

DIFFERENCES IN COLLEGE MAJOR CHOICE BY CITIZENSHIP STATUS

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Abstract: There are numerous studies of racial and gender gaps in major choices but none that examine these choices for non-citizens or immigrants populations. Using the administrative data from two flagship four-year colleges in Texas, I explore student's major choices by citizen status. I expand previous models (Berger, 1988; Turner and Bowen, 1999; Staniec, 2004; Porter and Umbach, 2006) incorporating foreign born populations and comparing choices across institutions. In addition, in the context of the legislation of in-state tuition access for undocumented students, I test the effects of the policy on students' choices of major. Foreign born populations evidence a higher propensity to enroll in science, engineering, and math, and a lower propensity to enroll in social sciences than citizens. Domestic students, show varied behavior in their propensity to opt for SEMs depending on their race. There is evidence of behavioral changes pre- to post-H.B. 1403, with foreign born populations evidencing a shift away from high return majors.

Keywords: Majors, Citizenship, Texas, Post Secondary Education, Immigrants

Bio: Milagros Nores specializes in the economics of education, poverty, early childhood attainment and international education. She has a Ph.D. in Education and Economics from Columbia University and an Ed.M. in Educational Administration and Social Policy from Harvard University and was a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Taubman Center in Public Policy, Brown University. She has coauthored the Age 40 Perry Pre-school cost-effectiveness studies, among other things.