, so in the first lesson of English I tell the teacher that I want 5 units and she told me that the regular class is different from ours so it is impossible.” (DN, male)

“I am still upset that in the ETGAR class you can’t learn computers. That is really my dream.” (EL, male)

There is a lack of mobility, and the systemic structure indicates the movement of the tracked students only in one direction – down.

“I had thoughts about my abilities, but you know that from the promoting class you do not leave. There is no option to leave. This is the track. You go there, this is special education. You can only go down to a track that in essence is without studies, students who only come to the school and engage in repairs. They receive a certificate for twelve years of studies.” (SH, female)

“It is clear that it is a pity that I do not come since I love to learn. I wanted to learn physics and computers, these are the areas that interest me. It is my dream to work in computers. And I am sorry that I do not have this option. In the ETGAR class it was very easy for me and my grades were really good. But they still did not offer me to move to the regular class and I also did not insist, I feel that this is missing out.” (EL, male)

Separation and segregation: there is a relationship between the learners in the tracked classes and the socioeconomic background from which they come. The tracking is the last window of opportunities that the system “gives” them.

“Most of them (the tracked students) are with ADHD. Or they come from homes with parents who did not learn and will not help you learn. This is primarily children who can learn but did not learn until now for all sorts of reasons. And then they receive a chance in these classes. And they know that this is the last chance.” (LM, male)

Systemic mechanisms of tracking and separation preserve the social segregation. The descriptions teach that the goal is the removal of the “disruptive” students from the regular classes.

“Children who have lost their way come there (she began to smile).” (SP, female)

“Everyone in the class has the same difficulties as me. They cannot sit, they speak a lot. They leave and enter the lesson.” (LM, male)

“What characterizes the children in this class is the academic difficulties. Everyone needs reinforcement hours, a small class. Very few students and lots and lots of repeating the material. Of course you know that you are under these conditions so you put forth more effort. Since they tell you: ‘Here you receive help and you will begin to put forth effort and to work.’ (YV, male)

“There is also the startup class, children with problems who do not learn and do not want to come to the school. There are those with many problems at home or behavior problems. They are in the startup class, but they hold them there for no reason. They do not learn and they do not do anything and they are promised a certificate of twelve years of study. These are children who gave up on the studies. They threw up their hands. And then the school also gives up with them.” (SL, male)

The school collects into the tracked classes the students with learning, attention, and behavior difficulties, when the school asserts that these students are disrupting the learning for all the students and that the response to their difficulties is possible only in the tracked classes.

“I began the year and was shocked, what is between me and what are these problems of behavior and noise (in the tracked class), it was hard for me to listen to the teacher.

Teachers go out of the class in the lesson since they cannot cope then what I will say, if a teacher cannot, what do I do with this. Difficult days passed for me and regrets. Until the twelfth grade there were still teachers who left a lesson in the middle since they were disrupted in their teaching. Situations to the point that the teachers left the class or did not want to teach in the class that was difficult and problematic. There are teachers towards whom the children were really contemptuous. The situation did not change, but I got accustomed.” The student continues and describes the difficulties in the tracked classes. “Stupid and retarded ones are not, but discipline problems, contemptuous, lack of attention are expressed among many students in the MABAR classes. You see in the halls how they go from the class and argue with teachers.” (KA, female)

There are gaps between the tracked classes and the regular classes. The option for the reduction of the gap and the integration in the regular class does not exist.

“Certainly there are gaps but you do not make up the gaps, you simply learn to attain the high school matriculation certificate. You know that you do not move a class or something like that. Why make up the material? You remain in your class and you learn the best you can to achieve the high school matriculation certificate. Look, the material is calmer. Fewer hours to learn. I tell myself what do you care, fewer hours is easier.” (SL, male)

“I have no such possibility (closing the gaps), since you are in a system disconnected from the regular class and this is not possible so it is not asked. And nobody offers to you.” (CH, female)

The students learn to ignore the gaps from the stigmas and the accompanying pain. This is to achieve the high school matriculation certificate.

“In the eleventh and twelfth grades there is stigma according to the scores and according to the units that they learn.” Researcher: “Tell me about the stigma.” (She is silent it seems that she is thinking.) Stigma? This is such on a small scale. It is clear that there are more esteemed programs, let’s say biology, physics, and such. But the children there are different.” Researcher: “Explain ‘others’?” “They invest in the studies.

They do not have ADHD. They can learn in a large class. I do not care. I chose the MABAR class. I could have in the regular class and I did not want to. At first this is stigma and then you see that you succeed in attaining the high school matriculation certificate then you do not care about this.” (SK, female)

“There was no such thing [transition to the regular class], you come to this class and that’s it, there is no making up gaps. But it is important that you obtain the full the high school matriculation certificate. There was no such need since each one with his knowledge. The groupings are constant and the material is constant.” (KA, female)

“You have thoughts about the regular school, of why you did this and why they (the teachers) address the students like this. And you all the time think that it is because of the large classes. And the teachers who work there only for the salary.” (SP, female)

There is also tracking inside the tracking. The students’ descriptions make it clear that the expressions of the tracking – the divisions and classifications according to levels and achievements continue even in the tracked classes. There is a group for the slower pace or a group for the students with attention difficulties. These are the new names in the tracking.

“What is a class, this is 25 students and they are divided into two groups. They learn in a small group, great. One group is stronger, and the other is weaker in all the subjects.” (AN, male)

“We were in a class of 30 students but most of the time they divided us, in essence we learned about 15 students. Each group is more its own level. For me this was wonderful, this is far more help.” (SL, male)

“In the regular class there is emphasis on the stronger ones and less on the weaker ones. In MABAR there is more emphasis on the weaker ones. But even in the MABAR class I saw that if I learn and get results they treat me and push me ahead. The strong ones are at the front of the class and the weak ones are behind, this is how it feels. Unequivocally this is seen.” (KA, female)

Exclusion and lack of mobility: there is geographic exclusion. Tracked classes are situated separately from the classes of the grade. This fact causes shame and an experience of exclusion.

“Where is the class, in the same building of the entire grade but at the end.” (TW, male) “The OMETZ class is not beside all the grade. It is separate, for me this is wonderful.” (LM, male)

“Beside the OMETZ class. The truth is, it was hard for me with this since I was ashamed at first of the students who learned with me beforehand in the regular class. I really did not want to see them. But slowly I got used to the new class then I left this.” (RO, female)

The exclusion is structural. There are systemic structures of lessons and programs, and flexibility and mobility are lacking.

“They have always given you one option of three units. There is no other option. You are not exposed to these things. You understand that you do not have another option. You also know that you are not good because of all your past and they will not expose you to other things. They tell you: ‘You are not good in numbers and formula, so why should you.’ Even in the programs you do not have choice. They give you one program to choose when everybody has a number of possibilities. To us they say: ‘You do not have a choice so as not to be a burden on us.’ The regular students have many options. For you things are not open that are open to everyone. For instance, you have no chance of dreaming about chemistry, why? They tell you that this is not for you. They told us choose canine studies or education and that’s all. You do not really choose.” (SH, female)

“I asked to do 5 units in English since this is my native language and they knew it. They told me: ‘It’s impossible.’ This really bothered me. Then you feel that you are different from everyone. Even in my English lessons I was so prominent, I would intentionally take over the lesson, say everything, not let others speak, I wanted to stick out since I am good in this. This would bother the teachers but I did not care. I also wanted to show that I am good and it aggravated me that I could not do 5 units. The teachers addressed

this as one who bothers and takes over the lesson from them and I suffered for this.” (SL, male)

The teachers’ conceptualizations of a student in regular education and lack of believe in his ability to learn recurred in the tracked classes. Exclusionary statements are summed up by a student; “The children for the most part did not insist (to learn in a regular class) and they accepted what they are told: ‘You cannot, you are not suited, why should you.’ These are most of the responses.” (DN, male)

A feeling of shame derives from the labeling and the exclusion. The names MABAR and OMETZ are names of tracking.

“They called us youths at-risk and we were ashamed of this, the homeroom teacher explained to us that everyone today is at-risk, so that we will not be insulted. But we are labeled for risk, why? Why to define and label us as at risk? I am not at risk of anything. But I am labeled at risk. I was in the eighth grade and ninth grade at home, for nearly two years, there they did not call me at risk. And then in this school yes. It is insulting. What does this say about the education system, it’s disappointing.” (NM, female)

“To be in OMETZ is also embarrassing for me, just like to be in the C grouping. I saw which children go there. I knew that I am not like that. I did not give up in this stage. I really fought since the teachers did not give me a chance. I begged and promised to learn. I remember that this was really difficult.” (BA, female)

The exclusion in the tracked classes is also related to the choice of the teachers who teach. Teachers without experience are recruited to teach in these classes through the assurance of accommodations. The same practices are adopted towards the students themselves.

“I trusted the administration. They promise you a class, split for 25 students. They promise you professional teachers. The start of the year came, we received teachers when some of them are professional. I will explain to you what professional is. In the important subjects we remained 25 a class. Did you understand? Sure, those who do not have such patience, and one big mess was there. We received teachers who are in their first year and

they tell them [the administration]: ‘You receive to check only 12 tests that are not on a high level’. He must check only 12 tests and that’s great so why wouldn’t he want to teach there. That is how they convince him to work with us. For a good class they bring better teachers, since the thought is that they are good so they will bring results and the good teacher is preferred for them. A teacher who worked with MABAR classes, that’s a mess.” (AM, male)

“The teachers in these classes, it is always the new teachers, they are not strong and not strict. Why do they put for children with difficulties weak teachers? I do not know, perhaps because in any event they do not do the high school matriculation examinations then why do they need good teachers?!” (SL, male)

Sometimes the teachers are not interested in teaching them. The student is aware that the teachers in these classes are less esteemed and their emotions are similar to the students’ feeling.

“One day I heard a conversation in the teachers’ room between the teachers: ‘What teacher is willing to teach “them” Bible?’ Now, this is a class that nobody believes in them. How do they know? Nobody wants this class, not a single teacher takes them, then one teacher takes them and suddenly he discovers that it is a wonderful class. And I only because of her begin in the twelfth grade to learn Bible and to finish material in a year. The same teacher understands why nobody took the class since any way they will not have a high school matriculation certificate (he speaks in fragments and in short ...). And this same teacher sat a lot with the students beyond, in her free time. As if she herself wanted to show the administration that this class can. At the end of the year she came to the principal with our grades and showed her how the class can do. And this is in essence dependent only on the hours and investment of only one year. A class of a total of eight students. I think that they discriminate a lot and this is very disappointing.” (AM, male)

The student SL is accurate with the tracking and stigmatic structure in the tracked classes. Following his absence from the school, the student was dropped from a tracked class for the high school matriculation certificate to a tracked class without one.

“We are classified simply according to grades and behavior. I understood that they are putting me there (in the MABAR) because of my absences. They placed me without knowing, and they do not inform you. I accepted this, really wonderful. I continued onwards. Yes, certainly this suited me. Since I continued to do what I wanted. The tardiness and shortness of the day, I continued this all the time. When this did not help them [the student continued to be absent], then one day they dropped me to the class of the startup for industry, which is a program without a high school matriculation certificate. They came and told me: ‘You are moving to this track.’ Without talking and without explaining. I was there a month. This was awful. They do not learn there, really awful. Students who have no respect for the teachers. They talk in a condescending way: ‘Don’t mix up my head.’ During the lesson they throw papers at the teacher and other problematic behaviors. For me this was too much, really horrifying. After a month I asked to return to my class and I returned to the MABAR class and in essence I understood that they wanted to frighten me, to shock me.” (SL, male)

To summarize, the students indicate the existence of systemic tracking structures in the high schools. They are aware of the segregation, the gaps, and the practices that differentiate the regular classes from the tracked classes. The students note the lack of mobility, the choice that was denied them, the open gaps, and the lack of possibility to change the reality because of the systemic tracking structuring. They do not have the options and choices like the rest of the students.

The tracking classes are the glass ceiling for the students. However, they are perceived by the adults and consequently by the students as the last opportunity in the regular school to finish the studies and to achieve the high school matriculation certificate.

The students emphasize the appropriate training for teachers who teach in these classes and note that frequently their feeling is identical to the students’ feeling.

The students’ reference to aspects of the choice of the teachers who teach in the tracked classes, to their geographic placement, to the relationship to the socioeconomic status, and to the belonging to the grade indicates their awareness of the factors responsible

for their exclusion and marginality. Their descriptions are accompanied by feelings of pain and frustration, alongside the academic success that strengthens their cognitive efficacy.

5.3.4 Emotions and Experiences of Students in the High School Period

In the previous sub-category, the students described the tracking and its expressions. They note that they do not receive preparation or explanations about the transition to the tracked classes. They describe social segregation, separation from the grade, gaps, and expressions of exclusion. This sub-category tells about the thoughts and emotions that accompany the students in the tracking classes versus the eye-opening reality. The students were asked about the personal meanings and the influences of the described reality on them and on their family, their self-worth, their motivation, and their sense of belonging.

Regarding the self-worth and the motivation, they feel they are not like everyone, they are worth less. They are vulnerable and in pain and feel a sense of exclusion.

“For instance, in the tenth grade I was in four units. And then they bring me down. They tell me: ‘You are not at the same pace as everyone, consider going down to 3 units.’ They do not say to you, come let’s sit, let’s practice. Not one teacher helps you or encourages you. You see that since he [the teacher] has a load on the class, and how he will find for every student time, then it is clear that he will bring you down, but here too, a small smile can change. And you don’t have this, you won’t get this. And the teacher, great for him, a student less. I am in pain over an entire system since I hear also in other schools, people I knew, all in 3 units. That’s all those who are in these classes. We made for ourselves like a fraternity of retarded people, since this is what was given to us. [They told us] ‘you will not make the top tier’. I felt bad, really bad, for most of the years of my school.” (AM, male)

“A regular class, really not, this does not go through your head. If I needed to choose again, this is only MABAR. It’s good for me here, and that’s it. Totally good.” (NA, male)

Statements commonly said by the teachers create harm and build a low self-value in the student.

“In a regular high school and also in the middle school they let us feel that children who do not go into class smoke and make problems, and nobody cares, only to catch you and to expel you (he appears ashamed). He turns to the researcher and asks: ‘Do you understand me? Am I explaining well?’ And we in the class are different clearly. Teachers tell you: ‘This is how your life will look’ loudly, in front of everybody; ‘You do not know how you will end up’. Everything comes with a sense of evil, and they do not care about you at all. You experience evil. For instance, the teachers in the classroom tell the good teachers: ‘You do not want to be like this’. And the teacher looks at you, as if without names, but transparent.” The student continues and describes, “The regular school does not accept you. We come in the morning, looking for adrenalin. A friend says let’s smoke a cigarette. In any event there is no connection with anybody [he refers to teachers]. You want to upset a teacher, since you do not like him. All the time you want to do everything that is forbidden. And if they catch you, go to the counselor, you know you did something forbidden. And there are punishments, like stay until 14:30, suspensions, and stuff like that. You are in a mess and the mess is the adrenaline of the group. We look to get back at the teachers who do not look at you. You didn't come to them well.” (AZ, male)

The motivation declines, and the self-worth is harmed.

“They speak with you. Yes, they speak with you. But this is as if they speak with you in the language of the school and not in the language of to understand what is hard for me, what is going on with me. They always offer you suggestions even if this is not at all for you. The only solution is for you to remain more hours, to invest, to invest. They tell you: ‘Why don’t you study for the tests, what is happening with you with the grades’, and then the end is known: ‘You cannot continue in the program, the requirements here are high, begin to think about another program’. You feel that if you are not good, then they do not want you (she is silent, her gaze is lowered).” (GA, female)

The students present a description of deprivation, frustration, lack of belonging, and otherness.

“The topic of my class, MABAR, it is rather painful what I went through. Look, I came to the MABAR class (he is silent ...he is thinking ...) I will go back, they told me you are retarded, you cannot sit. My older brother in the MABAR class was told the same thing (silence) They always took pains to remind me that I am less good than everyone (long silence) I saw those who fought tooth and nail and they are full of nerves. The grade under me in general felt deprivation. And we also felt deprivation. We saw that they invest in others and in us not. What is deprivation? Not equal, there is such a thing that one class is liked and one class is not.” Researcher: “Explain.” “It is clear, they like the quiet ones, those who do not interrupt the teachers.” (AM, male)

A student shares the emotions of frustration that derive from the labeling and stigma and their influence on the self-worth and social belonging.

“They called us youths at-risk and we were ashamed of this, the homeroom teacher explained to us that everyone today is at-risk, so that we will not be insulted. But we are labeled for risk, why? Why to define and label us as at risk? I am not at risk of anything. But I am labeled at risk. For instance, they asked us if we are ashamed. They tell you that you are zero, so you are zero. Then they say you are at risk, you are at risk. I was in the eighth grade and ninth grade at home, for nearly two years, there they did not call me at risk. And then in this school yes. It is insulting. What does this say about the education system, it’s disappointing. The common denominator of all of us who do not succeed in the school. 90 percent here are with ADHD. A large school is not suited, only small classes. Most of the youths today with ADHD and then to learn with 30 students is impossible. Most of the class are assessed and with Ritalin.” (NM, female)

The tracking awakens among the students mixed emotions. The loss of the opportunity to be equal, like everybody, in a regular class harms the sense of worth and belonging. The learning in the tracked class inspires a feeling of family that is responsible for learning success.

“I was very very happy. This was the decision of my mother and my teacher together. In essence, when this happened it was a mess and together, and I was very frightened since this appeared to me to be very complicated. The teacher encouraged me

that I can do it and can succeed. Today I can say that this worked and this was correct for me and I was in the classroom that suits me greatly, a MABAR class, this is a regular class and you do the high school matriculation certificate and everything is good.” (OR, male)

“I felt happy and also sad. Sad since I really wanted a regular class. I was used to the teacher there. She was nice. In the end I reached the class that more helps me than in the previous class. You quickly understand that there is nothing to be sad about. The change was correct for me, I do not think that I would have passed the high school matriculation examinations if I had stayed there. Since I need a small class and many repetitions of the same thing. And also less material to learn only what is needed for the high school matriculation examination and this is it. When I see much materials and pages and books I get pressured.” (RO, female)

New self-worth is steadily built in the tracked class. The students emphasize the advantages of the tracked class primarily in the creation of efficacy and motivation to learn and succeed.

“Yes, the teacher knows to help each and every one. We also help one another, we do not let anybody fall. Not like any other place. Only here. And all the time I say to myself what luck that I fought and did not give in. In this class everyone is “scratched”, we have our laughter, others from the other classes will not understand. Each one of us has his uniqueness, our craziness. Each one of us has some scratch.” (BA, female)

“I would never have gotten along in the regular class. With us it is more fun to learn and a family atmosphere. We help one another before the examinations. We give to one another summaries. The teacher also brings us during the vacation to the school to learn. They accept this with the utmost understanding since she is like our mother. With us there is no competition among us. We all help so that everyone will succeed. In the regular classes there is lots of competition over the grades.” (RT, female)

There is conflict and constant tension between the desire to learn in the regular class, as well as frustration about the lack of belonging to the regular classes and the new structuring, since the academic difficulties are receiving a solution and the success is

possible in the tracked classes. The experiences of failure and frustration that accompany them and the difficulties that remained without a solution facilitate the understanding of a new perception. The tracked class invites and enables learning success.

“Certainly there is desire periodically to be like this, like everyone, but this is not meaningful. You begin to learn and feel excellent in your class and you forget this desire to be in the regular class.” (OH, female)

“I would not want to learn in another place and not in another class. How would I manage? It was enough for me that they did not understand me in the elementary school. Good for you, but certainly you want to remain here. We are more crystallized, who are the children in our class, children who had it difficult in the elementary school or the middle school. Everyone wants to be in this class.” (RT, female)

“It is clear that I would prefer a regular class in which it is possible to earn as many units in the high school matriculation examinations as you want. But I cannot since I need learning reinforcement.” (YV, male)

“There is no question at all. Look, it is clear that I wanted a regular class. I tried everything, and this did not work for me. So here it is perfect for me.” (GA, female)

In the tracked classes the hope for learning awakens. The experience of the success influences the motivation and efficacy.

“We begin with that it helped me with something important that I did not have, which is to aspire and not to give up on yourself. Before this class I only aspired not to fail. In this class I became an excellent student. Suddenly 90 was not enough for me, I want 100. I did not have this beforehand and this is the main thing that helped me and suited me.” (KA, female)

“I am happy that I was in this class and if I had not moved then I would have continued to aspire to less and I would have worse grades, even low, in this class I felt that I am good, strong, successful.” (DA, female)

“In our school they get teachers who know to work with children. And this is hard. How much you believe in a child who does not believe in himself. On this the teachers are tested, you want to help a child, what will you do with a child who all the time tells you he does not want to learn. And then you discover that they care about you more than you care about yourself and you tell them: ‘Because of you I succeeded’. And they say: ‘No, this is because of you.’ A teacher tells you: ‘I am sorry, I apologize.’ If necessary, they have no problem to apologize. In the regular high school you are tossed out of school. Here they are not ashamed of us, we are not a “machine of excellence”. (SP, female)

Social belonging: Tracking prevents mobility. Feelings of harm and pain related to the lack of belonging and the social gaps become humor directed at the self.

