

Discussion of “Gender gap in high school choices: do achievements and peers play a role?”

Workshop on Gender and Mathematics
Collegio Carlo Alberto September 24th 2021

Overview of the paper

- Differences in educational choices at age 14
- Gendered selection of secondary school based on grades in maths and Italian (teachers' grades and INVALSI points).
- Explaining differences looking also at the context (peers and parents' education)... but...

Discussion

- Why do you present results on boys' choice only?
- INVALSI tests may be non gender neutral so inducing bias in the assessment (results of the test vs. teachers' score).
- What about differences between preparatory and vocational high schools? Those enrolling the first generally do not stop there.
- No difference in the choice of “liceo classico” by maths or Italian grade and gender. This may be due to how such a type of high school is perceived.

Discussion

- Results on school choice
 - Traditional STEM and non-traditional/others: adding controls, the coefficient of “female” becomes more negative -> socio-economic status (mainly) and grades are pro-males -> increase in inequality.
 - Traditional and non-traditional humanities: adding the controls for grades decreases the coefficient of “female” -> higher scores in (?) are pro-males -> decrease in inequality (coefficient positive).

Further suggestions

- Socialisation: what about splitting by more/less traditional regions (using more than the three regions currently in the paper)?
- Immigrants: natural experiment between more and less traditional countries (more/less gender discrimination)
- Second generation immigrants may be studied in the same way.