

Discussion of  
"A Peer Like Me? Early Exposure to High Achievers  
in Math and Later Educational Outcomes"  
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Joint Workshop on Gender and Mathematics  
September 2021

# This Paper

- Relevant question: Does exposure to gifted peers of **same/opposite gender** affect later academic outcomes?
- Focus on peer effects at **early stages** of educational process
- Methodology: regression analysis on **INVALSI** admin data
- Identification strategy: exploit **random allocation** of kids across classes within primary schools
- Main conclusions:
  - higher exposure to gifted peers of same (opposite) gender in **grade 5** leads to: higher (lower) math scores in **grade 8** and to higher (lower) probability of choosing scientific high school
  - mechanism of **role model** as main driver

# Comments/Suggestions for Future Work

- 1 Look at **other outcomes** of interest: probability of enrolling into Liceo Classico (traditionally viewed as more elitist/university oriented). Since these alternatives (scientifico vs classico) are not mutually exclusive, would you find similar/opposite effects?
- 2 Repeat the analysis with data collected during/following **remote learning** due to Covid-19 to see how these effects change in the absence of in person interaction. Are they stronger or weaker? Same direction? Could help in disentangling some psychological channels?
- 3 Run **counterfactual simulations** to see how much of the difference in probability of high grades/enrolling into scientific high school is due to "role model" effect vs something else? Similarly, what level of exposure would girls need in order to close the observed gender gap in scientific high school enrolment?