“We had a quote on the class ‘retarded with desire is MABAR²⁹’. This is our title. Most of us felt from the system: ‘You are retarded, you are not good’. What is left for us to do with this, so we laughed. We had jokes about ourselves. Our common denominator is that the system did not get along with our scores and with who we are and how we learn.” (AM, male)

There is a reasoned explanation on the lack of belonging to the general grade.

“Most do not fit in socially. I knew about the stigma. Most of the children would not fit in, socially they always were separated.” (SH, female)

“The friends are mostly from the class. It is clear that if you learn in a certain program, for instance, theater, then most of the time you are with these children. The other classes engage in other things and there is not so much to talk to with them. We are a class of such style since most are with ADHD and all sorts of difficulties of the studies.” (IL, female)

The students experience exclusion from the entire grade. That they are in the tracked class, among those similar to them, influences the formation and sense of belonging to the homeroom class.

²⁹ In Hebrew, these words when taken as an acronym also create MABAR.

“You are connected to your class. There is a cohesive togetherness. There were not many opportunities, only in the yearly trips and it is hard for you to maintain relationships with the rest of the grade. Slowly you do not feel comfortable with others. You focus on your class. This is like a greenhouse of sorts, you focus on it and on yourself.” (KA, female)

“A cohesive class. It does not belong to all the grade. Only activity of our class. Nobody says this aloud, but there are children who look at you: ‘You are in MABAR!!’ This does not bother since it is fun for us in our class.” (NM, female)

Social belonging is built within the tracked class.

A reference that recurred was “Most of the friends are primarily from my class” (BA, female). YV (male) added, “Yes, I feel belonging. And I have friends from my class primarily and from the startup class.” GA (female) said, “[The friends] are only from my class, and this is enough for me.”

To summarize, the students speak about a constant internal conflict to which they adjust with time. There is internal tension between their belonging to the tracked classes and the lack of their belonging to the entire grade.

In the tracked classes they encounter from the teachers a personal attitude and learning practices such as a small group, reinforcement, material focused on the high school matriculation examinations that enable learning and success. For the first time since the elementary school they experience learning success. The self-image and motivation rise. They experience achievements and successes. The experience of failure and the constant difficulty change with successful cognitive functioning. They describe a feeling of belonging to the tracked class. In this class there are their friends, and a sense of a shared fate develops. They feel similar, they cope with these difficulties, and most want to end the school and achieve a high school matriculation certificate. An atmosphere of a family that cares for all its members is created.

The descriptions of the age group and the relationship with the regular classes show a different reality. They experience and feel exclusion and speak about stigmas and lack of belonging. They are aware of the structural segregation. The students express anger at the

lack of options and the choices denied to them in the academic and social fields. These strengthen the lack of belonging and the harm to the self-worth. They are not like everyone. They are not of worth.

The students adopt interpretations and explanations on the emotions of the pain and the harm to the self-value and on their social exclusion. Some of them derive from the repeated statements of the teachers and additional educators. It is apparent that the interpretations are not expressed, processed, or addressed by the educators and they become personality and subject components of the students and influence their future perceptions.

5.3.5 Parent Relations and the Connection with the School

The period of the studies in the high school reach a turning point in the learning. The students learn in the tracked classes, and they are in an experience of success in the studies. A large part of their difficulties has eased. This sub-category addresses the relationship and system of relations of the parents with the school and their influence of the relations on the students.

The students were asked to address the socioeconomic characteristics, the parents' education, the parents' occupation, and the conversation held in the family about the school, so as to examine their influence on the student's choice. Doron (2006) found that social exclusion can pass from generation to generation and harm the chances of the next generation for a better life. The transmission may occur in communities and geographic regions that suffer from a combination of problems or lack such as unemployment, poor occupational skills, low income, poor residential conditions, poor health, belonging to a group of an ethnic minority, and unstable family life.

The questions asked by the parents and the siblings in the context of studies and employment reveal difficult emotions and lengthy silences among the students. The responses are in short sentences.

On the question of the parents' education, the students changed their tone and sometimes lowered their gaze. They maintained that they do not know their parents' education.

"I do not know their education (lowered gaze ...)." (AN, male)

Another student: "Mother and father? I do not know (silence). Do you want me to ask?" (OR, male)

A student asked, "What is education? Ah ... I do not know." (KA, female)

Their reference to their parents' employment also reveals embarrassment, silence, and feeling of shame.

"Mother is currently unemployed (silence ...)." (SL, male)

"Mother (silence ...) does not exactly work (she speaks in a whisper)." (OH, female)

"Father (silence ...), I do not know what he does." (LM, male)

They emphasize the fact that they belong to a regular family, from a regular home.

"I am from a regular home, a good family, everything regular." (AZ, male)

"Look, we are a really normal family. Father worked in gardening on the kibbutz. He did not really learn." (SP, female)

In every family a number of children learn in tracked classes. The students noted the relationship between the fact that their older siblings learned in tracked classes and their choice of and preference for learning in tracked classes.

"I have an older brother who learned in Branco. And therefore mother asked me to learn there. When I was in the eighth-ninth grade, I was about to drop out. My brother got on my case and told me to transfer to Branco [the tracked school], this is a good high school matriculation certificate. A perfect school." (SP, female)

“My brother always told me do not think twice, go directly to MABAR. He knew that I have difficulties. Both of us are the same with ADHD and cannot sit for a long time. He told me that it is a pity to waste time in another class. Certainly he influenced me, since I saw that it was good for him. He succeeded in the high school matriculation tests and I want to also.” (DA, female)

Students who are the eldest were determined regarding their influence on their siblings to learn in tracked classes. The argument is that this is the best track for success in the high school matriculation examinations.

“I have younger siblings, they will also learn like me.” (AN, male)

“My sister wanted Branco not because of the studies because of the attitude and calm. I influenced her and also the parents and she preferred like me, the right choices.” (AZ, male)

“My siblings did not really influence me but they always told me: ‘This is the best. This way you will finish school. What do you need more than this. As is it is hard for you. Look at us, this is the best solution to finish the school with dignity.’” (YV, male)

A student explains. “One certain certainly will learn in MABAR, already today she is barely learning. She has ADHD.” (DN, male).

A student explains. “Yes, sometimes we talk at home. Every time that somebody has it hard in the school or in tests or with some teacher, then I say: ‘I told you to go to MABAR’.” (NA, female)

One persuasive argument is that there are good teachers in these classes.

“Certainly, my older brother all the time told me you are like me, you should learn like me in MABAR. There are the best teachers. The truth is that I listened to him. Since I saw what came from him. One who was not capable of learning and sitting suddenly achieves the high school matriculation certificate and goes to learn to be a teacher of geography. This is something, no??” (AM, male)

A student who is a middle son in his family describes a conversation in his home about the factors that help in these classes.

“My big brother always told me to go to OMETZ or MABAR, this is the best, all the rest are a mess for you. I tell my little brother the same thing. Since this is truly the most correct and the most fun to learn in a class where they understand you and you know that there they will help you achieve the high school matriculation certificate. Without this you do not have a chance.” (BA, female)

Parental interventions: the parents support and accompany.

“My parents supported me all the time in every decision. Even when I did not learn or when I decided to stop Ritalin.” (NA, female)

“The parents let me feel that I am doing all that I can despite the difficulties. Mother frequently speaks with me about the studies. Since I am in MABAR, she sees me learning. This was not the case all the years in the school. So it is clear that she will do everything so that I will learn.” (IL, female)

“I felt terribly disappointed with myself but I was happy that at least I tried and put forth effort. The parents all the time told me: ‘It was easier for you’. And also: ‘In any event there too you will have a high school matriculation certificate.’” (RO, female)

The school intervenes and influences their relations with the parents. Teachers call, comment, and complain. The school deploys the parents against the children.

“They think that everything is alright. In the elementary school it was hard for them with me and with these comments of the teachers: ‘she does not learn’. But since I got along and I am learning, there is quiet and they are satisfied.” (RT, female)

“My parents are now quiet and satisfied, but it was not easy. They also commented much to me and did not understand what happens to me.” (GA, female)

“Father only sees a low score and gets upset. Mother said: ‘I will help you but I will not fight.’ In my opinion, she needed to yell and to demand and to fight for me. And this not primarily in the seventh grade and eighth grade and this is important.” (AM, male)

“Half a year I am convincing my parents (to move to another school). I wanted to distance, to run away from the environment. And the school, a waste of time, they bother mother without stop.” (SA, female)

The students described support and encouragement from their parents and others described a struggle in the home. The students speak about importance of the parents’ pride in them.

“You know what it is when you begin to bring 100s home to the parents, and you see that their looks are not the same looks when I would bring 60-70.” (KA, female)

“In the middle of the tenth grade I decided to move to the state school, despite my parents’ wishes. However they understood that there was no choice. How did this happen? I sat a month and a half at home, I did not learn, I refused to hear any idea connected to the studies in the Ultra-Orthodox framework. The parents tried to convince me to move to another *yeshiva*³⁰ or to another school. I did not agree. I sat at home and I refused to learn until the parents were convinced. I did everything alone since my parents did not cooperate with me and even were angry.” (EL, male)

“The parents supported all that would help me finish high school since both of them did not finish high school. It was important to them to support my learning process. Even if this is not a regular class. I was in MABAR, and from their perspective the main thing is to finish high school with reasonable percentages, including the high school matriculation certificate. They did not finish the high school and this is the most important thing for them. I understood this. And for me too it was important for them. I can talk about this a lot, endlessly.” (OH, female)

³⁰ A *yeshiva* is the traditional framework of Jewish religious studies for men.

“The teacher turned to mother (so as to move to the tracked class). I sat with the counselor and she convinced me that this is not bad, that this helps, you will succeed. The parents were for this. Mother was convinced. I was less so in the beginning. But I wanted to listen to my mother and perhaps to bring her satisfaction. How much she had invested in me. My mother was very concerned, mainly, she was anxious and arranged for me private teachers. In the MABAR I already gave her satisfaction. It is important to me really all the time what mother feels.” (CH, female)

The relations with the school are described as a struggle that influences the relations of the parents and the children. The parents struggle to hold expectations for learning for the children at home.

“My parents knew for sure that I am going to (name of the school). There is no way and no other place. This is mother mainly who was with all the siblings and me too versus the school. There is no way that you are leaving the school without a full high school matriculation certificate and of course good grades. When I went into the high school my brother was in the twelfth grade and received the excellent student of the grade award. This is a place that they always told me at home you need to reach and to aspire and to receive.” (SH, female)

“They call the parents. Every two days they call. My parents did not tell me anything since they knew that it would not help and I do not change this. I would tell them that it is boring for me to be a whole day. This is not for me. The parents do not say much. Father does not all intervene and does not say anything. Why, because he himself finished tenth grade. He does not think that to succeed it is necessary to learn. Mother yes. It is important to her, she pushed me all the time to go to the school. Every time they told me. This is something that truly every time they told me repeatedly at home, that I am leaving with a full high school matriculation certificate and there is no way to be without a full high school matriculation certificate.” (SL, male)

“My parents are satisfied. They tell me you must finish twelve years of studies and put forth effort as much as you can.” (YV, male)

The parents are a protecting factor. They fought against the system with the support of the child.

“I returned to not coming to the school. Nobody was in contact with me. Mother went to the principal and told her: ‘I want my daughter to come to the tracked school. The principal said: ‘No way, it is for children who are not disturbed, but this is their last station. You are not suited.’ Mother said: ‘Move her.’ My mother influenced me. My mother listened to me. My mother went to the regular attendance officer and asked for help. Mother went to the principal and told her: ‘I want my daughter to come to the tracked school.’” (SP, female)

“My mother was upset (at the teachers). She needed to help me at home and I am ‘screwed up’ in the definition of the system. How can she help me? What is she, teacher? As is, he already invested lots on me.” (AM, male)

A student summarizes the system of relationships between the school, the parents, and the student.

“In the middle school I did not have support. And I have a war with the two worlds. The parents are not for me, and the teachers are not for me, and this is a war and I am in a big mess. Look, every child wants somebody who will give him confidence in what he does. This is what the child wants, confidence in somebody. If the teacher waits for you and is disappointed in you and then tells your parents and they are disappointed in you. What about you? You are alone. This is what you think since if the parents are despairing about you and also the school. The friend calms you and you are alright and the world is screwed up. This is what you think. Since if the parents are despairing of you and also the school and the friends tell you great, all’s well. What will you do, you are a child of fourteen. Then in high school everything connects to the parents and then I felt that I and the parents are against the system. Also them from despairing since this is a mess.” (AZ, male)

In summary, there is a relationship between tracked students and their parents' socioeconomic situation, including the reference to the parents' education and their professional occupation. The questions themselves embarrassed the students.

The conversation in the students' home about the choice of the track indicates that in every family there are a number of children who learn in tracked classes. The topic is spoken about, and the siblings are encouraging about the decision to choose the tracked classes since they offer certain success in the studies. The relationships described between the parents and the school in the high school period depend on the student's academic and behavioral situation. The parents are a protective factor of their child. The school directs the difficulties of the student towards his parents. Students addressed the change in the relations between the school and their parents after their tracking. The students learn and succeed and create calm in the system of relations between the school and their parents.

5.3.6 Summary of the Third Category

The high school presents the tracking as the sole appropriate alternative for students who do not fulfill the main role and the mission of the high school – the high school matriculation certificate. These students are “not appropriate”. They feel lack of worth, unequal, and they adopt explanations related to themselves and the education system, to the point of the justification of the tracking: the system cannot be responsible. The classes are large, and the needs are many.

In the elementary school and the middle school they experience continuous academic frustration, an experience of classifications, gaps, and learning outside of the class and these help the high school in the structuring of the perception of the conditions and practices with which they can learn. The integration of the students in the high school and the transition to it are accompanied by fears and uncertainty. The students are aware of the opportunity they have. The tracked class creates a change among the students. The practices that are attributed to the teacher's figure, personality, and professional training and structured practices that address the teaching and pedagogy enable learning and success.

Teachers and educators address the tracking like a mechanism that enables and benefits, while students see it also as a mechanism of exclusion. The teachers ignore emotional and social aspects of tracked students and ignore the risk factors of the students. The tracked students feel loneliness and distress and exclusion. They do not belong to the peer group. The students define their tracking as a social glass ceiling and tell of the lack of mobility and inequality and of gaps between the tracked classes and the regular classes.

The exposure of the structural practices in the tracked classes blocks for the tracked students the possibilities for the reduction of the gaps, the sense of worth and belonging, or integration in the regular class.

The lack of belonging is a topic that empowers the conflict between their belonging to the tracked class and their being excluded and stigmatized with the peer group.

From the perspective of the students, the procedures, the practices, and the constellation of responses of the teachers in the tracked classes and in their academic past are responsible for the building of a perception and the manner of thinking of the students on their efficacy, emotions, and functioning in the school.

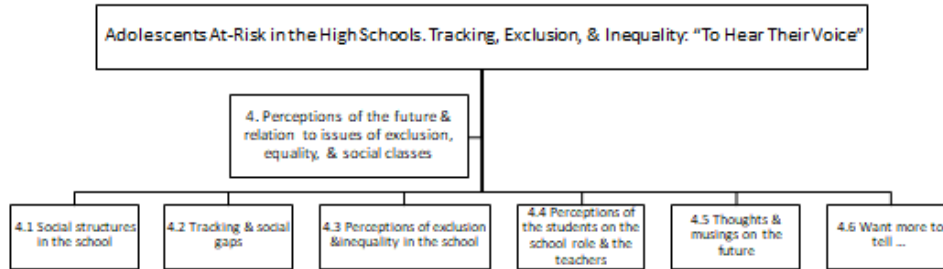
A number of students told that the attention problems, the need for Ritalin, disappeared when they encountered a teacher who believed in them and accompanied them.

The students are aware of the connection between the socioeconomic situation, education, and occupation in the context of their parent and their siblings. It was found that the conversation at home encourages the choice of the tracked class as an alternative for the success in the main task of the high school – the achievement of the high school matriculation certificate.

5.4 Issues of Equality, Social Classes, and Future Perceptions

The fourth category addresses the perception of social mobility and reference to exclusion in the aspects of belonging and self-worth. The students addressed the social classes in the school, social exclusion, and practices of equality and inequality, as they are seen in the schools. The aim is to hear their voice and the influences of the tracking and

experiences of learning of the students that were accumulated in all the learning periods on the issues related to their future. There are thoughts about the studies in the future, perception of efficacy for learning in the future, and choice of profession.



In this category, there are six sub-categories. The first sub-category examines social structures, statuses and segregation in the school. The second sub-category addresses the relationship of the tracking on the gaps and social structures in the school. The third sub-category examines the expressions and practices of exclusion and inequality in the school. The fourth sub-category speaks about the perceptions that develop among the students that address the teachers and the school during all the years of the studies. The fifth sub-category tells about the thoughts and musings of the students on themselves and on their future in the context of education, employment, and social mobility. The sixth sub-category raises the issues that the students asked to tell and to convey in a message through the research study.

5.4.1 Social Structures in the School

The students addressed the existence of social statuses in the school among the students and among the teachers. The research indicates the unique themes that characterize

the children's social exclusion. It was found that the main definitions focus on the inability to participate in society and to receive recognition from it (Stephan, 2007). Sabirsky (2006) holds that social inequality on a status basis is the first nature of every capitalist society. This inequality is embodied in the practical definition of every individual as a type of merchandise.

The students indicate the existence of social statuses in the schools. At the upper end there are the excellent groups, while at the bottom end there are the tracked classes.

“Yes, there were (social statuses). I did not encounter this, I did not experience this. There were different groups in the grade, for instance, excellent students who are not related to anybody, really not to anybody. They were isolated. Let's say it did not bother me since I also did not want to connect to them. I connected to our classes, MABAR, LEV, and OMETZ. The regular classes, we did not sit by them.” Researcher: “How did this feel?” “That they are condescending since they are excellent they are supposedly better.” Researcher: “How did this look?” “In the behavior. They go and behave differently and above everyone. Not in speech and clothing, they walk differently. They sit separately, like such smart people.” (DA, female)

“In the excellent classes there are the strangest children, they do not connect to them, and they also do not connect, you know they and the startup class (without the matriculation examinations), they are the same strange ones but on the other edge. They are isolated and do not connect. They are separate in the grade.” (SL, male)

There is a structural division into statuses, and there are relationships are alienation and exclusion between the classes.

“It is clear that yes. There is no such thing as no. The children there are evil, really. Perhaps with us this was the kibbutzim versus the urban areas, but I believe that in every school this exists. This is what I remember. The kibbutz people are the dominant and the others are called the ‘appendices’. Certainly in other schools the division is different but there is always a division, it is not that they are enemies. They do not sit together also after the studies, also not on Friday evening.” (NA, female)

The external status symbols are seen in parties, cars, and clothing brands. The names given to the tracked classes indicate the existence of statuses that determine academic achievements.

“It is clear, it is transparent. Until today it was this way, really this way, for instance, in high school, 15 year old girls come with prestigious clothing, nail polish, brands Adidas, and go in and they are feminine, as if they are prestigious. And father drops them off at school in the jeep. They see this, clearly.” Researcher: “Is this related to the studies?” “Yes, it is related to the groups. They always will be in the same grouping. And also the boys are the same way, those that are in the same status in the same grouping, somehow it works out this way.” (AZ, male)

“It is clear that somebody who learns mathematics 5 units is considered more. But although they are the scholars they are in the group of nerds. What determines more the status is how you look, what you wear, brands, and such.” (IL, female)

“It is clear, you see the statuses.” Researcher: “How is this seen?” “Even the certain people that for example will talk to you. For instance, really in the clothing, this is prominent in the clothing. Girls are pretty, guys are with brands. A nice bike or car. They indicate a high status. Certain parties and then they invite their friends. And they are not going to invite you. Even if I were better in grades it would not help me. One like this who has a car and he will not invite you and you see the difference.” (AN, male)

The teachers know about and are aware of the issue. “There are differences in clothing. Sandals of Shores brand are for the kibbutz people and other shoes are for (she muses) You know how they are called, *arsim*³¹. It is not that there are enemies but there is definitely a difference. For instance, in the behavior they are far cruder. It was hard for me with this, they are called *arsim*. For instance, they pass by somebody weak then they hit and smack. This did not happen to me but it was really hard for me with this. I do not know to explain but this is in their appearance.” Researcher: “What is the intention by somebody weak?” “Weak is the majority from the kibbutzim and they are the *arsim* from

³¹ *Ars* (*Arsim* plural) is a modern derogatory Hebrew slang term for the Israeli stereotype of a low-class young man. The stereotype may also refer to personal effects such as flashy jewelry and clothing.

the city.” Researcher: “In your opinion, do the teachers know of the phenomenon?” “The adults certainly know and do not do anything with this. Me, my heart hurt to see this, really they go beside somebody weak and you see punching, really punching. Even if an adult passes by he ignores it.” (SK, female)

The students describe the existence of statuses and external status symbols also among the teachers. The students notice the status-oriented preference among teachers.

