

Types of Tracking and Educational Success in the Netherlands

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This paper examines the effect of three different types of secondary-school tracking on educational attainment. Moreover, we also add to research on social inequality in education by looking at differences on socio-economic background. Using rich registry data, we exploit the variation in the supply of schools that are offering different types of tracks in the local area and use that as an instrumental variable to causally interpret the effect of types of tracking on educational attainment for students in the middle of the ability distribution. Our results show that students with the same prior track recommendation are more likely to obtain a diploma that exceeds their track recommendation in a class combining more than two tracks (broadly tracked) than a class combining two tracks (partly tracked). Only broadly tracked students have a higher likelihood to enrol in higher education. These effects are stronger for those with parents that are higher educated. By not defining tracking as a dichotomous, but by discerning different types of tracking we show that the consequences of these types of tracks that for students' school career and inequality in education. If politics is prioritizing attainment as a goal, then a recommendation is install more broadly type tracks for those in the middle.