

THE POWER OF ART: CULTURAL POSSESSIONS AND ATTITUDES OF TURKISH ADOLESCENTS TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS

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Abstract:

Existing studies suggest that people who are in the environment of cultural and artistic activities and have experiences with them have lower social stereotypes and prejudices toward the disadvantaged in the society. In this article, we investigate whether possession of and experience with cultural goods such as books of poetry, classical literature, works of art (e.g., paintings), and musical instruments help Turkish adolescents to have positive attitudes towards immigrants. The motivation of the study is coming from the increased number of immigrants in Turkey, especially after the Syrian Civil War started in mid-2011. Moreover, almost half of the Syrian population in Turkey consists of children at school age. The empirical analysis relies on the OECD's "Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)" data about 15-year-old students in Turkey. Controlling for gender, parents' education, and other characteristics in the regressions, we find that the index of cultural possession has a positive relation with the adolescents' attitudes towards immigrants. More specifically, the increasing level of cultural possession makes Turkish adolescents more supportive about the rights that immigrants should have like everyone else in the country, such as voting in the elections, and they believe that they should continue their own lifestyle and customs.

Keywords: Cultural possession, attitudes towards immigrants, test scores, PISA

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