“The teachers have too. Some are very dressed up, skirts, and you see the money. You have a bag from Adidas, you are worth something. You do not have money for perfect jeans and a brand, then they look at you differently. Those who have money are also friends from the same neighborhood, and the opposite, those who do not have money are also together. They have a license and cars. They speak about hair straightening, laser treatment, a license, and we do not have the money. They are referred to more, that’s how I felt. These children, yes, since their parents are known in the city and they are in upper classes. There were stupid girls who were in this class because of their parents’ status, definitely so. Since mother does not know to explain herself and is not referred to. There are ‘connections’ for ‘those’ since his mother will come for a conversation with the principal and they will do what she will say.” (SP, female)

“For instance, they brought for us a teacher of 3 units, he is doing us a favor that he is teaching. He enters the class tired and passes the time. And in 5 units you see the kids run to class after the same teacher. It is delusional, no?” (AM, male)

There are systemic practices that preserve the status structure: different hours of study, separate activities, different areas of activity, the choice of the programs, and even the different teacher behavior.

“There are those who are excelling and worth something. In the recesses every group is separate. Our hours are also different. We did not have activities with the regular classes. We do not connect to the excellent students. They look at us from the side.”

The student emphasizes the existing paradox in the topic of status affiliation. The same students who experience statuses and inequality in the school participate in informal

education in their residential community, and there the statuses are eliminated. “What is strange, let’s say you return home at the end of the day to the kibbutz and then suddenly there isn’t this, everyone is together.” (DN, male)

“What I was sad about is that there isn’t [in the MABAR program] almost any choice. I choose one of two, while the others in the regular classes choose one of ten. What this says is that I do not have much choice and it is clear that this is not equality and this creates statuses.” (AN, male)

The number of units of study and the groupings are the systemic structuring that preserves the status structure.

“There are statuses. Our grade, for instance, there is our bench. Nobody else sits in it. This is the status of the older ones. In the regular high school the ones who have money examine how you dress. If you have money then they will talk to you and if not then not. The principal we had preferred and admired the students with money. They were her geeks who brought her high grades. There the grade determines and not who you are. All the time they tell you go down. And the teachers convinced you only to go down. I tell them: ‘But I am in 4 units’. And they tell me: ‘But this can be the place of another who will be suited and will succeed.’ If you do not come and do not bring them the grades, then you are taking another person’s place.” (NM, female)

In the school, the students are worth more and are worth less, just like in society at large.

“Today I am good, I am prestigious. I got more girls and this goes with the money. This exists outside of the school but what brings it down is the school with its competitiveness and achievements and so on. These are worth more and these less.”
Researcher: “The school wants statuses?” “I do not know, but certainly there are. Perhaps they do not know what to do with disruptive students or with attention disorders and then all they do not know creates the statuses since some succeed more and some succeed less.”
(AM, male)

There is socioeconomic status affiliation, and there is the relationship to the parents' education.

“Define social statuses (she is silent) There are people with percentages (she is silent appears to be musing she does not find words to explain), I do not know to explain. Each one has a niche, a corner of his own. Each one in the fabric of society that he is absorbed into. How does this look? It is possible to see who has money and who has less. There are differences and this is expressed in where he lives and in what the parents do. There are things that are totally transparent. You see that here are children with cars, expensive bicycles, premium clothes. It is clear which home they come from.” (OH, female)

Students are aware of the relationship between economic status and achievements. They note that students from a low socioeconomic status learn in the tracked classes. They experience preferences of teachers and an open discriminatory attitude.

“Now that I think about your question, but certainly there is a difference, children whose parents have money, they can buy for them assessments and private lessons. I, for example, had to learn and work since I did not have how to fund the driving lessons. That way too I barely came to the lessons since you need to work. Then certainly if you have help then you will be more in the cream. Yes, all these children who learn in 5 units they have their noses in the air and they feel above you. But you do not have the time to think about these things. You are at work, you study, and you help the parents. You need to help at home. Among them it is opposite, they do not have anybody to help, and their parents only pamper. In my opinion, these are spoiled children and so their nose is up in the air. We are not such, we have a different life.” (AZ, male)

“I want to be honest with you. Those who are in 5 units come from an established economic status, well good there are individuals who came here not because of a good economic situation. The majority is a good economic basis. MABAR and OMETZ, these are the students from a less good economic basis. I was in a regular class and I say this with certainty, more students with a low economic status will be in MABAR. In a regular class there will be students with a good economic situation, in the OMETZ class it is the

same situation. Now let's say a student from 5 units comes without the uniform, they treat him differently from a MABAR student. You go straight home, phones to the parents, and a big mess.” (KA, female)

Students develop a perception that statuses and separations are essential and unavoidable and equality is not possible.

“It is clear, you will go around in the yard and will see for yourself. So what if there are statuses, this is how it needs to be, no? It is impossible that everyone will be together, we are not equal. We here are very different. And in my opinion, that's about it. (He thinks ...) Not logical. How it is possible to learn everyone together, for instance, what would they do with me in the regular class if I do not have a track of my own. You know how many are like this and more problematic.” (LM, male)

To summarize, students are aware of the existence of social statuses in the school and the relationship between statuses and education and socioeconomic status. Social statuses are characterized by status symbols and structured practices. They are the gatekeepers who preserve the status structure. Social statuses exist also among teachers. The status symbols and openly discriminatory attitude on the teachers' part are transparent and known to the students. The social structures that exist in the school receive explanation and justification through the excluded students, and they adopt the perception that the inequality is unavoidable and even essential for them. They prefer to learn in a tracked class despite their exclusion so as to achieve academic success and earn the high school matriculation certificate.

5.4.2 Tracking and Social Gaps

Research studies that examine tracking describe teachers who maintain that students in the tracked classes refer to their self-image as low. This low self-image is characterized by emotions of inferiority and rejection. Teachers also address the learning difficulties that these students have and the low motivation that characterizes them and their attitude to the studies. This approach focuses on the teachers' attitude towards these students. They are skeptical about their abilities and do not allow them to choose since they

do not depend on them. They compare them to other classes in terms of the ability and motivation and thus lessen their worth and ability (Blank, Shavit, & Yaish, 2015). Lampert (2013) adds that teachers ask students to thank them for enabling them to remain in the education system. The researcher calls this hurtful and the denial of education to the students.

At the start of the interview, the students were asked to explain or refer to the concept of “tracking”. The concept is not clear and is not familiar.

“I have no idea what this is talking about (embarrassment and silence ...) I need to say something?” (CH, female)

“I do not know what really to say.” (OH, female)

“(Silence) I did not exactly understand what tracking is.” (AM, male) “It sounds interesting but I did not really understand.” (RT, female)

There is silence as well as confusion.

“(The student looks at me, it appears he does not understand): I do not know, you want me to explain to you how I felt and I had?” (AZ, male)

They note the relationship between the program in which they learn and the tracking.

“It appears to me from the word track, you meant they chose to learn in different tracks. Each one chooses his track. This is according to the grades you have and what you want.” (OR, male)

“What is tracking at all! Ah ... you meant the programs in the school? I understood (she is silent).” (IL, female)

The idea of the elimination of the tracking as a part of the reduction of the social gap raised the fear among the students. The experience of the academic failure in the large

class and the perception built in them that they are not capable of learning in it are assimilated in them since the elementary school.

“I do not think that this will be correct. Since this helps the child. Why eliminate, why put a child with ADHD to learn in a big class? This is worse. You will not have motivation, you will not listen to what they say to you. I simply experience this in the elementary school. It goes in one ear, it goes out the other. I did not understand a word in class and then I did not go into the class. I do not understand anything. This is not good at all. If this were like that in the high school, then I would leave.” (DA, female)

“Not to eliminate (she is alarmed at the idea). Since these children never will fit into the regular class. They still want to learn and to invest but not in a regular class. The high school matriculation certificate is still important to her.” (SL, male)

Anxiety is awakened in the student. “I do not know (he is silent) I did not understand you (he is silent) You mean a change of tracks, then for instance it will not be art, then what will I do? And all these who learn with me they do not have a chance for something else. Where will we learn, what will we learn?! (it is possible to see the fear in his face ...)” (OR, male)

The elimination of the tracking will harm the regular classes. This is the argument of the education system that justifies and preserves the tracking structure in the school. The students perceived themselves as “disrupting” of the learning in the regular class and thus undermine the achievements of the school.

“Tracks are good, MABAR is wonderful. Perhaps everybody needs MABAR. You leave more proud of your success. How do we show you that everybody will learn in the same classes?! There are children with problems. There are children who do not want [to learn]. This bothers others.” (SK, female)

“There are gaps between children and different levels, not everyone is the same level. The tracks are needed since this will not work and this creates problems. Not everyone is the same level. There is a child with a problem and there is a child who is excellent. Then a child with attention disorder who is not capable disrupts the excellent one

in racing forward and the second cannot, this creates problems. It is impossible to eliminate the division according to achievements. Thus each one learns according to what he can.” (NA, female)

The memory and the drama of frustration and powerlessness from the elementary school facilitate the adoption of the perception that the tracking is necessary.

“What an awful idea. How children disrupt or move all the time or like me who it is hard for me can be in regular classes. I remember the elementary school, a regular class, nightmare. I try to forget this entire period.” (IL, female)

“It is impossible to eliminate the division since what will they do with the children who are in the remedial class or those who do not do the matriculation examination. There are classes with a completely different character, they cannot be with everyone.” (NA, female)

“Not to eliminate in any way. How can I learn in the regular class. I would fail for sure. And all the children with ADHD in the OMETZ class, and those who disrupt, everything will be destroyed, and what about students who want to learn and to invest, then they must separate. (she thinks ... she is silent ...).” She continues: “For instance, a good student in the class like I learn will go crazy from the many times that we get an explanation and he will be bored and will miss material because of us.” (RO, female)

The tracking classes are perceived as a social rescue.

“If there hadn’t been this class, we could have fallen, gotten lost. The class enabled us to achieve the high school matriculation certificate.” (RT, female)

“Not logical, how is it possible to learn everyone together, for instance, what would they do with me in the regular class if I did not have a track of my own. You know how many of them there are and even more problematic.” (GA, female)

“I do not think [elimination of the tracks], since not in every school will they give us conditions and resources like reinforcements. Reinforcements are at the expense of the

school. As you are stronger in the school more money is invested in the students, and this is expressed. And this will be expressed even more in the MABAR class.” (CH, female)

The tracking is the glass ceiling in the learning.

“For me this can suit [without tracks] since like I said the problem is only a number of subjects that were hard for me, such as physics, then because of this to track me? I would like there not to be these tracks, like you call this.” (OH, female)

“Nobody moved to the regular class. I think that we get accustomed that there is no such option and if already you dare to ask they will tell you it is impossible. I would like that at least there be an option for somebody who can advance to advance more. For instance, if somebody wants like I said to do five units in English, then there will be the option to do it in a normal manner or five units in mathematics instead of four. Why is this not an option? They told me find yourself a teacher who will agree to help you.” (DN, male)

To summarize, the concept of tracking and the exclusionary meaning that derives from it are not known to the tracked students. The idea at the basis of the tracking – that these students interfere with the normal course of learning in the regular classes and because of low efficacy they need special tracks – is known to them well and even is justified by them. The students displayed anxiety towards the idea of the elimination of the tracking. The memories and experiences of the past of frustration and failure from the start of their path in the school confirm and structure their perception of the need and conditions best for learning for them in the tracked classes.

5.4.3 Perceptions of Exclusion and Inequality in the School

This sub-category clarifies the students’ perception and their experiences in the issues of social gaps, exclusion, and inequality in the schools. The students addressed the explicit and implicit practices and expressions of exclusion and inequality. The students were asked about issues of equality towards them and towards their parents. The reference to the existence of the explicit and implicit gaps in the school and the idea of meritocracy

was examined. Another topic that was examined with the students is the relationship between money and status and success.

There is a relationship between geographic position and inequality or between periphery and center in the school.

“The school in Tel Aviv and in Tzfat, is it the same thing? I do not know, but if to think with logical then certainly not. Since I think in my region, for instance, in Tzfat and the school in the kibbutzim by us are different. They have many things that we do not. And they have trips that we do not. And they told me also that there, for instance, they all go to the trip to Poland, with us only one who has money goes. There are many examples. In my opinion, they do not treat everyone equally (she is silent). The teachers address only the children who learn. And you easily see who they cultivate and prefer. This of course is according to your grades.’ (RO, female)

“It is clear that in Tel Aviv they will receive more. The power of parents is money, this is a parents’ committee, this is influence, and then they give into them. And the child from Ethiopia, it is hard for his mother to speak, to protect her child, and they will less pay attention to her, they are less afraid of her. Certainly there is a difference between North Tel Aviv and Haifa.” (KA, female)

“In Tel Aviv there are more budgets. I entered in Facebook, I saw in Tel Aviv a huge school, renovated, with an auditorium, we do not have such things. At the start of the year they put for them balloons, you see the budgets. We were in volleyball in the Golan Heights, there too you see more buildings, a huge and beautiful sports building. Why don’t we have? Since this is from the municipality and it budgets less. In my mind, why does the network agree and this does “not” sit with me, why isn’t there equality in the network (an angry tone)? Why does it matter where you live? A nice school, 14 dunams³² of land, in Tel Aviv there are 30 dunams. You see the investment, they have balls at the end of the

³² A dunam is a measure of land area used in parts of the former Ottoman Empire, including Israel (where it is equal to about 900 square meters).

year, in our school there are no such things, only a small end of the year party. And this is disappointing. And the visibility influences you.” (SP, female)

Equality and social gaps in the school: equality in the school is related to the academic success and achievements.

“The school tries, there is no doubt that it tries, they try to give to everyone an option so that everybody will learn. So this is equality, no? That everyone will have a high school matriculation certificate is also equality. There are those who feel unequal since you fall and teachers do not address. There are many many children who feel unequal and they are not given this. You easily can fall and the teacher will make a check mark and will not do anything with this.” (SH, female)

The idea of meritocracy is phrased in the students’ language: equality conditioned on the student’s responsibility for his studies.

“Yes, the school addresses all the children equally. This is what I see in my class. This is the school, it has its own framework and rules and we come there to learn. If you learn then it is clear that everyone is equal.” (YV, male)

“There is equality. Everyone here is equal, they come in a uniform. Each one learns what suits him.” (GA, female)

“Yes, equal on the one hand since everyone can learn and not equal since you cannot truly learn what you want and like, even if you have good grades. You go into ETGAR, this is it, you do not go out of there until the end of the high school. You also do not have the possibility of learning mathematics 4 units with another class. They tell you it is impossible, this does not fit in the schedule. They convince you that it is best for you in the ETGAR class. It seems to me that this is just those who disrupt and do not learn, you always will be a problem in any place, no?? Since he who does not learn then in essence he is not referred to, like it happened to me.” (EL, male)

It is clear that there is no equality. A good child is liked. What is good? A good child is not late, is quiet, doesn’t make a fuss. The system shows him that you are alright,

stay on the wave and be a robot. If the child deviates and there are problems, they turn on him and do not care that he is lost. And they tell the good ones: ‘What do you want, to be like ‘him’?’ The teacher does not say names but she says: ‘You want to be like the children who wander the streets and have no future?’ And you know she is talking about you. What does this say, how will you take this?’ (AZ, male)

The capitalist perception: Students express the relationship between economic status and the perception of equality.

“One hundred percent there is no equality. Children with things are equal and are bragged about: ‘Look, he has a car, he has good jeans, he has Adidas worth hundreds of shekels.’ Look, items of clothing are the easiest to explain. And then every girl will want him since he is the most worthy and he has a car.” (AM, male)

Statuses in the school are an expression of the socioeconomic status of the family. They describe a discriminatory and exclusionary attitude towards students with difficulties and the preference of the excelling students.

“When do you feel, for instance, when a secretary comes to the class and reads names about students whose parents owe money to the school or the secretary says: ‘There is class trip and if a person does not pay then he cannot go.’ They read out loud names and then you understand who are those whose parents find it hard to pay and who have financial problems. Another example is an unequal attitude, primarily given to the children of the teachers. In what is this expressed? They are more tolerant, forgiving, and restrained with them even in behaviors.” Researcher: “You have an example.” “Certainly. There is a teacher here whose son is in the tenth grade, what a mess he makes. He behaves badly, but he is not suspended. He is sent to the library or to sit in the principal’s room only because he is the son of.” (SL, male)

“The school does not behave equally with everyone, it is clear it does not. It is clear that they prefer the children who excel and who learn. Children with attention disorder do not count. They do not get along with them. It is not known, this appears regularly, this is how they prefer somebody who learns well.” (DN, male)

Expressions of inequality are explicit: a discriminatory attitude, lack of caring, and giving up on the student. The teachers' explanations address the lack of time, load, and open statements on the preference of the students who learn and who succeed.

“No (a long silence). Definitely, there are students who did not receive sufficient help to succeed. For instance, children who are builders (a class of students who do not learn but are found in the school framework), why do they come to there? The teachers sometimes do not care enough for the students and give up on them. Me, for instance, this happened in Bible. A teacher who did not care about me. I do not succeed in her lessons in keeping up with her pace in any way. I tell her that I am behind in the material, I am not succeeding in closing the gap, and this does not bother her at all. She ignores me. I shared this a number of times with my homeroom teacher and I told her that it is hard for me and we spoke together with the Bible teacher and nothing happened. They ignore you and you remain with the problem. They tell you it is impossible to handle everything. Well, it is impossible truly to handle every student and every problem. They care in general, sure, but a school with 800 students it is impossible to care for each one in everything he needs.” (NA, female)

“They tell you (the homeroom teacher): listen, it is impossible to help everyone, there are here lots of students, it is necessary to help those who have it more difficult, get along.” (OH, female)

There is a discriminatory preference as well as deliberate exclusion of teachers towards the students.

“If you pay attention to things, you will see teachers who do or act differently with children. For instance, if one teacher tosses you out and you get a name of one like this, all the teachers will toss you out for nothing. And another child, he will not be kicked out. There are also preferred kids, those that they do nothing to.” (LM, male)

“Their attitude towards us is terrible, and they are discriminatory and speak in shouts and threats, and this is a terrible attitude. They threaten you sometimes and

humiliate, something terrible. I speak about the teachers of the regular classes relative to us.” (CH, female)

“I understand that money is at play. Students who have and they are set with clothes, even with learning equipment for school, it seems different and this influences the teachers. What also influences is how good of a student you are. Teachers like students who learn. First of all, they praise them more. You see this preference. For instance, they [the good students] ask for something, then they will get it directly.” The student continues to describe systemic preferences. “The school provides a different attitude towards excellent kids, freer. The teacher brings lots of confidence for the excelling child and he allows himself, for example, he is closer to the teacher. Look, the teacher conveys to the kid everything if he is worth it or not. And then the kid who is close to the teacher benefits. For instance, on parents’ day the teacher praises this child and is harsh on another child. This is what happened to me, instead of bringing me up, they bring me down. What, I am dumb, I do not know to learn” (SA, female)

The perception of inequality is built among the students. A perception is built among the students that the school cannot be equal for everyone and cannot care for every student. The school is interested in good students, successful ones, with high achievements. Equality is not a natural right. Equality is the province of those who succeed and have high achievements.

“The school cannot care for every student. They do not have the time for this. If a teacher less likes you or less cares about you, or simply you do not interest her, then she will not help you.” Researcher: “Who are the kids who are not interesting?” “The ones who disrupt, with difficult behaviors, who do not learn. If I am less quiet, less good, less (she is silent), this It does not suit her (the teacher). I had a teacher who simply did not (she is silent), she did not like me, did not refer nicely to me, and this did not work (she is silent and hesitates whether to speak ... she seems embarrassed and is afraid to speak ...) Look, he is today the principal of the school (again she is silent), he was insolent, spoke not nicely to me in front of the whole class, laid into me in front of the class about how I look. He laid into me in front of the class about things not related at all. This

was a great problem for me and I simply stopped learning with him (she is silent she is silent ...).” (SK, female)

“If you are in a small class this does not mean you are worth less. But that the regular class simply absorbs faster, understands the material quickly. It is not that I am less good than him. They [in the regular class] are focused simply (she coughs), they have quick absorption, so what? I understand that tracks are statuses, it is clear. This can give a feeling that you are less good but you begin to learn and begin to succeed personally, then you do not care. This is my pace, you understand that this is good for you, even if you supposedly are less good than everyone or from other classes. Finally you have successes.” (DA, female)

“The school does not address equally, this is clear. Those who succeed are preferred by the teachers, those who invest, who listen to the teachers, and who get good grades.” (AN, male)

“It is impossible to give equally to the students. They deserve equally but it is hard for one person to give 30 kids equally. There is an interest of status that is at play here, perhaps financial. Kids from a high status are addressed a bit differently. But if the parents are such that they have a relationship with the teacher it helps.” (SA, female)

Students indicate that there exists a relationship between socioeconomic status and achievements and success. Money and high parental status give the right to status in the school, a preferential teacher attitude, and success in learning.

