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Can Education Reduce Traditional Gender Role Attitudes?

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to identify if there is a causal relationship between education and traditional gender-role attitudes. In particular, if women have to leave the labor market to take care of the family, and if men have more rights to a job than women when jobs are scarce. In addition, I explore plausible mechanisms through which education affects these attitudes. I use data from the European Social Survey for 14 European countries. My identification strategy exploits educational reforms changing the number of years of compulsory education to obtain a source of exogenous variation that can be used as an instrument for education. The first stage results show that education reforms certainly increase years of schooling, but only for individuals from a low-educated family, in particular women. Results indicate that for this group, one additional year of education significantly reduces the probability of agreeing with women's traditional gender role in more than 11 percentage points.

KEYWORDS Education; Compulsory schooling reforms; Gender-role attitudes; Gender inequality; Europe

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