

# Re-evaluating the Political Economy of Education for Inclusive Prosperity: Turkey as a Laboratory

2nd LSE Workshop on Political Economy of Turkey

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European University Institute, Italy

September 10-11, 2020

# Human beings are social species

- We rely on cooperation to survive and thrive
- While we pursue our individual interest, we are better off acting collectively
- We thrive both individually and socially in cohesive environments, free from conflict and violence.

- Social connectedness and a collective will to live together
- Non-cohesive environments are characterized by violence, ethnic and religious segregation, intolerance.
- This may have deep historical roots and ongoing problem for a country or region.
- Or, may arise in socio-politically turbulent times and threaten existing social capital.

# Ethnic Diversity and Social Cohesion

- Social cohesion in ethnic and racial diversity may be particularly challenging.
- Recent human migratory flows made ethnic diversity a common (permanent) feature of most countries.
- A blessing: skill complementarities, innovation, and creativity
- A curse: threatening social cohesion through conflict and tension

**Economic and social policies are important to manage (and harness) ethnic diversity**

# Public We Aspire to in Ethnic Diversity

- Immigration is and will remain an inevitable reality of our planet for the foreseeable future.
- Can we design and implement policy tools to achieve the public we desire? A public free from ethnic conflict and polarization?
- If so, what form should these policy tools take to accommodate and harness increasing ethnic diversity in an inclusive way that benefits all members of the society?

# Leveraging the Power of Public Education

“... public education does not serve a public. It creates a public. The question is, what kind of public does it create? A conglomerate of self-indulgent consumers? Angry, soulless, directionless masses? Indifferent, confused citizens? Or a public imbued with confidence, a sense of purpose, a respect for learning and tolerance?” (Postman *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School*, 1996).

# Leveraging the Power of Public Education

- Public education is an ideal platform to engineer the public we aspire to.
- Childhood period offers tremendous opportunities to shape socio-cognitive skills (neural plasticity)
- These opportunities are limited at lower SES segments and humanitarian settings
- Schools are where
  - we instill civic virtues into our children
  - teach prosociality
  - build our social capital

# Ethnically Diverse Schools

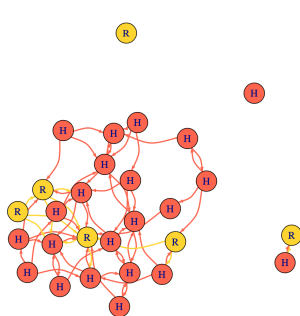
- Schools offer ideal settings to shape social skills
- Schools can reinforce the very problem we are trying to solve
- Challenges of governing ethnically diverse communities apply to ethnically diverse schools located in lower SES areas.
- They can mirror the neighbourhood they are located: violence, ethnic tensions, recruitment ground for radical groups.



# Turkey as an Ideal Laboratory to Study Social Inclusion

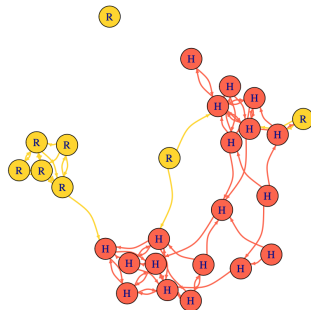
- Ethically diverse country
- Influx of Syrian refugees since the beginning of Syrian Civil War
- School Placement Policy
- Change in ethnic composition of public schools in a very short period
- The lack of a clear road map (effective social cohesion policies)

# Limitations of Contact Theory



Coleman Index for the Host Group -0.016  
Coleman Index for the Refugee Group 0.17

**A. Classroom 1**



Coleman Index for the Host Group 0.937  
Coleman Index for the Refugee Group 0.635

**B. Classroom 2**

# Growing Ethnic Prejudice and Self-Defeating Beliefs

- There is no difference in fluid cognitive ability between host and refugee children, yet...
  - 36% of host children think refugees are not as smart as them
- There is no difference in behavioral conduct (grades) between host and refugee children, yet...
  - 30% of host children state that refugees are much more badly behaved than them
- Internalizing self-defeating beliefs: 46% of refugee children believe that host children are smarter than them

# Need for Evidence-Informed Strategies to Help Build Social Cohesion

- A curricular Approach (Understanding Each Other Curriculum)