“Yes and no, it is divided. You can buy private lessons every day. Then perhaps yes you have more possibilities than another kid. Certainly.” (SL, male) Another student adds, “Sure, the parents’ money influences. They buy him assessments.” (DA, female)

“There are parents who are involved and who dictate to the school what to do with their child. And they listen to them (he is silent) Perhaps they are afraid of them.” Researcher: “Who are they?” “Those close to the management, the kids of ... or they have money. Money gives them status, it is clear”. (DN, male)

“It is clear that the parents’ money can help. I for example wanted private lessons and we don’t have money. They help me in the school. It is clear, for example, that one who has money easily obtains an extension in time. Assessments and other things. But a person who does not have money, with s in the class the teachers help.” (IL, female)

“It’s checked out, a child whose parents have money, this is status, the teachers also treat him differently. He can do 5 units, and if it is hard for me, then it’s not a problem since he has a private tutor, he will have a time extension. Even if he is a child with attention problems like mine and he does not sit on his butt, he will be treated differently since there are parents who bring him everything he needs.” (LM, male)

The schools have a preference for students with high achievements. The school is not responsible for what is done in the home and for the student’s family difficulties. “Age 15-16, what do you know. This is according to the considerations of the teachers who see and notice you during the years you are in the system and according to your achievements and family background. So they direct you and tell you what is right for you and what suits you.” Researcher: “The family background, how is it connected?” “There are children whose situations at home will cause deficits, decline in the studies, regardless of achievements and abilities, this takes up a part of life and it is hard for them to advance beyond it and to leverage (he exhales ...) and so the system, like a system, is big and it has many students. These kids will learn what they can and the teachers do what they can, since it is impossible to help them with situations that are not related to the school. How can the school change for them the problems at home? And the school does not have time for such things since it is necessary to learn.” (OH, female)

The student summarizes the relationship between the student’s success and his parents’ status: “I do not know, you know what, I think perhaps this really determines. I wanted to be in the regular class, I did not have parents who could pay for me for private lessons, perhaps if I had taken private lessons I would be today in the regular class attaining a high school matriculation certificate. So it is clear that money matters but this is not everything.” (GA, female)

The inequality exists also towards the parents. There is a parallel between the inequality directed towards the student and the inequality directed towards the student's parents.

“The school behaves equally towards the parents? This is a joke, it is clear that it doesn't. If it does not treat the students equally, then how does it count their parents.” (AM, male)

“(She is silent ...) a difficult question, I did not understand it.” Researcher: “The question is do they treat the students' parents equally?” “Ahhh ... it appears to be me not. There are these parents who know to come and to demand for their child and there are the quiet parents like mine. Then I do not know whether this is called behaving equally. It appears to me that this is according to their children's behavior and their children's grades.” (OH, female)

“It is clear. It begins with the parents. If you are a parent with money or status, then they refer to you and to your child. I, for instance, and my friend, mother comes to the school, who listens to her. She only hears her daughter, her daughter. She is not interested in anyone.” (SP, female)

The students are aware of the existence of statuses and gaps in society and indicate the social replication of these structures in the school.

“For the most part, those who have money they go also to better schools and not to regular schools. There are private schools, what's the problem? I know a girl whose parents paid lots so she would have a good school so it is clear that money determines where your child will learn. Everything is money, this is what has happened, like in society, no?? Money determines everything (he sighs a lot ... it is really hard for him to breathe ...)” (AM, male)

“Most of those who succeed and those with the good grades in the school come from family with money, unequivocally. The parents there are more encouraging and aspirational and they have the means, many more private teachers, economic ability, a room by themselves without siblings, more help. And this can influence. Not can, certainly

does. And there are the parents who are not educated and then they will not aspire high for their child. They will tell him only: ‘Do the high school matriculation certificate.’” (KA, female)

Students tell about teachers who prefer students from a high parental status and with achievements. They have stories about discriminatory preference and the connection to the learning.

“I do not think (that everyone is equal). I see a teacher who supports a teacher or a principal who supports a teacher even if the student is right. One teacher told a student that she is dressing like a bimbo. She told the principal and nothing happened with this and this is not equal. If this were another student or another teacher, then things would have been different, but she said this to a student from MABAR. The teachers treat differently students from MABAR only because they are from MABAR. Once I came with an unsuitable shirt and they yelled at me in front of everyone. And there was a student from the regular class with the exact same shirt and they say nothing to her. Why?! And they straight away say to me that I am suspended and even the homeroom teacher does not help since the principal was angry at him for defending me.” (CH, female)

“There is a relationship between the money and where you learn. It is the parents who fight for their children. And they will say that the problem in the school and then the school feels bad with this. They (the parents) also are in the parents’ committee and they influence and help the school and help the teachers. So they need them. They also will donate money, will buy the school something the principal asks for. So certainly it needs them. There is also discrimination in punishments. When the parents are connected (she muses) certainly there is discrimination. Their children are less removed, or suspended. With me: ‘Go home, get out of the class’, this was regular. The teachers do not pay attention to this. They simply do not want to get into a mess with the well-off children since they pay to the school. I was told: ‘you do not pay for the yearly trip then you do not go.’” (SP, female)

“The parents who come with a better basis that is related to residence, prestige, and money, teachers are more afraid of them and therefore they are more accommodating, more

carrying of them and their child. I will present an example to you: a child who had an argument with the manager from the Education and Welfare Department, the moment her parents came to school they arranged for her everything and nothing happened to her. She was not punished and her grades were not lowered. And a kid with a single parent mother, whose economic situation is not good, when his mother came the teacher insisted in dropping his score and kicking him out and he did not achieve a high school matriculation certificate. Everything because he argued with this teacher. And I am talking to you about two students from the same class. She comes from Romema, a prestigious neighborhood, and the other, he would even put forth more effort than her. (She muses) All the class took this hard, since we knew that his mother is divorced, there is no father in the picture, they chose him as a victim. She, who was more violent in the class and committed an act of violence, her parents came from the Romema neighborhood, this is arranged, since they speak a high language. The principal helped in her favor.” (KA, female)

To summarize, a discriminatory attitude, exclusion, and feelings that accompany the lack of value and belonging among the students causes the adoption of a perception that issues of inequality and open gaps are not on the agenda of the students and even of the teachers. The students are occupied with their survival in the school. Their integration in the tracked classes and the goal of the high school matriculation certificate take the place of these issues.

Students indicate the practices that preserve the inequality and creation of the gaps between the tracked students and the students in the regular classes. They describe the relationship between the socioeconomic status and the economic capital of the parents and the success at school. The teachers’ preference and discriminatory attitude towards the students are also transparent and acknowledged. The achievements and learning success are the goal and the main engine of learning. The parameter of achievements obligates status and gaps. The education system, like the students, is aware of the inequality existing in it and of the preservation of the tracking and excluding structures but nevertheless chooses to close its eyes and to turn its gaze towards the better alternative, the opportunity given to the students who are at risk and who are excluded in the tracked class and thus to give an excuse for the inclusion of students and the reduction of gaps.

5.4.4 Students' Perceptions of the Role of the School and the Teachers

The students were asked what in their opinion the teachers did not know and did not recognize in them during all their years in the school. Their reference to this question derived from the concept that the students at risk, the students with difficulties, are the experts in their needs. These students are experienced, and their past experiences in the school are the source of their expertise.

Listening to their voice in this field will help to learn about the role of the school and about the personal and professional practices that help the students who are at risk and who are being excluded. In addition, this knowledge will clarify whether the tracking is the most effective alternative.

The school and the regular classes: the school is not at all interested in the students' difficulties and needs. The students explain that personal and professional difficulties prevented them from learning. Teachers did not know about this.

"Teachers did not know anything about me. They did not know what I truly need and what bothers me. The main thing is that I will learn and finish the school." (YV, male)

"They did not know that I have a problem with nerves. Not that I want this and I can control this. All the time they told me to stop and to behave nicely. I got punishments and suspensions but nobody was interested in why this was." (TW, male)

"The teachers did not know that in the beginning I was shy, I did not talk. I would not answer questions like now, for instance, that I am speaking to you. Once I would have answered to you 'yes', 'no', and that's all. The teachers did not know this, the girls in the class helped me a lot. Teachers do not know the difficulties, they do not see the investment, they only examine the result." (BA, female)

A student does not know of a relationship and conversation on her difficulties. The perception is that the difficulties are of no concern to the school. In the school you learn.

"(She is silent ... she breathes heavily ...) Many things they did not know. But what is this related, I came to learn and that's all (she looks down and is silent)" (SK, female)

The considerable effort the student invests in the learning is not seen by his teachers. There is a demand in the school – for achievements.

“(He is silent ….) There is much they did not know. How I invest and learn. They want to see the results. We give you help, you will learn. They do not see how much I invest, how much I learn, how difficult this is for me, how I cope.” (OR, male)

Others maintain that also when the teachers know the students’ difficulties they choose to ignore the situation – while demanding they learn.

“It appears to me that you [the teachers] know everything. But what you do with this, nothing.” (LM, male)

“Teachers in general did not know anything about me. This is how it appears to me, aside from the homeroom teacher, who perhaps knew a little. I learned that I don’t have anything to tell you since in any event you do not address it and it is not relevant but only what is related to the studies. And in this they did not always help like I told you.” (NA, female)

“I never shared with a teacher, I did not sit with a teacher. They know me by name alone. Even you (she turns to me) now you know more about me. This is how I felt. The attitude is not wow.” (NM, female)

Teachers are not interested in or do not know the academic past and background and circumstances of the students’ continuous difficulties. The student’s difficulty is his own matter.

“Teachers do not know about me many things. For instance, I moved from the previous school because of social problems. I had difficult problems there and they shunned me. The parents moved me to the school in the middle of the tenth grade. I was scared to death. I was sure that this would happen to me also in the new school (she is silent … she lowers her head, her gaze is sad), I have no idea why the kids did this to me, they were really evil to me.” Researcher: “And the teachers?” “Nothing. What can they do. This is not connected from their perspective to their work.” (RO, male)

“In the beginning, they did not know about my past. They thought that I always am successful. They did not know that I did not succeed all six years in the elementary school. I did not even come to the tests. When I told a teacher in the high school, she told me that she does not believe it. Today I do not understand the attitude I received in the elementary school and how in the elementary grades I did not learn and they did not understand me. From the second grade I am in suspensions for this and for that. They destroyed the childhood of the early grades. It’s lucky that I succeeded in overcoming them in the middle school and high school.” (RT, female)

Teachers ignore the student’s difficulties and life circumstances. The conversation is about his behavior. The school’s constellation of the responses includes punishments and suspensions or rejection and ignoring.

“I want to tell you that first all those who disrupt and behave badly are not addressed. They are removed. They are sent to the principal. Their parents are called in. There are suspensions. There are punishments.” Researcher: “Which punishments?” “To remain at the end of the day until 16:00 in the teachers’ room under supervision or with the principal or suspension for a day or two. Some children, they give up on them, they do not receive help when they need it, and then they go down a track like LEV or builders (a track of 12 years of study without the high school matriculation examinations and certificate), which is better than dropping out of the school but still they do not care about them.” Researcher: “Explain.” “(She is silent silent ... embarrassment) They do not care about them, they do not do with them anything. They speak and speak the same thing all the time: ‘Stop behaving badly, you will not be here. If you want a counselor or help, ask, and such.’” (SK, female)

One student describes an especially difficult story. “In the elementary school and the middle school the children do not share and I also did not share [with the teachers]. I would go into the lesson, do nonsense, and leave the lesson. This became a daily thing. Nobody asks why, where you are going. We were 40 kids, how will somebody see me like this, it is clear that they did not see me. I know the field and the situation. Most of the children do not share (silence ... waits).” He continues. “I am really opening up and I

want to tell you. I experienced in the ninth grade serious violence at the hands of a student in my grade. He hit me and violence. I had another friend who was threatened with stabbing from him (he is silent ... breathes heavily ...) and there were social problems. You get beaten and difficult things. Teachers do not know anything. They prefer to live in the illusion. And we give them the illusion that everything is perfect socially. They are not interested in anything. What do they care? The main thing is to come for the test, to have studies, to get a grade. For instance, sometimes in the recesses there were insult fights.” Researcher: “Explain, detail.” “Insult fights is when I tell you how ugly you are and wait to see how you will respond. I insult you, humiliate you. The teachers pass by and see this and do not do anything. It is as if not their issue. You know, even if this happens in their lesson in front of their face.” (AN, male)

The tracked classes: The transition to the tracked classes created a change. In these classes there is interest in the student, in his difficulties, and in the family background and he is seen as a person.

“Look, there is nobody who does not know about me in this class. The teachers helped and supported. I felt that the teacher understood me and got me. When my mother was sick, they helped me. When I smoked, they did not bother me or her. I experienced difficult things with a friend, everyone knew and helped me. They knew how much I am wandering around, where you are at nights. They do not say to you: ‘Don’t drink.’ They say: ‘You drink, come learn how to keep yourself safe.’ They teach you to live, that you are not second class. You are a person before you are a student.” (SP, female)

“Teachers in the regular classes do not do for you. And here, they do not judge you but look at your situation. I think that all in all the MABAR class helped me a lot not only academically but also for life. I understood many things, I was exposed to the difficulties of others and to other situations. In the regular classes this does not exist. Nobody has the time to listen to you. Just for this is it worth it for you to learn in MABAR. And I felt comfortable telling and sharing and even there was no need since they always asked and were interested, they did not come to me from a high up place.” (KA, female)

“There were things that they feel that are not relevant to the school to know. There are things that need and things that do not need to be known. I have a friend with serious mental problems and he preferred not to involve the school at all. He did not want them to know anything about him. Why? Since he was sure that this would change the teachers’ attitude towards him. And in any event they will not help him with this. They also do not understand your situations, let’s say you cannot come to a test because of something that happened to you, you are forced to lie and to just say something. Since you do not tell the truth about what happens to you. In my opinion, the homeroom teachers in classes like this are an extension of the parents. It is the duty of the teachers to be interested.” (OH, female)

There are the practices of a principal who helps the students who are being excluded.

“Without a principal the school will not last. He speaks hours with the students. You have direct access to him. When a teacher says: ‘Get out of the class, go to the principal’ this is not a punishment since you know he will attempt to understand and will talk to you and will help. But he also required seriousness in the studies. The principal, he stands at the entrance, receives the students every morning. He looks at the uniforms. With him there are no children wandering the halls. He is authoritative. He goes in, you feel him, you do not get smart with him. You are in his room, you feel he is with you, he is fighting for every student, he flows with the students, does not lay into them. He listens, he speaks at their level. He allows kids all that they need, sees to help. He always says: ‘Tell me what you need. But there is no possibility of not learning.’ (SL, female)

To summarize, in regular education teachers ignore the emotional and familial aspects of students and ignore their risk factors. The students understand that the tracking is a glass ceiling with benefits. The students are the experts, and it is possible to learn from their statements and voice about the way that helps and gets out of their situation. The main practice is a personal attitude, connection, and listening on the teachers’ part, as well as an honest interest in their life circumstances with a tailored requirement for learning. These practices exist in the tracked classes. Principals are critical in their attitude towards students

at risk and in the formation of models that help students who are at risk and who are being excluded.

5.4.5 Thoughts and Musings about the Future

The future picture of the students is very important according to research. Erikson (1968) and Lewin (1939) emphasized that the period of adolescence constitutes the period in which people plan their time for the future and build subjective reference about it. Researchers who followed (Nurmi, 1991; Seginer, 1988) maintain that the subjective picture of the future motivates and regulates the individual's behavior towards the hoped for future. Seginer (2009) emphasizes the necessity of motivation among adolescents as helping the process of preparation for a career. She holds that this is a long-term developmental process that begins far before the end of the school.

The future picture includes dreams, desires, and possibilities and a system of expectations of teachers and system that the students internalize during their years in the school. The perception of efficacy and self-worth built in the school influence the choice of studies in the future as key to the social integration and livelihood.

This sub-category clarifies the students' dreams regarding the studies and employment in the future. Most of them come from a low socioeconomic background. In most of their years in the school, they experienced frustration, lack of relationship, rejection, and exclusion. It is important to learn how much the experiences of the past influence the perception of the future.

Students attribute importance to the fact that a dream about the future is needed. They are missing in the picture. The statements are general, the sentences are short.

“The future, it is important certainly since it is impossible to advance in life without a profession.” (NA, female)

“I do not have a dream at the moment. I want to already finish with the high school matriculation examinations and with the school.” (OR, male)

“I do not know what I will do in the future but this let me feel that I can be a teacher.” (AN, male)

The motivation in the context of the future prevents the need to prove to the teachers their success.

“I have no idea, I do not know. As of now, I am trying to taste things, for instance, I volunteer with the firefighting department so as to understand what this is. Youths at risk interest me. I am dying to prove to everyone that “they” [he and his friends] are not “retarded”.” (AM, male)

Thoughts about the future and the choice of the subject inspire anxiety among the students.

“I am interested in learning law but also am afraid since I know that it will be hard for me since this is many hours, I do not know at the moment this is very scary.” (SL, male)

“My dream is to be a star of something, I do not know what exactly. I want to be a hairdresser when I will be older.” (GA, female)

“I want to open a bridal salon, to fulfill myself.” (BA, female) “To be a home designer or a building engineer.” (RT, female)

Thoughts about the future education inspire anxiety and a feeling of lack of efficacy.

“Yes (he is silent ...). In the regular to learn something (he shifted to short sentences). First like I said I think about the high school matriculation certificate. If I have a high school matriculation certificate, I can think about the studies in the future. This appears far off.” (OR, male)

“Yes. Thought and fear. I want very much and I fear that I cannot, that it will be hard for me.” (RO, female)

“If we do not learn, we will not advance. Not much I want. I need self-awareness and not to be omnipotent. I need to be aware of myself, I cannot be a lawyer and get along and to like such a job. I understand who I am. I do not want to be seen, I want to do what is good for me. I discovered that I am good in cooking and I must move all the time, then cooking is for me.” (AZ, male)

The students understand that education is the key to the change to mobility. Their anxiety surfaces.

“Until the tenth grade I thought that I would never learn in life and nothing would come of me. Today I do not want to work in a regular job with a low salary, for instance, like my mother. She works really hard. All day she cleans homes. I want to have money, the studies are the only way to achieve this. Without a high school matriculation certificate, they do not talk to you at all. At least I will have a high school matriculation certificate. There are thoughts, it is clear. But they always end with fear. How, from where will I have money, what can I learn, the university does not seem to be for me. I will look for something small. If now it is hard for me than what about later. This is pressuring.” (IL, female)

“I always knew that I can learn and I felt that they do not understand me. They do not believe in me. Yes, there are thoughts but there is no direction. And this is frightening. When I say studies, I see teachers who are against you. I know that there is waiting for me a difficult battle on the topic but I will not give up on what I want.” (LM, male)

The learning past, the lack of value, and efficacy influence and limit the dreams about the future and also the choice of the subject.

“I want to be released (from the military) and to learn cooking. I am good in cooking and I want to advance in this. I have ADHD, I must be physical and to advance this as much as possible, and everything is alright, you must do what is good for you.” (AZ, male)

“Look, I cannot learn hi-tech or a job that will take from me many strengths. I wanted to learn so as to bring a serious salary, but now I want something for myself that is easy to work in and I will earn a nice livelihood. I do not aim high.” (SA, female)

“My dream is a dignified job, and that I will earn much money. Dignified? When you work with dignity, you do not need favors, you exist in your own right.” (YV, male)

A perception of the self is built that the choices and the possibilities in the future are limited like in the school.

“I am afraid of the difficulty since I am accustomed to ‘individual help’. I already have a feeling that without this individual help I cannot, but MABAR gave me the confidence that I am succeeding.” (CH, female)

“I do not know, this is the question of questions for me. I know that I will learn, I do not know what. I do not know whether I will succeed, this is rather frightening. I am sure that not everything is open to me, since I do not have mathematics and other important subjects. In most of the important subjects I have three units. So certainly not everything is possible for me, but I will find what to learn. If they ask me, I always think about a place in which there will be a small class and I will not be pressured from a big class. I can improve grades if I want, but this is much work, all this.” (NA, female)

“Without studies it will be difficult to succeed in life. Studies since you see work. Work is livelihood and without this I will not succeed in getting along like I want to get along. After the military service to learn something. Unequivocally. I believe in myself, I do not see myself not learning something. I had a number of directions that closed and vanished, why? Since I understood more what I can and what I need to focus on.” (KA, female)

The students plan studies in the future in the learning frameworks that are similar to the tracked classes. The perception is structured so that they can succeed.

“I know that difficult studies await me and I will search for small classes also in the future. That I put forth effort and succeeded built me, I learned mainly alone in the home. I wanted to prove to myself that I can.” (DA, female)

“I want to learn in a good and reputable place. I hope that I will have accommodations since I do not know how to cope without them. I want to influence

children, this is something that is really important to me. A kindergarten teacher, as the first figure to give to a child, and the dream is perhaps to open a kindergarten or daycare center and develop. I need the courage for this.” (SH, female)

“Sure, it is not that I am not concerned since in the degree they learn at home and you need to work much and this is not a small class, many people and lectures. I do not want, certainly this is frightening and pressuring (the face changes to stress).” (SP, female)

Students describe the feeling of efficacy that will enable them to succeed in the future.

