

May 31, 2009

## **RACE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN COLLEGE MAJOR CHOICE**

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**ABSTRACT:** College major choice varies substantially by gender, race, and ethnicity among college graduates. This study investigates whether these differences are present at the start of the college career and whether these differences can be explained by differences in academic preparation. This study estimates a multinomial logit to evaluate whether students of similar academic backgrounds make similar college major choices at the start of their college career. The results demonstrate that there are differences in college major choice even after controlling for the SAT score of the student and the high school class rank of the student by gender, race, and ethnicity. The effects are much larger for gender than they are for race and ethnicity. In addition to differences in the initial choice of college major, large differences exist by race and gender in the likelihood of changing majors. Women are significantly more likely to switch away from an initial major in engineering than are white men.

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The author wishes to thank Marta Tienda for access to the Texas Higher Education Opportunity Project administrative data set and for research support. The author also wishes to thank Mark Long, Marta Tienda, Jason Fletcher, Brett Wendling, and an anonymous referee for helpful comments.