

Comparing Sibling Similarity in Education Within and Between Countries

We compare the variation of sibling similarity in education by family background between different societies. We study inequalities in cognitive test scores, school grades, and final educational attainment using data from Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The data sources we use include the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP), the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), the United States Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) and National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) as well as registry data from the Nordic countries. Within the countries, we compare sibling correlations along the dimensions of parental education, occupation, migration background, and family size. The comparison of these estimates within and between countries allows us to demonstrate the variation in sibling similarity, i. e. the omnibus impact of family background, across policy landscapes. Our findings show similar levels of sibling resemblance for cognitive scores, school grades, and final educational attainment. Most of sibling similarity is at comparable levels across countries. We find, however, some differences in sibling similarity in educational attainment with sibling similarity being higher and more polarized between advantaged and disadvantaged social groups in Germany and the United States.

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