“Yes, clear. Since the school prepared me how to learn. How much time to learn before a test. I learned how to succeed. Today I believe that I can achieve what I want.” (RT, female)

“I aim far but I do not know where. Still, I want satisfaction, not money. I want work that will provide me with satisfaction. They taught me that what I want I will achieve, this the homeroom teacher taught me.” (NM, female)

To summarize, students emphasize the importance of the future picture and the need for education. Nevertheless, the thoughts about the future inspired emotions, anxiety, and pressure. A past saturated in experiences of failure and lack of value build a perception that the studies in the future are essential but the dream is limited to the learning frameworks that are similar to the tracked classes. The students attribute their success in the tracked classes to outside attributions: a small group, limited tasks. This success creates structuring in the future perception of the studies and livelihood.

5.4.6 I Want to Say More...

The students find it difficult to finish at the end of the interview. The listening to their voice and their personal stories and the interest in their academic lives in the schools have created the desire to continue to tell and to share. They ask to convey a message to the education system. They ask to emphasize and clarify topics and thoughts that appear to

them suddenly to be important. The stories they sought to add were thoughts and wishes. There was no need for questions; they wanted to make their voice heard.

Students emphasize the importance of the listening and the relationship.

“It was fun for me to speak with you, I said all that was in my heart without censoring. I felt comfortable and this really makes me happy to speak and to have people listen. And even more, you tell me thank you, this makes me so excited.” (KA, female)

“Do you want to listen to me?” Researcher: “Yes.” “It is fun for me that you listen, it is fun for me that you listen to me and to what I have to say since this is rare.” (AN, male)

“I can say something else? I want to say and I do not feel secure. I focus on my high school matriculation certificate. But I know that there are many more like me and it would be good if they would understand more, they would consider the war there is at home.” (EL, male)

“I can add another sentence?” Researcher: “Certainly.” “The ETGAR class is small for me, but I wanted to feel strong and to be the star of the home. That my parents will see how much I succeed, that everyone will be proud of me. I am now completing the twelfth grade with a full high school matriculation certificate, one extended subject of theater. Finally my parents are proud of me.” (GA, female)

An interviewee is emotional, speaking in segmented sentences. It is important to her to convey a message that their teacher’s attitude is critical to success in learning.

“The attitude of teachers towards students is important and the teachers need to speak pleasantly, many teachers yell and you, because of this, do not listen. If a teacher displays a good attitude, then you will have a warm attitude back in return. It is important that the teachers will be nice and understanding of the students. This is all the secret for the student to learn and not to stop listening.” (CH, female)

The interview brought up difficult experiences and memories for the students.

“I feel that the interview ended with a difficult atmosphere for me (she remembers the elementary school. I saw you with a lowered gaze).” (RT, female)

“I am alright, alright. I simply remembered the things (she exhibits lack of quiet With the memories that arose in her). But I am in a different place since in my class it is really comfortable for me.” (RO, female)

“I can add? Look, I think that I was saved. I think what would have happened to me if the principal had not talked to me and if my homeroom teacher had not been considerate. Not all are like that. If you fall on a bad teacher who does not help you, then there is no situation in which I would have learned.” (IL, female)

“I do not like remembering these things, this makes me feel bad until today. Until today it is hard for me with friends. It is hard to tell or to speak about myself or about what I feel. I always think that this does not interest anybody and then I prefer not to tell and not to speak about it.” (DN, male)

Others find it difficult to finish and say goodbye. They ask to continue to talk.

“I think that I am not a good example, you need to interview other students in my grade. I wanted to learn, this came from the home, but there were many children who fell and they were not helped. You are certain that you cannot and you will not learn and you look to pass the time and then the teachers also give up and do not cope. You must interview these children.” (SH, female)

“It appears to me that I was carried away and wasted much of your time. Look, I am not a student like those who do not learn. For me it was important to learn. For me it was important to achieve the high school matriculation certificate. Go talk with those for whom it is really hard. Then if there isn't the principal to find a solution for them to be in the school, they will be in the street. They will wander and will deteriorate to all sorts of nonsense.” (SL, male)

Two months after the interview, the student called and said that he must tell and convey a message. “I want to talk to you.” Researcher: “Happily, what do you want?”

“Look, since the interview I am restless. The interview got me thinking about what happened and I think that this is deeper than what I described to you. And I decided that it is necessary for me to be heard. I am speaking with friends and I have lots of support, since what happened to me happened to many like me. I have the thought to make this into a show, I want to appear in front of the teachers, and I want to have them hear my words. I think to shock. What is your opinion?” (AM, male)

A student insists on sharing an experience of social rejection accompanied by pain and distress. The teachers ignore. “The teachers did not know that I had many social problems. Children rejected me socially and behaved to me with insults also in the middle school. I never spoke about this with the teachers. Once in the third grade the teacher too really insulted me in front of the entire class and humiliated me. She told me: ‘You are lazy and you will not go far.’ This influenced me greatly. The children laughed at me. Teachers do not see a lot. I repressed it and did not tell them anything. A kid curses at you, I go into the classroom and continue onward. I see that the teachers do not know. I would hide things and attempt to learn. But it didn’t work for me.” (DN, male)

A student asks to tell and to share the pain of the teachers’ ignoring and the exclusion. DA says: “Look, also in high school I sometimes had difficulties. I had a teacher in the eleventh grade for language and I had difficulties with her. I would just enter the classroom and she says to me: Get out, you are making noise. I will not forget this about her. I just entered the lesson, and get out ... There were teachers who did not tolerate me and I have no idea why. The entire class makes noise and chatters and they scream at me: Get out of the classroom. They did not tolerate me. They would ignore me. I knew there were teachers who did not like me. You see it, you feel it. There was a teacher who got stuck on me, she did not tolerate me, this teacher. The truth is I did not understand what they want of me, I thought she was racist, she hated me.”

A student seeks to emphasize and to convey a message about the importance of the relationship with the teacher and its influence on success in learning.

“It was fun with you. The conversation with somebody outside of the system who listens and it is fun to tell you. Why are the teachers in the regular system not like the

teachers in Branco [tracked school]? If only it was that way. Many teachers told me: ‘Nothing will come of you.’ Why do they need to tell you this? Look what a teacher can be for you. I finished with a full high school matriculation certificate. The homeroom teacher is like a psychologist, the homeroom teacher is like a father. Something happens to you with the principal or subject teacher, the homeroom teacher helps you. This is the father arguing with the grandfather. And you understand that they argue because they love you and not because of something else. Imagine that he comes with us to the enlistment bureau. He taught us to control our drive. He would say: ‘Now restrain yourself and wait.’ It is hard for me, I have lots of problems in this. He would explain and convince. He did not lose patience with us ever, this is his greatness. And look, we are maddening, we are with problems and difficulties and he is with patience and is always there for us. And this is what begins to move you. You say if he is for you, you are for him. You begin to learn for him, you come for him. All the teachers need to go through a course with my homeroom teacher and then the system will be alright. He sends us a have a good week message, every start of the week. Happy birthday. Every start of the week he brings a cake, he brings us apples. All the time he thinks about us. Like I told you, a real father. The teacher generally does not let you leave. Until he too does not manage. We were different and each one has a story. We would tell him everything, arguments with the parents, everything, with the partner. And he would counsel you, you are with him in everything. Deep conversations of hours. He is with you in everything. There is no area in which you feel he does not care, or he will say it is not his issue. He needs to understand our pain. To include it. I must say thank you and it was fun. It was a privilege to be interviewed and to have you listen to all the problems I had.” (NM, female)

A student asks to convey a message to the schools. “Look, my message is that everybody needs to act like in Branco [a tracked school]. And also there will not be 30 students in a classroom. 20 students in a classroom and everything will be different. And to see the kid himself. It will be different. The mean of the grades will rise this way, for sure. The attitude and the feeling are what determine. Students need to feel that this teacher is a second mother during the school time. You did something bad, tell the teacher like the mother and she will not be angry at you and will understand you. And the teachers who are not capable of this then they should not be teachers.” (SA, female)

To summarize, this sub-category includes the messages and stories that the participants were not asked about but that they thought they should emphasize and stress. The listening to their statements, the teachers' attitudes, the relationship with a teacher who does not give up on his students – this is the first message that the students bring up. The students emphasize that the teachers' relationships with students are critical for the learning. In contrast, the students share their pain that the teachers ignore them. The constellation of their responses to the student creates exclusion that is accompanied by pain and distress. A number of students shared that the interview brought up memories and painful experiences related to their learning in the schools, and nevertheless they succeeded in looking on the way they themselves passed.

5.4.7 Summary of the Fourth Category

This category referred to the issues of exclusion and inequality for the existence of social gaps in the school and for the meanings of these aspects for the self-worth and the social belonging and the students' future perception.

The students indicate the existence of social classes in the schools and their perception is that this is a reality similar to the society. Students indicate the existence of social classes in the schools and their perception is that this is a reality that is similar to society. Students justify the inequality. They adopt thinking and interpretation since the school cannot respond to the multiplicity of needs and the differences of learners since his role is to teach. The tracked classes are the most suitable place for students with difficulties. These classes enable success in learning. The teachers' reference to the students is not equal and is even exclusionary and is influenced by the students' status and socioeconomic background. The teachers ignore the exclusion of the students and the implications on the tracking on the students' perceptions on the self-worth and the social belonging and their future perceptions. The main task of the school is the high school matriculation certificate.

Students emphasize the practices that will help them succeed in the tracked classes and the practices that caused pain, excluded, and distanced them from their age group and grade.

The students' future perceptions reveal limited and restricted dreams that attempt to avoid the repetition of the past experiences in the schools and to ensure success. These dreams bear the practices and structures of the tracked classes.

5.5 Summary of the Findings

The chapter of the findings describes and summarizes the words and voice of the students who are tracked in the high schools. Their voice includes their perceptions, their memories, their experiences, and their emotions in issues examined in the research study, and it is meaningful and presents knowledge with great value to the researched field.

The stories, the memories, and the experiences that the students raise reveal a drama of exclusion of inequality in the schools at all ages. Students describe how classification and tracking create experiences of failure and create pain, harm, and abandonment. These students also are not partners to the processes of the making of school decisions related with the integration in the educational constellation.

The findings address the three schools that every student passes through in the education system: the elementary school, the middle school, and the high school, with the transition from school to school.

The main findings on the elementary school describe the memories, experiences, and descriptions of the students and the tracking and exclusionary structures. In the period of the studies in the middle school, the participants formulate practices that help their learning and emphasize the practices that create exclusion, inequality, and social gaps. In the high school period, the participants add practices and notice social structures in the expressions of tracking and influences on the self-worth and the motivation and social belonging. These help them share about their programs and their future perceptions.

Practices, expressions, and phenomena associated with tracking, exclusion, and inequality are well known to the participants and they have opinion and perception of great value. The students are the main experts of exclusion and tracking. Listening to their voice

may be critical for them and may help build a school educational perspective on the topics of tracking, exclusion, and inequality.

The findings emphasize the existence of class statuses, gaps, and segregation in the schools when they exist in society. The students ask to bring up a message and issues for thinking. Why do helpful and tailored practices exist only in the tracked classes? Why do students who are at-risk and are excluded need to be tracked so that they will be listened to?

The findings represent the students' voice. Their voice resonates and expresses a message, perception, and practice indicating and broadening the reference to the research question.

Chapter 6. Discussion

The research question examined in this work is as follows. How does the tracking influence the lives of youths at-risk and what is the significance of their being tracked in the short term and in the long term in aspects of the studies and the acquisition of an education, motivation, sense of efficacy, and belonging?

This chapter includes the summary of the findings, discussion of their significance, and analysis of the findings in light of the theoretical background and the research question (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The discussion will present the broad meanings of the belonging to the category of the “tracked student” alongside reference to the profile that characterizes such a student in terms of self-image, future choices, and so on. The discussion will address the knowledge produced from the findings, the practical conclusions deriving from it, and their contribution to the research and to the educational field.

The first part will focus on the researcher, the research participants, and the relationships between them as an integral part of the research process and the emphases deriving from it. The second part will discuss the core findings and conclusions that derive from them in the researched aspects, with regard to the exclusionary social structures and the question of the influence of neo-capitalism, poverty, segregation, and inequality of these structures. The third part will present the main theories that support the findings, and the fourth part will address the research conclusions and contribution.

The engagement in the research of the students in the field of education is deficient, and with time its importance and considerable contribution to the field of education become clear. This research study focused on students who are found in the school and sometimes even in the classroom, but for most of their years in the school they did not function and did not feel they were learners. These are students who were tracked from their first year in the school, and during most of their years in the education system they felt alienation and disconnection from their class and the school.

The need to go in-depth and to understand the influence of the areas of economics, welfare, and culture on education was raised in research (Sabag & Biberman-Shalev,

2014). Indeed, the findings of this research study are examined from a sociological perspective, at the center of which there are social stratification, social exclusion, and inequality as factors influencing the education system. The research study will present the ways and practices that are used by the education system to replicate the economic and social structures so as to preserve the social inequality and its expressions in it. The research focuses on the gap between the demand for social equality and the exclusionary reality that characterizes the education system, when the starting point is a global perspective of social structures and sociological aspects that lead to the look at the micro level – the student.

The research emphasizes the importance of hearing the students' voice as a method of learning about the way in which they perceive the path of their studies and its influence on their life in the future and therefore focuses on the understanding of the students' subjective interpretations of different phenomena. The main questions examined are how the tracking, exclusion, and inequality towards the students in the school expressed in actuality, what is the students' perception of the tracking, beginning from their first year in the school, and what does it derive from and how does the system help and justify these structures.

The education system is a microcosm of the entire society. Social exclusion is not created by chance. It is a product of social and economic inequality and ongoing struggle between groups over resources of power and control. Moreover, it is directed by political and economic mechanisms (Horesh, 2004). Like the education system does not operate as an independent body disconnected from the context (Karnieli, 2008), the education institution structures in it social behaviors and local culture.

The research addresses the tracking in the education system as a mechanism that preserves and reproduces social structures like classes, segregation, and meritocracy and is a tool for the assimilation of economic and social ideologies among children, adolescents, and the communities where they live (Sabag & Biberman-Shalev, 2014). Tracking exists in all the schools and at all ages, and since the students at-risk are those who are influenced by it especially, the research seeks to examine the relationships and influences it has on the

feeling of self-worth, efficacy, and belonging and on these students' perceptions in the future.

The method in the research study is qualitative and ethnographic, in the spirit of “ethnography learns from people”. The conceptual approach in ethnography is the desire to understand the other from unmediated closeness, listening, and observation, entry into the field, creation of a relationship with people, choice of categories, in-depth conversations, and mapping of the relationships. Ethnography strives to understand what influences social structures in aspects of policy, ideology, economics, and financial needs and the laws that create social inequality. This research approach enabled the researcher to interpret and decipher social situations from the understanding of the context.

The research includes a broad look at society and the structures that characterize it alongside focus on the researched field – opinions, attitudes, and feelings of tracked students of high school age. The examination of the relationship between the overall context and the researched field is performed in two directions: from the macro to the micro – how social structures and characteristics are reflected in the education system and in the schools and from the micro to the macro – what the findings collected from the field indicate about the macro. The experiences, emotions, explanations, and silences as a part of the constellation of personal references of the research participants constitute units of analysis and a source of additional information for the learning about phenomena and behaviors in the micro and macro and the understanding of them.

6.1 The Researcher, the Research Participants, and the Relationships between Them

6.1.1. The Researcher in This Research

In the research study, considerable meaning is attributed to the researcher's part in qualitative research, and this includes the researcher's thinking, emotions, and interpretation – before the interviews, during them, and even in the stage of the organization and writing of the findings (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2000). The researcher is a subject, a person with background, perceptions, and prior attitudes, and the researcher's

influence on the research field originates in knowledge and professionalism, which are the basis of the work. The researcher uses a holistic viewpoint, while paying attention to details, and the researcher's traits include curiosity and a desire to understand and go in-depth and even to contribute to the research field.

The social reference in the research is a product of the data and the attitudes collected from the research participants along with the reciprocal relationships between them and the researcher. The triangle of researcher – research participants – interaction between them is the main instrument that dictates the research process and its outcomes.

The researcher's judgment, perception, choices, and ways of investigation are relevant to the stage of the discussion of the findings, in which triangulation is performed between the interviews, the researches, and the theories in the field.

The research field is known well by the researcher, and since she was a part of it, her exposure to what happens in it is high. She interprets her positions and perceptions on the subject being investigated and presents the places in which her personal attitude influenced the collection of the findings. The researcher's reflective observation, sharing of dilemmas and experiences, thoughts, and emotions are a main part in the research process. The researcher acknowledges that she has a certain viewpoint regarding the research, and her scientific objectiveness undergoes changes during it. The understanding and analysis of interviews, the decisions on the units of analysis, and their editing into findings led to the creation of new knowledge in the researcher.

The researcher's personal involvement and detailed description of the researched field brought up methodological and ethical dilemmas that obligated her to examine her choices. Thoughts, interpretations, emotions, and aspects that influenced the researcher, the research participants, and the course of the interview were brought up. Since this is reflective writing and the research materials are influenced by the researcher and by contexts of place and time, emphasis is placed on the complexity and richness of the stories, as well as the way that the researcher chose to organize them into knowledge. The researcher's centrality in the collection of the data and mainly in their analysis has made her experience and her manner of work relevant and has given the research the potential to

contribute to the research field. The reflective writing supports the research arguments, in the broad context of the work and in the research integrity that characterized its performance.

According to the theory of Znaniecki (in Thomas & Znaniecki, 1958), the choice of cases represents the “easy” option, since the human range is tremendous. When a sociologist is required to examine a personal issue as a part of a social context, he assumes temporarily that this case represents a certain community and will be identical among all the individuals who belong to it – and thus he takes a risk. This theory influenced the choice of the interviewees for a research as relevant to it.

The researcher chose the students as research participants with the assumption that the interviews with them will be interesting and fascinating, and due to their important and significant voice there will be innovation in the research. A main consideration in the bringing of the stories was their presentation as they are, clear and authentic, without the need for explanation and mediation. This motivation of the researcher is related to her previous knowledge on the world of students at-risk in a continuous reality of tracking and exclusion.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The repeated listening to the recordings and the transcription created a process that enabled differentiation, development, and making of decisions by the researcher. The differentiation of the unique nuances in each voice and in each statement helped the transition from readiness to curiosity and from concern to interest and relevance.

The first two interviews were characterized by adherence to questions and to the interview guide, to the recording, and to important technical aspects. In the continuation, the level of alertness decreased, and listening, flowing conversation, intimacy, and empathy were possible in the researcher, which also helped the interviewees. The experience of listening was good for the interviewees; some also sought to add to what was asked and some offered themselves and volunteered to help in all that was required for the research needs. During the interviews, the researcher discovered the interviewees’ need for intimacy

and listening, despite the knowledge that this is an interview for the purpose of the research and not a continuous relationship and despite the gap of ages and the strangeness.

To overcome the barrier of strangeness and to enable a feeling of intimacy with the research respondents during the interviews, the sessions were held in the respondents' private homes – sometimes in their room and sometimes in a central room in the home when the parents and siblings are in the background. The research respondents felt that they are in their home court, and it appears that this choice helped the normal course of the interviews.

From the understanding that the choice of the interviewees and the way they were recruited are relevant and meaningful to this research, the researcher went in-depth into theories that address the importance of the relationship with adolescents who are at-risk and excluded (Moore, 2018; Razer, 2018, in Razer & Friedman, 2019), and in the light of these theories the recruitment of the research respondents was planned. The researcher's acquaintance with the teachers of the researched students and a preliminary conversation she held with these teachers on the research paved her way to them and enabled an initial sympathetic relationship on the part of the research respondents. In essence, here there was an indirect recruiting of the research respondents by the teachers and not by the researcher, and the first relationship with her was a telephone conversation in which she presented the research and coordinated the interview date. The preliminary relationship with the teachers and the fact that the research respondents did not know the researcher helped preserve her anonymity and reliability.

The interviews opened with a number of background questions on the student's parents and family, with the thought that these are questions for which the answers are "easy" and known and therefore they will help foster initial trust and a sense of relaxation among the research respondents. In reality, the process was opposite: the background questions were hard to answer and created embarrassment and concern among the research respondents. Some of them refused to answer, some of them gave evasive answers such as "I don't know" or "I don't remember", some of them sought to move on to the next question, and some of them answered briefly with looks that revealed difficult emotions.

The researcher felt embarrassment and surprise at the participants' responses and understood that they are aware of the reality of their life and are not proud of it; they were prepared to interview about themselves and less about their family. In this stage, the researcher found that the correct strategy is to continue the course of the interview, and the transition to the questions on the research respondents themselves and on the school created in them openness and intimacy that helped to return in the continuation to the background questions.

During the interviews, the researcher noticed her identification with the feelings that arose in the research respondents during the interviews, such as embarrassment, pain, sorrow, and anger and sometimes also joy and pride. The researcher's knowledge and previous experience in work with adolescents at-risk helped her notice these situations, learn further about their emotions and internal world, and shift to empathy and listening.