# Teachers and Pedagogical Approaches

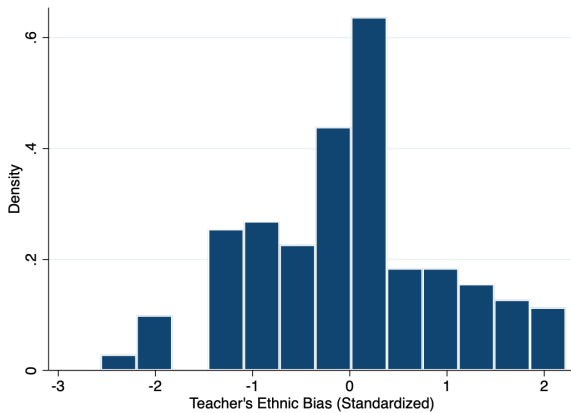
- Teachers play a critical role in developing our social capital
- They shape our children's inter-ethnic relationships based on their own ethnic beliefs.
- How ethnically biased are they?
- Over 70 primary schools, ~ 200 teachers (over 5000 students) in Sanliurfa and Mersin.
- About 13% refugees

# Teacher's Ethnic Bias: An Implicit Association Test

<p><b>Syria:</b></p> <p>Damascus, Aleppo, Arabic, Dabke,</p>  <p>The image shows the flag of Syria on the left, which consists of three horizontal stripes of red, white, and black with two green stars in the white stripe. To the right is a map of Syria with major cities and regions marked.</p>	<p><b>Good:</b></p> <p>Happy, Love, Freedom, Peace, Health, Friend</p>
<p><b>Turkey:</b></p> <p>Ankara, Istanbul, Turkish, Halay,</p>  <p>The image shows the flag of Turkey on the left, which is red with a white crescent and star. To the right is a map of Turkey with different regions color-coded.</p>	<p><b>Bad:</b></p> <p>War, Fight, Sad, Disease, Enemy, Hate</p>

- 1 Good vs. Bad (14 stimuli)
- 2 Turkey vs. Syria (14 stimuli)
- 3 "Good/Turkey" vs. "Bad/Syria" (28 stimuli)
- 4 "Bad/Turkey" vs. "Good/Syria" (28 stimuli)

# Distribution of Teacher's Ethnic Bias



# Measuring Inter-ethnic Ties and Homophily (Segregation)

- Asked to nominate upto 3 classmates as
  - friends
  - emotional support (providing and receiving)
  - academic support (providing and receiving)
- How does the teacher's ethnic bias affect the formation of inter-ethnic ties in the classroom?
  - Exploiting a natural experiment generated by a massive refugee crisis and the way a school placement policy is implemented in a large number of schools.
  - Collected data on children and teachers in previously unavailable details



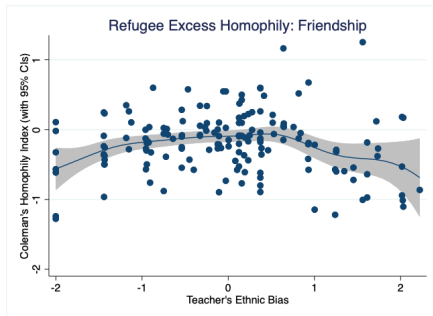
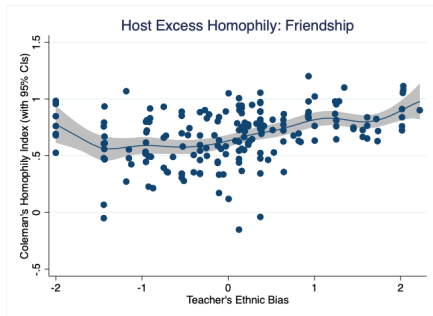
# Teacher's Ethnic Bias and Nominations Involving Refugee Classmates

	Friendship	Emotional Support	Academic Support
Teacher Ethnic Bias	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.00)
Observations	5032	5032	5032

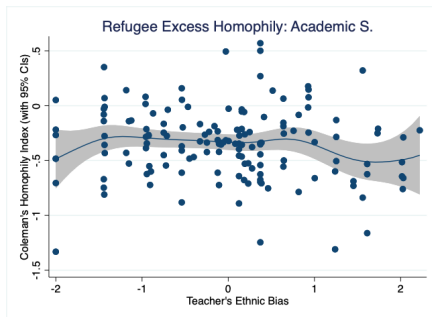
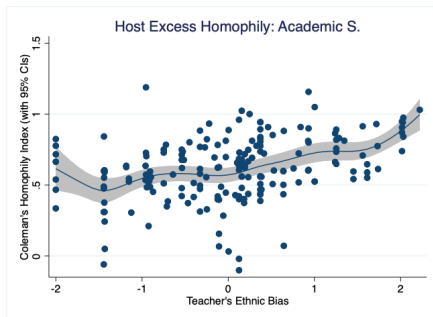
Standard errors clustered at school level. Asterisks indicate that coefficient is statistically significant at the 1% \*\*\*, 5% \*\*, and 10% \* levels.

