

Women Mayors and Management of Spanish Councils: An Empirical Analysis

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Abstract : This paper analyses the influence of gender of the mayors of Spanish local governments on different budget items using a sample of 8,243 town councils between 2002 and 2010 period and 64,361 observations. The system Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) technique was employed to examine this panel data. This powerful methodology allows controlling for the endogeneity of the variables and the heterogeneity of the sample. Unlike previous works focused on the study of gender influence on firm decisions, the present work analyzes the influence of the gender of the major in the council's decisions. Specifically, we examine the differences in financial liabilities, security, protection and social promotion expenses and income items relating to public management. In addition, the study focuses on the Spanish context, which is characterized by the presence of decentralization of public responsibility to a greater extent than in neighboring countries, feeding the debate on the operational efficiency of local government increased with an open debate on the importance of gender in public management. The results show that female mayors tend to have lower expenses in general without significant differences in incomes obtained for men and women majors. We also find that female majors incur fewer financial liabilities, one of the most important problems in the Spanish public sector. However, despite of cutting in the public sector, these councils have higher expenditure on security, protection and social promotion. According to these evidences, the presence of women in politics may serve to improve the councils' economic situation and it is not only necessary for social justice but for economics efficiency. Besides, in councils with more inhabitants, women mayors are more common, but women who served for a very long time are less common.

Keywords : councils, gender, local budgets, public management, women mayors

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