

## Sibling Influence in Field of Study Choices

van der Vleuten, Maaïke (1); Maas, Ineke (2); Weesie, Jeroen (2)

1: Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands, The; 2: Utrecht University, Netherlands, The  
m.vandervleuten[at]maw.ru.nl, I.Maas[at]uu.nl, J.Weesie[at]uu.nl

**Abstract** This study evaluates sibling influence in field of study choices. We argue that sibling similarities in fields of study arise because older siblings transfer field-specific resources to their younger siblings. This is more likely to occur when siblings are more similar in age, education level or when siblings are of the same sex. We analyze 14490 siblings in 1858 families using conditional logit models. We find that younger siblings tend to follow their older sibling's field of study, irrespective of parent's occupational field. These sibling similarities are weaker when siblings differ more in education level, but stronger when siblings are of the same sex. There is no evidence that sibling similarities depend on age differences between siblings. Importantly, we can conclude that the influence of older siblings does not lead to gender differences in fields of study. We find that not only the field of study of the older sibling closest in age is important, but also the field of study of subsequent older siblings. Our results imply that when interventions meant to increase the number of individuals entering certain fields of study target one child in the family, they may have indirect effects on that child's younger sibling, but do not decrease gender segregation in the field of study.