The researcher coped with a number of considerations and dilemmas during the interviews, when one of them was how and to what extent should the interviewees be informed on the researched topic and how should the researcher explain and present herself and the research to the interviewees, who are students who are not accustomed to interviews in general and to interviews for the purposes of a research in particular. There is no doubt that the researcher needs to be aware of the experiences through which she connects with the research respondents and creates meaning (Wexler, 1992), but the presentation of the topic and distant concepts of "tracking" and "exclusion" to the research respondents constituted a real challenge. Her professional knowledge of the topic of tracking and exclusion, as well as her expertise in work with the field and with adolescents at-risk, helped the researcher mediate this world for the research respondents and in parallel ensure the scientific performance of the research study.

The researcher deliberated on the extent to which to broaden or lessen the opening, what to explain in the initial conversation on the telephone, how to present herself, and how to manage the encounter and to begin the face-to-face interviews. This preliminary thinking helped the preparation for the interviews and for the process of the recruitment of the research respondents. In a preliminary conversation on the telephone and at the start of

the interview, the researcher was careful to explain about the research and to present herself. A number of interviewees asked for additional information about the research or about the researcher. To create continuity and to emphasize the importance of the conversation with the interviewees, the interview incorporated indirect questions or questions on others as a technique that encouraged free conversation on their part and allowed the researcher to reveal and identify gaps without harming them.

During the interviews, the researcher was exposed to prolonged and repeated silences on the part of the interviewees, which sometimes were accompanied by embarrassment and emotional overload. The researcher's ability to deal with these silences was based on her familiarity with the world of children at-risk who are not accustomed to conversation, primarily not about themselves, but when for them the safe space is created with the help of empathy and listening, they very much want to share and continue to speak. The researcher's strategy was the gift of empathy and sometimes a change in the order of the questions. Nevertheless, the "holding" of the silence was difficult also for the researcher, but coping with it enabled intimacy that helped the continuation of the interview.

The listening to the youths at-risk necessitates unique conversation and communication skills, since their language is relatively poor and the conversation with them is filled with silences on the one hand and repetition on the other hand. This fact guided the researcher in the analysis of the findings, as well as emphasis also on the relevance and authenticity that will awaken curiosity towards the respondents since the reader will experience and will "feel" them. Another difficulty arose when interviewees shared and told from the request to go in-depth into the experiences they described. These situations obligated the researcher to exert judgment and to balance between the management of the interview and keeping the rules and order of questions and requests for greater depth. In his article "Science as Destiny", Weber (2009) addresses the importance of maintaining objectivity on the researcher's part and explains that many components, for example, personal temperament, tone of voice, way of thinking, and even desire to response to the research questions, will influence the respondents. This approach obligated the researcher to have awareness of these influences and to be involved in processes of thinking

and interpretation. The researcher found that sometimes it was possible to go back to the questions and sometimes it was correct to continue in the interview. The issue of how much to intervene or to mediate for the respondents was addressed by the researcher throughout the entire interview. Students who are excluded and at-risk frequently behave differently from what they report, thus creating a gap between their behavior and the way in which they perceive or explain themselves (Razer, 2009). This fact obligated the researcher to pay attention to every word and look as components with meaning in the analysis of the findings. The focus on phenomena such as female respondents who spoke in the masculine language or many respondents who spoke about themselves in third person revealed the interviewees' difficulties with speaking about themselves.

The researcher was methodical in all the stages of the research: the recruitment of the interviewees, the interviews, the collection of the data, and the analysis of the findings. This approach allowed additional insights beyond what was said or perceived intuitively to be reached (Kassan & Krumer-Nevo, 2010). The methodical work also enables transparency, which is an important and ethical characteristic in academic work. Through the methodical analysis, it is possible to follow up after the process that led to theoretical arguments, the validity of which is reinforced also following the legitimization on the part of the scientific community.

The manner of the analysis of the findings and their division to categories and subcategories constituted another dilemma. Since the research study seeks to emphasize gaps and insights in all that pertain to the continuous social phenomena, the choice was to include in the interview questions that address the continuum of the studies from its start and the division into the different schools – elementary school, middle school, and high school. This observation is important since it enables reference to the social phenomena researched in the education system, as well as to the perception, interpretation, and emotions, which are researched from an above perspective.

As mentioned above, the language of the students at-risk is not proper, is relatively poor, and their descriptions are simple, short, and ambiguous. The researcher's attitude was that this unique style of expression brings the readers close to their emotional world and

their difficulties, and emphasis on it will help focus from up close on the ways through which they express frustration and pain. To enable the interviewees to express themselves authentically and freely, the researcher was careful to have an attitude that is not critical or judgmental and avoids corrections or stops, with the exception of relevant questions to ascertain that she understood their intention.

The writing of the findings inspired in the researcher difficult feelings and the desire to shout out the respondents' statements, to the point of difficulty with giving up parts of the interviews in order not to weaken the cry arising from them. The researcher found that it is important to bring the interviewees' statements as they are, without interpretation, and therefore the presentation of the findings includes their statements, as they were said. Segmented sentences and discontinuous phrasings, ideas that were not completed, and improper language are a part of the "story", and thus they are presented. However, it is important to note that the whole story reflects, more clearly and unequivocally, the students' difficulties, and the disassembly into categories for the purpose of the analysis does 'soften' the whole story.

6.1.2 The Research Participants

In the research study, importance is ascribed to the respondents' behavior, responses, and feeling, from the first stage of their recruitment to the research, through the setting of the times of the interviews, to the interviews themselves. All these are an inseparable part of the research, and therefore it is important to address them and to produce from them knowledge relevant to the research. The research respondents' behavior before and during the interviews expresses the response to the researcher or to the research process that the researcher represents – in other words, the research topic or questions in the interview. In essence, the researcher is a part of the variables and the situation, and the behavior is related to the researcher and the researcher's presence is a part of the array of responses and means for the collection of material.

Since the research seeks to shed light on and emphasize the learners' personal interpretation of their learning and of the schools and their subjective viewpoint, it was decided that the research environment will be their home – a familiar and secure

environment for them. Although the respondents are students in regular high schools, they learn in separate classes that belong to a separate department in the Ministry of Education. This separation indicates the tracking and structural exclusion in the education system. The respondents' ages, 17.5-19, constituted an advantage in the aspect of the self-identity and expression ability and enabled their introspective look at all their years in the school. They addressed the difficult experiences and emotions that accompanied them in the transitions and movement between tracks and schools and presented a personal viewpoint on the end of the studies in the school in the present and on their future.

Many of the respondents exhibited discomfort at the start of the interview. The entrance of the researcher, a woman they do not know, into their home and the presentation of the research design and the topic, which includes unfamiliar concepts, the questions about them and their family – all these were for them variables that created tension at the start of the interview. The respondents moved on their chair with lack of quiet, their glance was not relaxed, and eye contact was not made.

The explanation the researcher gave the interviewees at the start of the interview on the concepts of tracking, exclusion, and risk did not help. They did not understand but also did not ask or respond. They gave a puzzled look, and they continued onward, and it appears that this is a typical response for them in situations that are not understood. The interviewees felt that they are committed to the interview process since they were recruited for it by their teachers. Students even noted that they came to the school and learned “for the teacher”, so as not to disappoint her, and the statement “I am doing this for the teacher who asked me” recurred during the interviews. The recruitment of the interviewees opened with a connecting sentence: “I was given the telephone number by your teacher. Did she talk to you?” The answers were: “Yes, sure, I remember” or “How can I help?” One of the interviewees (Na - female) described her feeling; “I saw this as pride that the teacher turned to me and explained to me that they want to interview me. I felt chosen by my teacher, this is flattering. My friend even asked me: ‘Why were you particularly chosen to be interviewed?’”

The interview, which includes questions about them and about their thoughts and emotions, is perceived as strange and unfamiliar, and they noted that they are not accustomed to talking about themselves and their needs. Impulsive responses such as “I don’t know” or “I don’t remember” repeated themselves frequently, and the researcher had the responsibility to understand what they feel and to display understanding and sensitivity. In the first questions, the respondents were asked to tell about the period of the elementary school, and they caused a change in the atmosphere. The tension disappeared, intimacy was created, and the respondents were relaxed. In this stage, there was a turning point, and the researcher was impressed that the interviewees are beginning to display interest in the interview. The fact that they are being listened to despite the parts that included excitement, anger, silences, and pain was for them a positive experience.

The questions were phrased with sensitivity that they are not accustomed to, and some of them brought up unpleasant memories that were expressed in facial expressions of sadness or depression, in a lowered gaze, and in the cessation of speech. It is apparent in the interviewees that they are not aware of their emotional difficulties, are not accustomed to explaining themselves, and lack expressions and conceptualizations about themselves and their world. It can be said that it is far easier for them to show their emotions than to describe them in words. It is apparent that teachers turn to them with short statements that are mainly directions like “put forth effort” or “try” – closed statements that cannot create a conversation. A pattern was identified according to which instead of explaining themselves they chose to quote from their teachers’ statements and to assume that the researcher would understand.

The respondents displayed difficulty in the understanding of the questions on the topic of equality or exclusion towards students and needed further explanation. It was apparent that they did not understand what are the aspects and meanings of the concept ‘equal’. It is apparent that sentences said by the teachers, such as “you cannot continue onwards and go up a grade” or “you must go down a grouping”, are perceived as caring and concern on the teachers’ part, that the teachers care about them.

In response to questions about the gaps and differences between the regular classes and the tracked classes, the research respondents were silent or ignored the question and instead chose to address gaps in the class where they learn. A similar response was observed also when they were asked “would you like to return to the regular class?”. This recurring pattern reflects their response to pain and difficulty and ignoring the world that exists outside of their classroom.

The interviews lasted between an hour and a half and two hours. During the interviews, it was possible to feel the tiredness or repetition among the research participants, but when the interview ended the response always was surprise and disappointment: “It’s over?!” It was apparent that a dialogue that interested them had developed, listening was created, and they reflected in their way the empathy they experienced during the interview. The impression was that the research respondents are interested in continuing the interview and talking. They led the conversation after the questions ended and strived for a happy end.

If at the start of the interview the research respondents did not understand what was being talked about, in the end they exhibited interest in the research and understood its relevance and the research goals. They sought to know who would read the research, whether the Ministry of Education would change anything in its conduct, and mainly whether they could help the researcher in the creation of a change.

6.1.3 The Relationships between the Researcher and the Research Participants

In qualitative research, the relationships between the researcher and the research participants are very important. The researcher has professional status and knowledge on the researched topic and a hierarchical position that obligates dynamic and mutual relations that are characterized by dialogue. The researcher is required to understand the experiences through which he connects with the respondents and creates meaning (Josselson, 2015) and to be aware of the boundaries and interactions between him and them. The researcher – respondents relationships are a product of the feedbacks from the interviewees in combination with the researcher’s emotions and decisions. The researcher’s interpretation

is added to the respondents' interpretation as an inseparable part of the research (Bar Shalom, 2011).

It appears that the promise that the interview would be anonymous, the attentive listening, and the flexibility that the researcher exhibited regarding the duration of the interview created among the research participants the feeling that every word they voice is important and significant. The strangeness between the researcher and research respondent was replaced by a close conversation, which invited sharing primarily in all that relates to the school and the period of the studies. Some of the respondents shared that the situation made them emotional, and at the end of the interview they thanked the researcher and expressed happiness for the listening and for the right to participate in the research. Their understanding of their important contribution to the research study empowered them.

During the interviews there were also moments that were not simple for the two sides, which were associated with difficult memories. In most cases, the researcher contained the pain, and sometimes the respondents were the ones who encouraged her in the encounter with the difficult information about themselves.

Johnson (2002) maintains that the interviewer is required to offer mutuality to build a feeling of trust and closeness, and indeed the researcher offered the interviewees empathetic listening and identification while limiting her involvement and avoiding the channeling of their words. This behavior requires effort, concentration, and maintenance of restraint on her part, and it is apparent that as the interview progressed, the interviewees allowed themselves to open up. The impression was that the interviewees enjoy the interaction, the listening, and the interest in their statements to the point of understanding that they have considerable value to the research. Periodically they suggested to the researcher to bring to the research their classmates to confirm their statements, and it appears that they relied on her in all that pertains to the leading of the interview and the preservation of their privacy. The researcher was committed to ethics, objectiveness, and restraint from the expression of an opinion as a way to maintain clear boundaries for the interview, and this alongside the striving for discourse and entry into the world of the research participants.

The relationships with the research respondents influence the researcher's behavior during the interview, and the dialogues are influenced by the familiarity or lack of familiarity between them. Additional variables of influence were the researcher's status, her hierarchy relative to the research respondents, the age gap, the interview environment, and so on. Thus, for instance, the choice to hold the interviews in the respondents' homes, when the researcher does not know them and their families, brought up dilemmas and question marks. The researcher did not have information about the conditions under which the interview would be held, how the interviewee would respond to the very fact the interview, whether the interview would be held without the presence of others in a quiet place, and how the family would respond.

The end of the interview was accompanied by a dilemma of how to say goodbye. The meaningful connection that was created made it difficult to part, and the feeling was that both sides are interested in continuing it. The researcher had shared in the experiences, memories, and difficulties of the research respondents, and they on their part prolonged the conversation through questions such as "Do you need help?", "Do you not have other questions?", and "Did I help?". The procrastination at the end reflects the intimacy created during the interview. The research respondents thought that the interview was performed for the Ministry of Education and asked the researcher to convey the message about the importance of the personal relationship with the teacher, a relationship that they see as critical to their remaining in the school and their success in the studies.

6.2 Findings and Conclusions

The summary of the findings and the conclusions that derive from them was performed according to the four main categories presented in the chapter of the findings. The analysis addresses the periods in the participants' study track, the structures of tracking, exclusion, and inequality, and the reference to their future. This division enables the learning about them and the structures in the education system.

The research population includes students from schools chosen randomly and located at a broad geographic dispersion, so as to enable a look from above on general systemic structures and mechanisms and researched phenomena. The chosen research

method, broad interviews with students, enabled reference to all the years of learning in the education system, from the first grade to the twelfth grade. The reference to three periods – elementary school, middle school, and high school – as a part of the structure of the education system reveals information about the structures and practices and the way that they influence the planning of the future and the perception of the future of the research participants. The micro indicates about the macro: the student is a representation of society and the student's personal story indicates the manner of action of the school and society and reflects the influence of the decisions and social structures.

This work seeks to reveal what is done in the space that creates the tracking from the students' perspective, which until now has been lacking in the research in this field and which may contribute significantly. The research participants' statements indicate the lack of mobility and the social gaps in the school and the expressions in the field of mechanisms of tracking, exclusion, and inequality.

6.2.1 The Elementary School Period

The first experiences in the elementary school are important and significant to the building of the efficacy and motivation for functioning as students. At the age of five-six the initial perception of the self is formed, and at the age of the elementary school the thinking about the future begins to be built (Grant, 2008; Williams et al., 2005). Hence, the future picture begins to be delineated already in this stage, a fact that puts the question of the teacher's role and its importance in these years into sharp focus.

The findings of the research study indicate that the period of the elementary school is less remembered by the students. They displayed difficulty speaking about it and explaining events that they experienced during it, they presented a self-image and perception that represent a negative narrative of themselves and difficulties and doubts of the system about their learning efficacy already from the first grade. They described the initial encounter with the school as an accumulation of difficulties and learning failures and the first years as an experience that they would be interested in repressing or forgetting. The research study of Cohen-Navot and Avadya (2012) reinforces these findings and displays that the students who were identified in the first grade as having academic and

behavioral difficulties were found in the twelfth grade as youths at-risk with poor achievements and high percentages of dropping out from the school.

The research participants indicated the existence of excluding and tracking structures beginning in the first grade, which were implemented on them throughout all their first years in the school on the background of failures in the studies and difficult learning experiences.

The most dominant practice through which the school dealt with the academic difficulties was the removal from the classroom to small learning frameworks outside of the classroom. According to the students, this tracking practice did not help their functioning in the classroom and even intensified the feeling of alienation and exclusion towards them when they returned and integrated into it. The students described that they received an attitude of objectification and one-sided actions on the part of the teachers with the addition of the demand for obedience. This structure was preserved throughout the entire period of the elementary school, and in essence the gap increased in such a way that the possibility of learning in the regular class remained vague until the transition to the middle school. These findings are commensurate with the findings of Moore (2018), according to which the students' functioning is influenced by their feeling of belonging and their relationships with the peer group and the teachers.

The findings indicate that the help provided to the students outside of the classroom is perceived by them as an excluding mechanism. They noted that the methods of learning outside of the classroom are different from those accepted inside the classroom, which empowers the feeling of alienation and pain that arose in them with their return to the class. They described that in the first years in the school they experienced stress, threat, insults, humiliations, and setting of conditions for their being there and that the school contributed to their lack of confidence. The teachers set for them a low threshold of achievements and determined glass ceilings relative to their efficacy, in contrast to the emphasis of the researchers that self-confidence and self-esteem cause mental wellbeing; their presence positively influences the normal development of children and their absence causes a risky situation (Aloni, 2005; Zalka, 2015).

The interviewees indicated about an open class division already from the first grade, which was expressed in the description “strong” or “weak” as a part of the routine and well known language of the teachers. These class descriptions accompanied them for most of their years in the school. The teachers’ preference for the “strong” students was prominent and intentional, while as “weak” students they were ignored, given up on, and abandoned. In actuality, understanding or implicit consent was created between them and their teachers since they receive help outside of the classroom, and therefore the teachers ignore them, their difficulties, and their needs. The students felt they were objects that the system acts on according to the structures accepted in it. These findings confirm the perception that one of the main factors of the students’ distress is the school itself (Avidan, Lampert, & Amit, 2005), which is experienced as a difficult place where there is a battle for survival and which represents feelings of pain, frustration, and disappointment.

It was significantly apparent in the findings that in the first years in the school the respondents lacked explanations about what was done with them. They told that the teachers did not discuss with them their difficulties and their needs, and their decisions were made as an announcement to them and to their parents, without prior conversation. Consequently, they adopted the conceptualizations of the teachers and the adults to explain their feelings and thoughts. The teachers’ tremendous influence on their identity, mainly at the young ages, caused the students to adopt the “teachers’ formula” about their learning ability: they can learn in a small group with an assistant teacher and outside of the class since they are lazy, delayed, or irresponsible. The respondents emphasized that this was the language of the educational establishment and that they adopted its perception that they are responsible for their achievements and their failures.

The findings indicate the school as causing the students a feeling that they are disappointing their parents and their teachers already from the young grades. The school refers the student’s difficulties to his family, ignores the harm in the family context and in the relationship between the student and his parents, and even recruits them to the learning tasks that their children did not succeed in completing. A student described the organizational structure of the school as “standing in line”: when a student did not stand in the row like everyone, his parents are recruited to push him back into the existing structure.

The school weakens the parents in their children's eyes, and nevertheless they describe their parents as doing the best they can for them. It appears that the students are aware of the fact that the school is the key to the difficult power relations between them and their parents.

6.2.2 The Middle School Period

The middle school is a "school in transition" between the elementary school and the high school. The findings on this period indicate that the students perceive themselves as active and less enable the system to act upon them. The relationships with the teachers and the school are described as an arena of war, and the behaviors that derive from this are for the most part internal dropping out (coming to school but not functioning in it or absence from the school). In this period, they act and respond to the education system and to what is done to them. Their method of action and manner of thinking indicate what is done in the school space and in the tracked space, so that the findings reflect the teachers' perceptions and practices and the school's ways of action.

According to the research findings, during the years of the middle school there is a structured tracking mechanism, which includes the removal of the students from the regular classroom and decisions about their manner of learning and lack of involvement in or preparation for the tracking, accompanied by the familiar establishment alienation from the period of the elementary school. Kalinov (2014) maintains that the selection and adjustment to the tracks in the education system are performed according to the mental ability and academic achievements, and this is the case also in the job market. Additional characteristics of these years are steadily increasing gaps between the research respondents and their classmates and the abandonment of students; the open institutional behavior includes giving up and harm, the results of which are exclusion and blame directed at the student and the student's family. Given the lack of choice, the student is pushed to take upon himself risk behaviors and to adopt a feeling of lack of efficacy. Continuous frustration and anxiety of students on the one hand and powerlessness and frustration of teachers on the other hand help the school build and justify the existence of the tracked classes. Researchers indicate procedures and organizational and content structures through

which the school preserves or at least does not prevent the student's distress (Motola, Mittleberg, & Razer, 2014; Razer, Warshevsky, & Bar Sadeh, 2011). According to the findings of this research study, the students also recognize and identify these structures and procedures and maintain that they are harmful and alienating.

The teachers' expectations from the tracked students are low, and they are doubtful about their ability to succeed. They do not succeed in disconnecting from their past filled with the students' failures and their socioeconomic class affiliation. The gaps are evident and known to the teachers and the students. According to the interviewees' testimonies, the explanations they heard from their teachers about gaps and lack of efficacy indicate the justification of the inequality and that its implications (exclusion and risk) are known to them. Over time, the students adopted the systemic perception at the basis of the tracking. These findings are supported by the researchers' arguments (Bar Haim, Yaish, & Shavit, 2008; Sabirsky, 2004; Sabirsky & Dagan-Bozaglo, 2009) that in the schools there is differentiation in opportunities in terms of the learning tracks and levels of learning, which preserve the students' socioeconomic composition. The differentiation causes the student's status to become permanent, both in his own eyes and in the eyes of the education system.