- Average number of friendship ties involving a refugee student: 0.19
- About 16% decline per standard deviation increase in teacher's ethnic bias

# Teacher's Ethnic Bias and Homophily: Friendship



# Teacher's Ethnic Bias and Homophily: Academic Support



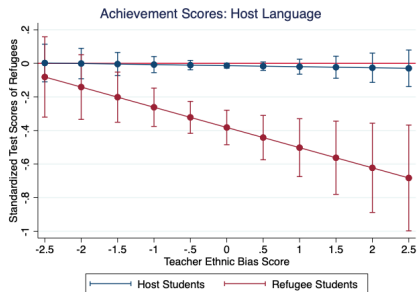
# Teacher's Ethnic Bias and Bullying

	Probability Bullied		Number of Bullies	
	Host	Refugee	Host	Refugee
Teacher Ethnic Bias	-0.00 (0.01)	0.05** (0.03)	0.10 (0.12)	0.46** (0.22)
N	4051	322	4276	633
P-Value (Host=Refugee)	0.070		0.088	

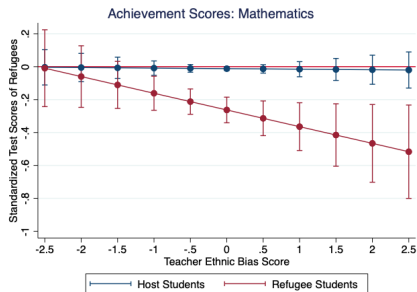
Standard errors clustered at school level. Asterisks indicate that coefficient is statistically significant at the 1% \*\*\*, 5% \*\*, and 10% \* levels.

# Teacher's Ethnic Bias and Achievement

## Turkish Language



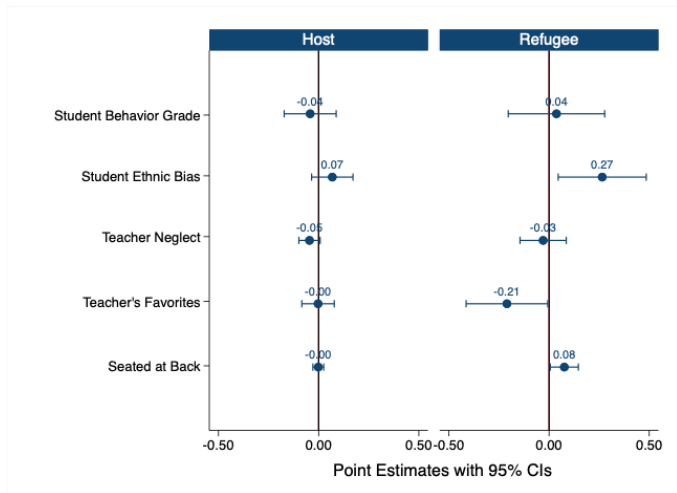
## Mathematics



# What are the Mechanisms?

- Reverse causality?
- Teachers instilling their ethnic bias into children
- Discriminatory classroom practices
  - Neglect
  - Spatial segregation

# Potential Mechanisms



95% confidence intervals are based on standard errors clustered at the school level. The vertical line indicates an effect of zero.

# The Road Ahead

- Teacher selection
- Combination of curricular and pedagogical approaches
- Mitigation strategies for at-risk post-primary schools
  - tailored approaches (taking into account of adolescence related issues)
- Prevention strategies for primary schools that supply students to those post-primaries
  - achievement and social cognition building strategies starting kindergarten and grade 1 (curricular and pedagogical)



# Conclusion

- We are living in ethnically diverse world
- We need to manage and harness ethnic diversity to benefit all
- Schools are ideal platforms to instill tolerance and build social cohesion
- But mere contact is not enough (creates more problems)
- Need clever mitigation and prevention strategies

**Public education does not serve a public. It creates a public. The question is, what kind of public does it create?**