

# Discussion on “Parents and Peers: Gender Stereotypes in the Field of Study” by Michela Carlana and Lucia Corno

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# Why should one care?

- Students make decisions on their **field of study** at several points in time
  - Are these decisions optimal?
  - Are they affected (negatively? positively?) by parents or peers?
- (Ex-ante) plenty of reasons to believe that decisions are suboptimal:
  - Gender gap
  - Women underrepresented in STEM fields
- Understanding the determinants of **suboptimal** decisions may allow us to help students
  - Do parents' recommendations matter?
  - Are there peer effects?

# Main results

## 1 Parents' recommendations matter:

- Thinking about mother's recommendation  $\Rightarrow$   
girls choose math less often
- Knowing that recommendation will be revealed to parents  $\Rightarrow$   
girls choose math less often

## 2 Peers' gender composition matters:

- Knowing that choice will be revealed to peers  $\Rightarrow$   
no effect
- Knowing that choice will be revealed to peers +  
Knowing that they will have to interact with peers  $\Rightarrow$   
girls choose math less often

# Comments

- Clear paper
- Solid methodology
- Results consistent with (my) prior
- Does experiment reflect environments in which real decisions are made?
  - Who decides on field of study in real life?
    - Teachers? Students? Parents?
  - Don't students think for longer about their field of study in real life?
  - How are these “points” payoff relevant?
  - What do I learn from the actual value of the estimates?