The students transcribe their difficulties through the use of statements that the teachers directed at them and describe the ignoring of their difficulties and the prevalent pattern of the transfer of the difficulties to them and the accusation of them as lacking responsibility. The system justifies the existence of the tracking structures and thus builds the students' perception about their necessity and causes them to see the exclusion as unavoidable in a uniform system that cannot prepare for personal difficulties. They internalize the only alternatives at their disposal – the low groupings and tracked classes, and already they are “accustomed” to the harm to the self-worth, statuses in the class and between the classes, and the discourse of “strong” and “weak”. These findings are reinforced by the arguments of Boudon (1974, in Bulle, 2009), who links dropping out to tracking as an anticipated phenomenon among members of the lower class and states that placement in the low tracks following the negative labeling harms both the academic motivation and the self-image. The continuity of the early low groupings to tracking classes

in the middle school is the first seed of future disconnection and dropping out and a product of the institutional segregation.

The report of the Brookdale Institute (Ben Rabi et al., 2014) shows that, in contrast to the OECD countries, in Israel students report emotional disconnection, a feeling of lack of belonging, alienation, and “perceptual disconnection’, which is expressed in the view of the school as not contributing to their lives and future. However, the findings of the present research study indicate the influence of the perceptual disconnection on the students of the middle schools who were tracked from their initial years in the school, and it is evident that its influence on their future and their life is rather significant.

The difficult experiences that the tracked students experience cause them to fail and harm their ability to learn and to feel a part of the system; they are excluded. In parallel to the fact that they do not succeed in developing positive self-awareness, in them a perception is entrenched that mobility is not possible, that statuses are essential, and that they are the ones that make it difficult for the system to bring the good ones to achievements. The perception of inequality as a social structure becomes necessary and internalized as eternal “truth”: in society there will always be successful ones and unsuccessful ones, achievers and underachievers. The students do not dispute the perception of inequality of the school and their exclusion. Even when they are absent or drop out for lengthy periods from the school and report that nobody is looking for them, they do not perceive the system as responsible for what is happening with them.

Cook-Sather (2006) emphasizes in his research studies the importance of the teacher-student relations, the listening to the students, and the research of their voice. The findings indicate that this is not only listening to the students but also addressing them as experts who phrase helpful practices and ways of teaching. Students convey a clear message on what “works” for them, is necessary for them, and helps them. The practice of a significant relationship with a teacher who displays listening and “perseveres” for every student is rather emphasized by the interviewees and is known in the research literature (Moore, 2018; Razer & Friedman, 2019).

The students indicate that their teachers withdraw from engagement with their difficulties and search for a pathology that will release them from this coping through the transfer of the responsibility to the students. It appears that the teachers are influenced by the social structures and reproduce them to the education system, and even if in their conduct there are personality components, it reflects problems of society.

It is possible to summarize this part and say that in the middle school period the students perceive the school as responsible for the worsening of the struggle between them and their parents and identify the parental powerlessness. The awareness of the weakness is assimilated in them, harms their chances to succeed in the studies, and from the belief that they are not worthy of the school they adopt risk behaviors such as absenteeism and dropping out.

6.2.3 The High School Period

Most of the research participants were high school students in the research period, and therefore this is the period about which they preferred to talk. They are doing their years of high school in a track chosen for them and belonging to a separate department in the education system. The findings indicate acceptance with their situation and even satisfaction with the fact that they are students. Students with a “history of difficulties” in the elementary school are characterized by implicit and explicit internal dropping out and exclusion in the middle school, a negative process that ends in the tracked classes in the high school, where they first experience academic success.

Like what is presented in the research that in the high school the main discourse revolves around grades and output as dictating tracking (Razer, Mittleberg, & Motola, 2014), the interviewees indicated that they are aware of the centrality of the achievements and accept upon themselves the tracking as a good solution, “what they deserve”. Their statements further indicate that they live in a structural conflict: on the one hand, they feel anger and alienation that they are “marked” as weak and are separated from their grade level, while on the other hand, in the tracked class they are satisfied and feel belonging – this is the framework in which they experience success in the studies despite the stigma.

This conflict is visible also in their exclusion from the grade level and from the social activity in it.

The findings indicate that the research participants do not understand the concept of tracking and its meanings. For them, this is the only and ultimate solution, a moment before they are removed from the school permanently. This is the best offer of the system for them. In the tracking classes, they find educational figures who create in them an experience of confidence and efficacy; this experience is attributed to what is done in the tracked class and thus the perception is built that “only here can I do it”. The new reality of the sense of belonging, friendships, and academic efficacy (which will lead to the high school matriculation certificate) does not help in the coping with the sense of exclusion.

The findings indicate that the feelings of harm and pain from the start of the path in the school and the experiences and perceptions that the teachers assimilate in them continue to accompany them. This reality is not spoken of in the school at any stage and it intensifies the alienation and exclusion that the students feel although they are learners. The students tend to explain about their difficulties through external and negative attributions: “because of the teacher”, “because of the attention disorder”, “because of the large class”. They adopt patterns of students who are excluded, not successful, and problematic for the system and thank it for the opportunity given to them and ignore their low place in the hierarchy and the concomitant pain. Their perception represents the social perception that the high school matriculation certificate is the main thing. The implicit message in the teachers’ statements is that the tracking is an opportunity and a benefit for students at-risk: “You were chosen painstakingly, there are only 25 places. You learn like everyone.” Sentences like “You cannot continue onward and go up a class” are perceived as expressing caring and concern. In the conversation with the interviewees, it is apparent that the awareness of their “self” is not developed. They flee from the painful parts and are not connected to themselves and to their difficulties. The structural perception of themselves, the school, and society draws from the systemic conduct and the actions of the teachers towards them. They internalize the adults’ statements towards them from an early age as the way of things, and from the difficulty expressing their distress they use their expressions: “What is a good student, one who does what he is told”, “I did not have

motivation”, “I have untreated attention deficit disorder”, “Suddenly I was no longer interested in learning”. They internalized the attitude of the adults who know what is good for them and no longer ask questions or dispute it.

In general, they are not accustomed to asking, requesting, or complaining. Their requests to move up to a higher grouping, to learn another subject, or to reduce gaps are met with a wall. There is barely such a possibility, and single cases in which the student persisted against the system are described as a war in which the student bore the burden of proof. Thus, the students are denied the freedom to develop their abilities and skills and their efficacy declines. Sabirsky (2006) maintains that there is a relationship between the students’ referral to tracks and these meritocratic principles that the system aims at.

Both tracking and differentiation that was created through the distinction between high tracks and low tracks act as means for the preservation of social inequality. Separate classes distanced from the rest of the grade are equivalent to the social geography of the center and the periphery with the attendant implications. Researchers present the existence of tracking structures explained and justified by educators (Ayalon, 2009; Blass, Zussman, & Zur, 2014). The findings of this research study show that the students are aware of these explanations and perceptions and even adopt them. The preservation of the tracking structures relies on practices of the positioning of tracked classes at the end of the structure, a different system of lessons, prevention of the choice, and explained objection to mobility. Thus, the choice is denied to them, somebody else always will choose or decide for them and in their stead, there are no options open to them. They are accustomed to accepting one option along the statement “this is the best for you”.

These practices and structures are not commensurate with the attitude of researchers who clarify that the idea at the basis of neo-liberalism is that personal liberty and freedom are the goal and apex of human culture and it is necessary to cause every individual to aspire to the maximum personal benefit (Gal-Nor, Paz-Fuchs, & Zion, 2015). Dahan (2006) focuses on one of the paradoxes of neoliberalism, which on the one hand strives to reduce the role of the country and to obtain maximal freedom for the individual and on the other hand needs a strong country that intervenes, so that the democratic majority will not

undermine the order of capitalist regime. In the field of education, this trend is expressed in the transfer of the responsibility for learning to all the students in the guise of freedom, competition, and choice, with control of the channeling to the existing tracks and their direction to them according to achievements. The interviewees emphasize that the conversation accompanying this direction is forceful and threatening: if you do not learn, then you will be kept back a grade or you will be in a lower group in the school.

The respondents address the completion of twelve years of study as success and accept the tracking as a structure that helps them achieve it. The paradox in their perception is apparent: in the class they enjoy a feeling of personal worth and high efficacy but relative to the rest of the classes this feeling is low. In this period, there is a turning point in the academic life of the student at-risk, but alongside it the gaps are retained and the social status is internalized well. The students prefer to ignore the gaps, the exclusion, and their low value and choose to focus on their learning success.

Students at-risk are experts in the teaching and pedagogy they need. They know to indicate supportive practices on the level of the system and on the level of the teacher, when what helps the most, in their opinion, is a teacher or principal who sees them and listens to them. The interviewees emphasized the teacher's importance and influence on the building of the efficacy, which enables them learning success and a high school matriculation certificate. Similarly, they indicate sabotaging practices: a large class, lack of their involvement in the decisions about them, emphasis of the good students and weakening of the students with difficulties, lack of integration in the class, different learning methods, ignoring their distress, and reduction of the teacher's responsibility. The classification continues also in the integrative classes, with the separation of students with academic deficiencies, and they all accept the existing reality.

The students perceive educators as helping and see the adult, a teacher or a principal, as a mediator whose role is to understand their needs and to help them develop a picture of the future. However, in reality teachers see their role in finding the track suitable for these students according to their grades and while ignoring their difficulties. The lack

of listening to the student's statements and their unheard voice express the research arguments about mobility, exclusion, and social statuses.

The school track of these youths tells the story of society and the structures in it. The students are aware of what is done but do not have the possibility of speaking about it. They feel that people are not interested in hearing their words and do not believe that they have something to say. In the extensive literature that developed on the topic of social exclusion, it is accepted to assume that social exclusion is the process in which certain groups in the population are pushed to the margins and are denied full participation in the life of the society in which they live. The main characteristics of the marginal groups are poverty and economic distress, as well as inadequate education (Estivill, 2003; Hills, 2004; Lister, 2004). Doron (2006) adds that social exclusion may pass from generation to generation and harm the chances of the coming generation for a better life.

The findings indicate that the education system requires responsibility for the learning from all the learners, including those who cannot and are at risk or are undergoing continuous learning failure. Thus it adopts the meritocratic idea according to which the responsibility to learn and to succeed is solely that of the student, in the form of "ask and you shall receive help". Despite the facts known to teachers on the students' risk situation, a conversation is not held with them beyond the repeated requirement to fulfill the obligations and the "learning behaviors". This approach pushes the students to think that their chances of academic success are reduced, to the point that they adopt the perception that the school lacks the tools for coping with them; they are problematic and the school cannot provide an answer to the variety of the needs and the differences between the students. The school is large and lacks resources. The achievement-oriented ideology that is at the basis of the meritocratic thesis causes the individual to feel that his place in the school hierarchy is solely his "fault" (Lampert, 2013; Mehan, 2008).

In the high school period, the relationship between the school and the parents is sparse, and the parents are barely in the picture. The students prefer to cope with the school and with their difficulties to the extent that they can and to keep their parents uninvolved. However, they are aware of the intergenerational transference and the lack of mobility and

of the relationship between these factors and their parents' socioeconomic status. Their thinking shows that they are aware of their similarity to their parents and that they are disappointing: "The parents are not satisfied with me and the teachers aren't either". In every family there are a number of siblings who learn in tracked classes and it arose that the preference for the tracked classes is conveyed between the siblings and from the parents to their children. This preference occurs while "preserving" the socioeconomic status and recognizing the existence of a stratified structure inside and outside of the school as reflecting the structure of society in Israel. The students adopt the belief that this is a reality that cannot be changed. The parents' statement, which recurred, was: "I was this way, too". The parents' education was found to significantly predict their children's academic success, as was their involvement, in the school and in its academic activities outside of it and in the conversations with the children on the picture of their future. The conclusion is that the parents' education and their degree of involvement in their children's lives are main factors in the creation of gaps in education, a fact that the education system prefers to ignore and to keep as the parents' responsibility.

6.2.4 The Perception of the Future and Issues of Inequality

The realization of the future goals occurs in the broad context of factors: the family, the school, the age group, and even the political environment (Seginer, 2009). The future orientation does not end with the presentation of alternatives from which the young person can choose; rather this is a process of the formation of the personal identity in which the individual learns about himself and about his environment for the purpose of determining personal objectives he can realize. In this context, it is important to direct to the fact that the school experience will be a tendentious experience, the goal of which is to strengthen and shape an applicable future program. The school must work, actively and tendentiously, to strengthen among the students the studies and the school experience in general as related to the choice of a career path and the realization of future goals (Mahajna, 2014).

The findings of the research study indicate that the questions on their future caused the students anxiety. It appears that success in the studies and the high school matriculation certificate had little effect on their sense of worth and efficacy about the future. They lack

an internal basis of success in their own right, according to which they can build the perception of the future. Academic failures, classifications, and separations from an early age, tracking during most of their years in the school, and perceptions that influence their personality cause a limited picture of their future.

Most of them indicate that they do not have dreams, and even those who dare to dream describe in few words a narrow and focused picture. The choices are limited just as they were in the school, and it is clear that the tracking is the glass ceiling in the school present and in their view of the future. However, they adopt a perception according to which the idea of tracking is their rescue, and there is no other way for them to succeed. University is perceived as a scary word – they note the lack of efficacy in this context and delineate for themselves possibilities of learning in a small class without academic tasks and without high requirements.

The reference to education in the future is important, since it indicates chances of mobility or preservation of status. The research study describes education as a lever of change of social status and the increase of the chance to change situations of risk and exclusion (Razer & Friedman, 2019). The idea that the academic future is the key to change was familiar to the interviewees, but it inspires in them anxiety. It is apparent that they do not aspire to mobility or see it on the horizon but primarily address a concrete future in aspects of livelihood and money as accepted in capitalist society.

The idea to eliminate the tracking in the school as a way to create equality caused anxiety among the research respondents. According to them, this harms them and especially the “strong” students, since they then interfere with their studies. The possibilities of reducing gaps in the school also awoke in them concern, since they undermine the entrenched structures in their awareness and they do not succeed in seeing an alternative. In their perception, a regular and heterogeneous class is not good for them and is also not good for the “strong” ones. They do not have the expectation that the social structures will change.

Researchers maintain that the schools tend to adapt themselves to the emerging neo-capitalist reality, although this is not essential. They describe changes undertaken in a large

number of schools in public education, which cause the increase of the social gaps and the worsening of the situation of children of the lower class (Harpaz, 2014; Pasternak, 2013). The neo-capitalist perception that is characterized by the preservation of class structures is expressed in the conversation with the respondents. They indicate the relationship between economic status and equality and between equality and the education existing in the school, as well as the open existence of statuses in the school, which are preserved by the mechanisms of tracking. The class structure has external status symbols such as prestigious clothes, cars, and parties and discriminatory behavior on the teachers' part. The research respondents described class differences between teachers, which are expressed in the different behavior of teachers who teach excelling classes and of teachers in the risk classes. The principal's conversation with and requirements of the two "types" of teachers are different.

Additional practices that preserve the hierarchy are the different learning hours and numbers of units of study as well as separate activities and regions of activity. The periphery and the center that exist in the school reflect those outside of it, and the research respondents are aware of this and identify that most of the students in the risk classes come from the same residential regions and the same socioeconomic status. In their words, this class division is eliminated when they move to informal education in their neighborhoods in the afternoon hours. In their perception, like there is in society excellent-rich and weak-poor, so too there is this division in the school: excellent students with high achievements and weak students in risk classes. This is also the message they receive at home from their parents and siblings, and thus the perception is enrooted in them that this is the desired structure that cannot be changed and that statuses are an ideal solution for the weak student and are tailored to his abilities. The school does not educate or constitute a model for mobility and equality, and the future perception that they derive is that there are "worthy and less worthy".

6.3 Main Theories Supporting the Findings

6.3.1 Relationships between Theoretical Announcements and the Research Conclusions

The main point of the present research study is the listening to the voice of the students at-risk, to learn how they see exclusion and inequality and what their perception of the future is. The research emphasizes the extent to which these students recognize the systemic structures and the extent to which their voice and statements are a central instrument for the understanding of their manner of action and the influences of these structures on their lives in the present and in the future.

Both the researchers who support tracking and the researchers who object to it relied on teachers and educators and on the data of tests and achievements. However, this research study does not address the justification or negation of the tracking but rather the presentation of the voice, emotions, and attitude of the tracked students about it.

Even when it is well camouflaged, at the basis of tracking there is discrimination (Hadar-Packer, 2013). This research study comes to assert that the students are aware of it and of the profound implications of tracking. The gaps and inequality are overt but are not talked about. The students' testimonies reveal the teachers' perceptions and systemic structures and know to connect between them and the social structures. This research study seeks to argue that tracking is not only a mechanism; this is a school space of many years and through the actions and discourse in it identities are acquired and conveyed onward. The interviewees shared their thoughts and emotions and thus helped create important knowledge on what occurs in this space and on the contribution of the participants in it to its preservation.

The findings indicate how aspects of global economics and neo-capitalism are reflected in the "unintentional" actions of the schools and the teachers towards the students at-risk. Separations, classifications, segregation, and classes are justified by the adults and are projected on the students' action and thinking – both on themselves and on the school. The system is not aware of the implications of this and ignores the students' distress. Some

also see the high school matriculation examinations to be a tracking factor (Michaeli, 2013), and some maintain that they are still the decisive factor in the future of the students and the best way for them to reach the top of the economy and the country.

Therefore, a competitive race for grades and commensurate systemic behavior lead the students to accept upon themselves the hierarchical capitalist structure (Davies & Guppy, 2010), with the requirement for discipline, obedience, and avoidance of independence and expression of opinion (Bowles & Gintis, 2008). The discourse in the field of education is subordinate to the measures of output and effectiveness, like the manner of operation of business companies in the location of suitable clients. Despite the argument presented in the research study that in the neo-capitalist world there is no need for outdated school hierarchies, it appears that they are still the very heart of the school – both the teachers and the students support and “strengthen” them. Their influences on the school functioning in the aspects of equality and holding of students at-risk from a low socioeconomic background are critical.

The research study indicates that tracking, in its forms, is structural at all ages in the school and is recognized by the students, and the research participants even indicate the continuation of the tracking in the tracking. In Israeli sociology tracking is linked to the referral of students from the neighborhoods or regions of the periphery to vocational education, a tactic that determines their professional fate and their social status for their entire lives (Sabirsky, 2004).

Bourdieu (1986) holds that the education system in every society is responsible to maintain the social order and to reproduce the governing relationships and power in it. Students who belong to the weak groups in society are educated for the exclusive supremacy of the ruling culture and are excluded from it. They tend to see the reason for exclusion to be personal failure, a view that reflects a feeling of basic inferiority. This research study shows that tracking concentrates students with similar difficulties in the same class, when the characteristics are difficulties with discipline and behavior, anxieties, learning disabilities, and attention disorders. The students experience continuous failure and frustration, and the main discourse is about their lack of ability and hence further

classification or separation. A change did not occur in structures and not in the social basis they rely on.

Attention to the students' needs, connection, and empathy are perceived as a "personal favor" from the teacher and not as an educational approach. A personal relationship with a teacher or a teacher who understands the student's difficulty and attempts to help the students are perceived as cases dependent on the teacher's personality. Students from a young age experience the teacher's help as personal and not systemic-institutional. This is an important characteristic in the understanding of the exclusion and institutional alienation accompanying it, primarily towards students who display difficulties already from the first years in the school. The findings of this research study show that already at the young ages the school acts towards the students as objects, and they feel that the decisions are made for them while their difficulties are ignored. When the school ignores the children's basic needs and they lack a significant figure to "show" them, they feel as if they are objects, they become unsuccessful and alienated, and their chances of dropping out of the school increase (Blank, Shavit, & Yaish, 2015). The ways of action and attitudes of the teachers shape the students' thinking and identity; they develop a status perception of gaps, discrimination, and inequality as a part of their experience in the educational institution and accordingly what occurs in it. In their perception, the fact that society is this way must be reflected also in the school.

The findings show that the teachers' conceptualizations and tracking actions are accompanied by alienation and harm throughout the years of the school, but they are entrenched to the point that the students who themselves are hurt justify them. The teachers do not listen to them and thus strengthen the feeling of exclusion. Teachers argue that they do not have time for those who do not want to learn and that they must advance those who do want to learn. In all the schools the mechanisms and the structures are identical and familiar to students. Experience and memory reveal alienation and rejection and even inferiority to the members of the regular classes. The students' statements indicate that they justify the inequality, their tracking, and the separations according to achievements and accept the perception regarding the learning efficacy and social status they deserve.

