

Gender empowerment and proactive economic rationality

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Abstract:

Have women empowered themselves, or has their empowerment had to be initiated by policy measures? Are school girls passive reactors who work just hard enough to fulfill the society's expectations for them, or enlightened proactors who work even harder to improve the societal expectations? We discover that contemporary Spanish women, unlike their foremothers, have opted for higher education since before the society's expectations started to change. In other words, much of the institutional development toward gender parity and empowerment materialised after, having presumably been influenced by, the self-improving investment precommitted by these women. There is little reason to believe that our observation is peculiar to Spain, that is, women's improved socioeconomic status has not only been well-deserved, but also been hard-earned.

Keywords: Statistical discrimination, self-fulfilling prophecy, commitment, intertemporal consistency, human capital.

JEL classifications: J16, I24, C33.

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