The adoption of the meritocratic idea regarding the perception of the responsibility was revealed in the students' statements. In the young classes, they expect understanding and assistance, and from the middle school they perceive themselves as the reason for their situation – and this is reinforced by the school, which structures their exclusion as something that is under their personal responsibility. In the neo-capitalist era, the school limits the adults' range of responsibility for what happens to the children, like the principle that the client is not to be given a warranty for the way in which he consumes what he has acquired. The reduction of the responsibility in all that pertains to the distress of children is critical (Lampert, 2008). Teachers know the students' background data, they doubt the students' ability to learn and tend to ignore them, and thus they replicate the social reality of exclusion and inequality. In the elementary school, the students feel different and not only are appropriate solutions not offered to them but also they are harmed, humiliated, and blame for their situation.

The schools function as institutions of classification of education and competition for achievements characterized by hard-heartedness and lack of compassion. The findings show that the schools and the teachers do not address the social-emotional world of students at-risk and certainly do not provide care. A possible explanation that arises from the findings is that the existence of the structures and practices that track and exclude is structured and entrenched to the point that the teachers justify it.

It appears that the longstanding policy of inclusion, equality, and reduction of social gaps, as the education system proclaims (Blass, Zussman, & Zur, 2014; Ministry of Education, Director General Circular, 2014) – and even prohibits the classification of students in the elementary schools – does not help. The conceptualizations of the students in the research study reveal preservation and justification of these mechanisms, which reinforces the argument that the schools continue to serve the interests of neo-capitalist society (Addi-Racah, Greenstein, & Bahak, 2015). According to the theory of neo-liberalism, people's happiness can be realized through their entrepreneurial capabilities in the institutional system (Sabag & Biberan-Shalev, 2014), but this claim is not relevant: the interviewees say that already from the first grade they experience difficulties, exclusion, and a feeling that there is no interest in them. There is a gap between what is

said and what is done, and over the years it grows and with it the lack of interest in advancing them.

The harm to the confidence and sense of self-worth alongside the emotional harm to the interviewees were expressed in the silences, lack of ability to answer questions, a lowered gaze, and so on. The pain and alienation because of the ignoring of their distress empower their experience of disconnection and intensify their pain. It is clear that the students, who are tracked or separated from an early age, will continue to be separated and tracked throughout most of their years in the school. At a certain stage, towards the high school, they will even ask for this separation and tracking themselves and will argue that they are problematic and it is their fault that they do not learn. Moreover, they are grateful for the school that provides them with some framework in which they can succeed in their learning task and even achieve a high school matriculation certificate. The research study emphasizes that the students internalize the message of the achievements and competition to the point of the thought that they endanger the school's prestige. They perceive the tracking as a solution for everyone and see it as a mechanism that has the aim of equality.

The family relations with the school as a social-institutional organization reflect the individual's relationships with the establishment in neo-capitalist society. The school "involves" the family and sees the family to be responsible for the student's situation and difficulties. These are weak families, characterized by class-based thinking, and they do not see the school as an opportunity for change or mobility. The reverse is true: the parents and siblings recommend tracking as an alternative and change for the completion of the studies. The parents of the tracked students are involved less in their learning and more in their behavior. The tracking is a representation of a separating structure known to the family, which even encourages it as a known and suitable solution. In the relationship between the parents and the students, the reproduction of the social structure is prominent, especially in their reference to their future. The relations with the school are described as a struggle, and the students' relations with their family are influenced by the school's manner of intervention. The school operates with inequality towards their parents, and the students ascribe this to their economic status. At the younger ages, the students feel that their parents support them and help in the struggle against the school, while at the high

school age the students prefer not to involve their parents, understanding that they cause additional difficulty for them. The students' parents do not dispute the social order; they for the most part heed the demands of the system, even it comes to their pain or their children's pain or suffering.

6.3.2 The Phenomena and Processes Examined in the Research from a Theoretical Aspect

This research study innovates in that it emphasizes the listening to the students and the reference to them as having opinions and as experts in their needs, an approach that may prevent dropping out and continuous exclusion throughout the studies. Pedagogy that directs to skills of listening and connection, as presented in the research literature, is not adequately supported by the students' voices. As the research identified, this reference is critical, from the first years of the school, and then the structuring of the efficacy and the perception of the status among the student begins. In the continuation, the encounter with the feeling of belonging is apparent, and it appears that the tracking fixes the perception of efficacy both in the present and in the thinking about the future. The students indicate a process that begins in passiveness and an experience as an object in the elementary school and continues with active rebellion, avoidance, or absence, accompanied by anger and rage at the system. They know to describe precisely what helps them and what impedes them or harms them.

Tracking creates a learning environment and a certain space that the research extends the knowledge about what happens in it and about the structures that constitute a main part in it. The understanding is that the tracking in the school is a mirror image of the social tracking and that it influences the students from different backgrounds and cultures and is performed in the same ways as in the past: classification according to achievements and division into excellent-high-preferred-prestigious tracks and low-weak tracks.

In this research study, there is prominent parallelism between extensive regions of the country and regions in the school found to be excluded, outside of the engines of economic and social growth. The research finds that the future of the students will be like

this. While the education system has twelve years to create social mobility and to change the students' status and efficacy, it instead perpetuates their exclusion.

This research study strengthens the argument that the subjects in the tracks in which the weak students are concentrated are learned at a lower level, with the creation of a structural gap that cannot be closed (Gamoran, 2009). In essence, since the establishment of the education system, there have been in it separating and tracking structures, and even if the names and practices have changed, they are structural and nobody disputes them. The few researches on the topic indicate this. The students who learn in the tracked classes from early ages experience constant tension between their good feeling and their successes in the small class – in the tracked group and the belonging to the peer group. In the high school, they “give up”, accept their situation, and focus on success in the high school matriculation examinations or in the completion of twelve years of studies. The school is described as a competitive factory for grades, which harms the self-confidence and sense of belonging of students from their first years. The teachers' attitudes and their responses towards the students over the years perpetuate the perception that the student is disappointing, angering, and disrupts the success of the enterprise.

Structures such as tracking are an outcome of economic and social policy and its tremendous influence. Thus, achievement is the supreme value in the school, and a student who does not meet the demands of the system is removed from the “fast track”. The immediate outcome is labeling and academic behavior that suits his “place” to the point of acceptance of the situation. From the first grade, it is apparent that the learning methods in the tracked space are different: the learning in small groups outside of the class ignores what is done in the large class and the students find it difficult to be helped by them and to bridge the divide between the two spaces. As the years pass, the students' awareness of what happens in the tracking space increases, and they are convinced that the system's approach is the best for them and act accordingly.

The interviews in the research enabled the learning about the teachers' practice in teaching in the class and towards students at-risk and their viewpoint and that of the educational staffs. The research shows that the educating figures are responsible for

perceptions and thoughts created among the tracked students. These perceptions derive from the personal experience of disconnection, giving up, and lack of connection with the adults – but most of all from the adults’ responses during and after the events.

In the interviews the respondents described most of the teachers as loyal to the requirements of the system and as those who do not do the best with them and their family. Nevertheless, the perception in principle of the students at-risk is that the teacher is a critical key figure in their lives, and they address the teacher as able to support significantly their success in the studies and even more the perception of future efficacy that they will form under the teacher’s influence.

The research indicates a gap between the teachers’ focus on achievements and the students who are focused on their difficulties. This gap exists as a structural tension between two separate worlds that is accompanied by an experience of aloneness of the students. An inclusive and equal policy remains a declaration but is not carried out in the field. The teachers ignore and do not take responsibility for the tracked student, and the fact that they do not see themselves as responsible for his academic situation “supports” the student’s remaining on the margins. The students not only do not have a way to make up gaps but also they experience the pursuit after the majority as a structural conflict and describe drama in their personal and academic lives in the school and mainly in the middle school. This situation lasts throughout all the years of studies and is reflected in the teachers’ statements that are quoted by the interviewees in the research.

The research shows that the perception of the teaching of teachers of students at-risk is based on the perceptions of education that are based on meritocracy and segregation. The teachers are not aware of the ongoing exclusion and harm to the student’s self-worth and belonging. In their perception, the tracking is a beneficial structure that helps the weak students achieve a high school matriculation certificate and thus there is equality towards them. The teachers focus the problem on the student and on the pathology of his risky situation, and the student “behaves accordingly”. Suleimani (2006) describes the approach that addresses the students at-risk as having low achievements that do not fit into the school since they cannot meet the system requirements. In other words, the problem is in them.

The research indicates that the teachers focus on the student's difficulties in the present and tend to ignore the student's past and emotions. The teachers' statements in a reality of ignoring and requirement for achievements build the tracking perception as correct in the students' awareness. The research respondents indicate that they are required to bear the responsibility for themselves and for the results of their choices, even when the teachers knew about their exclusion and their "record of failures" accumulated from the beginning of their studies in the school. This reality was found to have dramatic influence on their sense of belonging and on the perception of their lives in the future.

The research seeks to argue that tracked students are experts in pedagogy and the teaching of youths at-risk. They do not seek solutions for their difficulties and do not need advice. Instead, they emphasize the need for listening, empathy, and a relationship with a meaningful person as helping and as giving a feeling of worth. While they need to be seen and listened to, the system acts in a one-sided manner, strengthening the "negative" (failures, lack of efficacy) and determining accordingly the path of learning.

Korczak (1929) maintained that the child's first and indisputable right is to express his thoughts and play an active part in the considerations and decisions pertaining to him. When the child trusts the adult, then there will be fewer puzzles and mistakes. This research study seeks to emphasize that tracked students have implicit opinions, perceptions, and emotions. Although they are experts in their needs, they cannot communicate them. Their voice remains silenced, and the schools do not see it to be important. The research argues that it is tremendously important to make their voice heard openly – both in the personal-emotional dimension and in the academic dimension. This is pedagogy that will help them complete their learning task, and as the teachers will listen to the students, the mechanisms of tracking and exclusion will not be needed.

Most of the leading schools succeed in influencing their students' identity (Oakes, 2005), and this research emphasizes that tracking as a mechanism that preserves social-economic policy significantly influences the students. The research respondents know to delineate a picture of the tracking from the lower classes; they are aware of its implications and see the relationship between their channeling to tracks with low self-image and their

low status and how all this confirms their status and pronounces their fate. Over the years, the students adopt the position of the system regarding inequality, and despite the suffering and personal harm they believe that this is what society looks like and even justify the existing social order.

The research emphasizes and strengthens the importance that the students have the ability to dream and to see the future, especially when talking about students at-risk. When the family does not encourage this, the education system has a central place in the building of the students' identity and in the way the students make decisions and build for themselves their outlook. The school as an institution that reflects the values of neo-capitalism has strengthened the competition, the importance of achievements, and the individual's responsibility for them. In this way, the existing structures are reinforced and even validated in the form of further variations and programs that separate and divide, even in the tracked class.

If, many years ago, tracking structures were created and were intended to help the weak, then today this is a mechanism that preserves class stratification through competition and achievements. The students are certain that they choose to learn in the tracked classes and that they receive an excellent response on the part of the authorities and the school, but in actuality there is no attempt to provide an answer to the constellation of needs, including the aspects of family and community. Students who attempt to change their track, grouping, or class and to "climb up" encounter refusal, through which the system "nails" them in the inferior and low place.

The relations between the parents of students at-risk and the school are rather meaningful. The student needs his parents and wants to feel proud of them and of their action for him. The factor that undermines this desire of the student is the school. The research participants' testimonies reflect a reality in which the parents build and reconstruct their powerlessness in facing the education system. Like the students, the parents lack a voice and adopt the existing order.

6.4 Research Contribution

Research studies that address youths at-risk primarily present the attitudes of teachers and educators. The uniqueness of this research study is that it seeks to present the voice of the students at-risk and their personal perspective on their exclusion and tracking; thus it contributes to the research field and to the theories engaging in tracking and its roles in the education system. The format of a qualitative research enables the development of a values-based discussion in the educational field. The exposure to the students' voices contributes to the understanding of the phenomena and the creation of relevant knowledge with importance for teachers, principals, and shapers of educational policy. One of the conditions of the handling of gaps and inequality is to openly discuss phenomena and to place them on the agenda.

The recommendation of the research study is that in educational discussions emphasis will be placed on the students' personal attitudes, with listening, display of sensitivity, and their involvement in what is done. Moreover, listening to their voice is not privilege but pedagogy, and it must become a leading practice. These students' thoughts and emotions have great value for educators in the formation of pedagogy and teaching methods. The discoveries that arise from the research about students in tracking and the meanings that derive from this justify the interviews and the chosen methodology.

The theoretical contribution of the research study is the new understanding of the students' experience in the tracking space and its influence on them and on their families in the context of social and economic structures. If we address the expressions of tracking in the school walls, as the research participants describe them, and the policy behind it, then we will encounter already in the first year in the school an exclusionary and harmful system for the students who exhibit difficulties or those who have a lower "starting point". The research literature lacks retrospective researches, which enable in-depth understanding of students who experienced tracking and exclusion from the first grade. The research helps examine how the school and the learning tracks in it strengthen the inequality between groups from different class backgrounds and preserve the exclusion of the "weak" ones.

Knowledge about the thoughts and ways of action may facilitate the use of practices that take them into consideration and influence them in the present and in the future.

The research findings support research studies that were carried out on tracking and on students at-risk, but to differentiate from them it presents important information on the practices that help and primarily reveals their inner voice and the place of their teachers in the shaping of their outlook. This comprehensive knowledge, which includes the range of ages from the elementary school to the high school, constitutes an applied-practical contribution to the organizations of education, colleges of teaching, personnel of supervision in the Ministry of Education, the department in charge of students at-risk and the general education departments. This contribution includes aspects of “do and do not do”, and the understanding of what helps and promotes the students versus what harms and weakens them can help the improvement of the system’s conduct with them and with their families.

The research study proposes to create pedagogy based on the listening to the voice of the students’ at-risk, on the understanding of their needs, and on the teacher’s responsibility, from the understanding that such pedagogy will have a beneficial influence on their lives as adults in society. In this, emphasis is placed on the in-depth examination of the role of the elementary school, where the tracking begins and becomes lodged in the student’s life as a suitable alternative for him. The researcher’s hypothesis is that this perception is formed first in the teacher and then is conveyed to the student through the actions and daily discourse in the classroom. The argument of the research is that it is necessary to find supporting equal alternatives that do not entail separation and the creation of a weak minority, which is physically and mentally distanced from the large class, where the strong majority remains. The research study recommends to education personnel that instead of thinking *about* children at-risk to think *with* children at-risk.

The findings of the research study support the researches that emphasize the relationship with the student. The research participants phrase well their needs and the practices that help them, as well as the meaningful relationship with the teacher, the listening to them, and the “insistence” on the continuation of their functioning and success.

Another contribution of the research is the respondents' reference to the ways of action of the school (the teachers, the tracking constructs), and this as a response to the question of the extent to which they helped and what their influence on them as students in general and as students at-risk in particular is. The research sees the research participants to be relevant and authentic experts and to help in their statements the emphasis of practices that increase risk or help reduce it. The research poses a new and in-depth perspective, which seeks to claim that students are not objects and their voice is critical to the empowering and promoting educational work. The determination that the key to change is found in the hands of the students may be an applied contribution to the educational field.

It should not be concluded from this research study about all the students and all the examined phenomena. However, the trends arising from the research participants' descriptions definitely constitute an invitation for the continuation of the studies and increased depth in the topic. The understanding that the students know better than the teachers to conceptualize what it is right and "works for them" and the translation of this knowledge into practical uses may make a meaningful contribution to the development of new pedagogy.

The objective of the research study is to present knowledge that will facilitate the personal and professional development of teachers and institutions that train for teaching. This knowledge will help in the creation of a culture of honest and caring concern for students and in the improvement of achievements and the extraction from typical patterns of behavior and thinking. This is a change that will lead to personal and professional empowerment among teachers and institutions that train for teaching and schools. Equipping the teachers with knowledge and instruments that will enable them to reach all children and to give all children a feeling that they hear and see them in a comprehensive and in-depth manner is a paramount educational challenge.

It will be interesting to carry out a continuation study that follows up after the research respondents and to compare their perspective on the tracking and exclusion as adults to what is presented in this research study. Hence, it will be possible to understand

how they were influenced by the experience of the studies in the education system, how their choices and decisions were directed, and what the place of these in their lives was.

The research study was carried out on the background of the changes in the field of education that address the student's functioning in the 21st century. Emphasis is placed in the research on the student's emotions and thoughts, instead of only on the student's achievements. The research participants' voices tell the story of the education system and describe its attitude towards youths in general and youths at-risk in particular, as reflecting the attitude of society towards them.

As a researcher, I call on teachers to hold a constant dialogue with the students, with its main focus the listening to their voices as a primary method in the teaching work and in their educational missions. This research study is the first of its kind, and it is very important to extend it and to bring additional voices of students from other regions in Israel.

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Appendices

Appendix Number 1: Informed Consent and Confidentiality Form

Dear Interviewee,

In the framework of the doctoral studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, the School of Education, I am conducting a research study under the guidance of Professor Sławomir Banaszaks about narratives of students at-risk who are learning in the high school. I am turning to you since you have unique knowledge from which I want to learn.

I promise that the details of the conversation between us will be kept completely confidential. At the end of the research the results will be published with the use of quotes from the interviews. This will be done with complete secrecy, without the use of names or identifying details.

Your participation in the research depends on you, and you have the full right to end your participation at any stage. I will ask your permission to record the conversation so that I can remember the details.

Your signature confirms that you have read what is written and given your consent to participate in the research.

I, Lili Israel, confirm that you read what is written and your consent to participate in the research.

I, Lili Israel, confirm my promise to maintain confidentiality.

Interviewee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix Number 2: Informed Consent Form – Parents

Dear Parents,

In the framework of the doctoral studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, the School of Education, I am conducting a research study under the guidance of Professor Slawomir Banaszaks about narratives of students at-risk who are learning in the high school.

I am turning to you since your son / daughter has unique knowledge from which I want to learn. I am asking for your permission to interview your son / daughter and promise that the information is solely for the purposes of the research.

I promise that the details of the conversation between me and your son / daughter will be kept completely confidential. At the end of the research the results will be published with the use of quotes from the interviews. This will be done with complete secrecy, without the use of names or identifying details.

As a researcher, I assure you that at any stage the parent can cancel the interview or ask that the information not to be used.

Date: _____

Parent name: _____

Parent signature: _____

Appendix Number 3: Informed Consent Form – Teachers

Dear Teacher,

In the education system there is a perception that refers students to different tracks according to their achievements, such as such as groupings, professional track, academic track, MABAR classes, and so on. The reason for this approach derives from the belief that this division enables the students to learn and to realize their role as students.

My goal is to hear the voice of the students – the students' thoughts and feelings about this perception.

I turn to you so that you can help me reach the students in your school who belong to these classes. As a researcher, I am committed to anonymity and confidentiality regarding your information and the students' information.

I am thankful for your help.

Lili Israel

Appendix Number 4: Interview Guide

Dear Student,

In the education system there is a perception that refers students to different tracks according to their achievements, such as groupings, professional track, academic track, MABAR classes, and so on. The reason for this approach derives from the belief that this division enables the students to learn and to realize their role as students.

My goal is to hear the voice of the students – the students' thoughts and feelings about this perception.

Date: _____ **Place:** _____ **Hour:** _____

Remarks:

Background Questions:

1. Interviewee age
2. School and study track you learned in
3. Residence
4. Parent education
5. Parent employment
6. Brothers and sisters, where they learned/learn

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself as a student in the young grades of the school.
2. What kind of student were you?
3. What were your difficulties?
4. What did you feel? What were your thoughts about learning?
5. What did you think about yourself as a student?
6. What did you think about your teachers?
7. What did your teachers tell you about your difficulties? Tell me about such a teacher ...
8. What did you think about what they said to you? Share your thoughts. Was there a teacher who was there for you?
9. Tell me about a case of a change or transfer in the school (program, class, group).
10. How did you feel? What did you think about this?
11. Who decided about the transfer or change and why?
12. What did you feel and think about the change?
13. Was the change right for you?

Until now you have shared the story of your past as a student. Now we will focus on the present period:

14. Tell how you came to this class in the high school.
15. How do you feel in this class? Where are you situated in this class?
16. Do you think that this class suits you? How?
17. Does this class allow you to learn better, to close gaps?
18. If you had the possibility of choosing, where would you want to learn and why?
How do the teachers treat you?
19. In your opinion, what characterizes the students who come to these classes?
20. Do you feel that you belong / are a part of the school?
21. Do you have friends? From what class?
22. What do your parents think about your studies?
23. Are the studies important to you and why?
24. What is your dream for the future?
25. What are your thoughts about studies in the future?
26. Do you believe that you can learn in the future?
27. Are there social classes in the school? Is this apparent in the clothing? How else?
28. In your opinion, are all the students in the school equal? Do you think that the amount of money that the student's parents have is meaningful for the relations in the school? Do children from a home where the parents have money learn better than do others?
29. In your opinion, does the school address all the students equally? What feeling was it? In your opinion, does a student in Tel Aviv and you obtain the same conditions?
30. What is your opinion on the elimination of the tracks as in other countries?
31. What do teachers not know about you?

If you want to add anything, about something I did not ask ...

Thank you for your time.

At the end of the interview, the interviewer fills out:

Feelings _____

Interpretations _____

Comments on the interview _____